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AND NORTHERN IRELAND
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COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER—Mrs. J. Garbutt

POSTMASTER—J. Arnold

TRANSPORT MANAGER—R. H. Hyde

THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

IN THE FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTIETH PARLIAMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND
[WHICH OPENED 25 JUNE 1987]

THIRTY-SEVENTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SIXTH SERIES — VOLUME 138

TWENTY-FIRST VOLUME OF SESSION 1987-88

House of Commons

Monday 25 July 1988

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

BRITISH RAILWAYS (NO. 2) BILL *(By Order)*
Order for consideration read.
To be considered tomorrow.

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE TOWN MOOR BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*
Read a Second time and committed.

HARWICH HARBOUR BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*
Order for Second Reading read.
To be read a Second time tomorrow.

Oral Answers to Questions

ENERGY

Magnox Power Stations

1. **Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what recommendations he has received from the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate on the case for additional safety measures for Magnox power stations.

The Secretary of State for Energy (Mr. Cecil Parkinson): The Health and Safety Executive's Nuclear Installations Inspectorate has asked the licensees of the Magnox power stations to carry out a long-term safety review for each station. These reviews are assessed by the NII, whose findings and requirements for continued operation are being published.

Mr. Corbyn: What is the cost per station and in total of all the safety measures required by the NII? Is the Minister prepared to review the unit cost of electricity generated by Magnox nuclear power stations and, in the light of that review, to consider phasing out those stations on grounds of safety, environmental damage and cost of electricity generation?

Mr. Parkinson: No, Sir. Each Magnox station is independently subject to long-term review. Two reviews have so far been completed. In the case of Berkeley, the cost of making the changes necessary to enable the station to continue to work until 1992 simply was not justified, whereas in the case of Bradwell it was. These are matters for the commercial judgment of the Central Electricity Generating Board, coupled with the fact that the NII must be satisfied before issuing a certificate and allowing the station to continue. Each station will be reviewed individually. It will be for the NII to say what is necessary to be done and for the CEGB to decide whether it is worth doing.

Mr. Marlow: Will my right hon. Friend tell the sandal-wearing, nut cutlet-eating—[HON. MEMBERS: "*The Guardian*-reading."]—yes, *The Guardian*-reading, bearded fanatics who have it in for nuclear power that in reality the environmental danger of fossil-fuel generated electricity as it is now produced is far greater than that of nuclear power? Will my right hon. Friend consider implementing an urgent programme to extend the amount of nuclear power generation in this country?

Mr. Parkinson: My hon. Friend is right. There is a strong argument that the safest and least-polluting source of energy is nuclear power, when installations are properly built, designed and regulated.

Mr. Matthew Taylor: In view of the great public interest, will the Secretary of State make available the full report on Berkeley and not just a summary? Will he also state the time scale for reports on Oldbury, Trawsfynydd and Sizewell A?

Mr. Parkinson: The CEGB has had the report on Berkeley. It has announced that the station will be closed and will cease to operate from March next year. That is a matter for the CEGB and the NII. The NII is clearly satisfied that it is safe for the station to operate during that period, or it would have withdrawn the licence. The NII has made recommendations about what would need to be done to keep the station working and the CEGB has decided not to spend the money, but the main fact is that the station is safe.

Mr. John Garrett: Will the Minister please come clean about the cost of nuclear safety, the cost of decommissioning the old Magnox stations, which is roughly estimated at £2·5 billion, and the uneconomic cost of nuclear power in general? Is he aware that electricity privatisation will be subject to the Financial Services Act 1986, which makes it a criminal offence to make deliberately or recklessly misleading forecasts to induce shareholders to invest?

Mr. Parkinson: As I am sure the hon. Gentleman knows, it is very hard to put an exact figure on the cost of decommissioning. The process could take up to 100 years. There are three stages. The first is withdrawal of the fuel and the second is the immediate decommissioning. There then is the decision on how long the station will be allowed to be maintained in a secure state so that the natural reduction in radiation can take place, which will make it safer for the workers when the final decommissioning is carried out. Provision is made for each station and is estimated at about £300 million over the period of decommissioning, which could be up to 100 years. I should add that coal—the Opposition's preferred option—is a massively expensive pollutant. If costs could be attached to coal with the same certainty as they are to nuclear energy, coal might look very dubious. Indeed, there is a school of thought that the British electricity user has been subsidising the mining industry to the tune of about £1 billion per year for the past 10 years.

Electricity Industry (Regulator)

2. **Mr. Rost:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he expects to appoint the Regulator to oversee the electricity industry in the private sector.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy (Mr. Michael Spicer): We plan to appoint the Regulator and have his office established by the time the industry has been reorganised for privatisation.

Mr. Rost: Is my hon. Friend aware of the widely held view, especially among prospective independent electricity producers who can provide the competition that the Government want, that the Regulator should be appointed as soon as possible in the transition period so that the contractual arrangements can be monitored in the run-up to privatisation?

Mr. Spicer: We clearly cannot appoint a Regulator until the necessary legislation has passed through Parliament. Until the Regulator is appointed and the regulatory regime is in place, the Government will oversee, or, to use my hon. Friend's word, "monitor", the electricity supply industry's preparation for privatisation. In particular, we shall oversee the negotiations of the initial contracts between distribution boards and the CEGB's successors. We shall not permit practices designed to stifle competition or to prevent distributors from making contracts with new sources of supply.

Mr. Prescott: Will the Minister confirm that the profit rates allowed by the Regulator for privatised electricity will be double those allowed for the public sector, which will confirm the fears of industry and consumer groups that Britain's electricity prices will move from being among the cheapest to becoming among the most expensive in the world? Will he also confirm that the salary of Lord Marshall, chairman of the new privatised company, will treble to £200,000 for managing a company that is 30 per cent. smaller? Will the Regulator be able to consider that exploitation of the consumer?

Mr. Spicer: I cannot confirm either of those questions, the second of which is a figment of the hon. Gentleman's imagination. As to profit regulation, the hon. Gentleman clearly has not seen the procedents for regulatory regimes or what we have written about them, because they will operate, not on profit regulation, but on price regulation.

Coal Industry

3. **Mr. Allen McKay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he has discussed recently with the chairman of British Coal the effects of privatisation of the electricity industry upon the British coal industry.

Mr. Parkinson: I meet the chairman of British Coal regularly to discuss all aspects of the coal industry.

Mr. McKay: Given that the paper sponsored by the *Financial Times*, "Coal on the market", says that the deep mines which could compete in 1995 will be closed in 1990 if the Government encourage a free-for-all in coal imports, given that the International Coal Development Institute has said that nuclear power is never likely to be able to compete with coal-fired power stations, and given British Coal's argument that it will need a 10-year contract after the privatisation of the electricity industry to secure the coal industry's future and the energy future of this country, will the Secretary of State stop considering his long-term political future and consider instead the long-term energy requirements of this country and give British Coal the contract?

Mr. Parkinson: Under this Government more than £9 billion has been invested in the coal industry, £6 billion of which has been in new capital equipment. The Government have shown a commitment to the industry that no previous Labour Government have matched. Our objective is to produce a modern British coal industry that is capable of beating foreign competition, not because it is protected against it, but because it outperforms it. Given our plans for the electricity industry, which envisage a substantial market for coal, and the amount of money invested in the industry to put it in a position to compete, the hon. Gentleman should begin to share my optimism that British Coal has a good future.

Mr. Dickens: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the future of the coal industry is in the hands of the workers? High productivity, flexible working, less time off work and fewer strikes will help the industry to compete with the rest of the world. Other countries are exporting coal to the United Kingdom, and I believe that the workers are beginning to realise that.

Mr. Parkinson: My hon. Friend is correct, and the point is clearly understood by many people who work in the coal industry. For example, the Scottish miners have made it quite clear that they are prepared to adopt flexible working if that is a way to secure their jobs. The Welsh miners have made it quite clear that they want Margam, and they are prepared to adopt flexible working. The only people who appear not to understand the need for better productivity in the mining industry are Opposition Members and some trade union leaders in the industry.

Mr. Eadie: Is this anti-coal Secretary of State aware that there is widespread opposition to freeing private generators to buy coal at the cheapest possible price available—his stated policy—irrespective of whether it damages the British coal industry? Will he tell the House what reply he has made to the warnings of the chairman of British Coal about the policy that the right hon. Gentleman is hell-bent on pursuing?

Mr. Parkinson: During the previous energy Question Time the hon. Gentleman said that the Scottish coal industry was about to close down and that my remark, that I felt that agreement would be reached on a sensible basis, was not true. His assertions have been exposed as completely untrue and ill-founded. His earlier assertions about my approach to the coal industry are equally ill-founded. I believe that British Coal has a future free from the sort of protection and life support systems that the hon. Gentleman appears to believe are its only means of survival.

Piper Alpha Disaster

4. **Mr. Chapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the daily loss of oil and gas volumes as a result of the Piper Alpha disaster; and what proportions of the total United Kingdom production these represent.

Mr. Parkinson: At the time of the disaster the daily oil production of the Piper Alpha platform was 120,000 to 130,000 barrels a day. Some 150,000 therms of gas per day were also produced and sold to British Gas.

Five other fields linked to Piper, producing an additional 180,000 barrels of oil and 350,000 therms of sales of gas per day, are currently shut down, but should be back in production within a few months. The total combined loss in daily production of Piper and those other fields at the time of maximum impact is equivalent to about 12·5 per cent. and 1 per cent. of total United Kingdom production of oil and gas respectively.

Mr. Chapman: I thank my right hon. Friend for giving the House those figures. Does he agree that however serious the disaster is from an economic point of view, it is of paramount importance that the safety of those working on our rigs and winning valuable resources from under the North sea is the main issue, and that nothing must be done to prejudice their safety? Would he like to take this opportunity to comment on whether those figures, serious as they may be, have had a bad impact on our balance of payments, or whether they are not as bad as was first thought?

Mr. Parkinson: I wholeheartedly agree with my hon Friend—I am sure that the whole House does—that safety in the North sea must be of absolutely prime importance.

On my hon. Friend's second point, I read today an estimate that it would cost about £500 million a year to our balance of payments. We regard that as excessive. It is based on the assumption that the fields associated with Piper will remain out of action for the rest of the financial year. We believe that they will be back in action well before then. Our estimate of the impact is something less than £300 million.

Mr. Salmond: Does the Secretary of State accept that the environment and safety provisions in the North sea originated when early production from the North sea was an overwhelming priority? Might it not now be time to review that priority and the safety regimes?

Mr. Parkinson; As the hon. Gentleman knows, a number of different bodies take part in certifying the platforms and safety in the North sea. The independent certification authorities are responsible for the equipment and construction of the rigs; the Department of Transport for the safety arrangements, fire detection and fire fighting; the Civil Aviation Authority for the helicopters; and that under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, which was extended to the North sea in 1977, my Department's inspectorate carries out its duties in the North sea. Therefore, a substantial range of different bodies check different aspects in the North sea. I have set up the inquiry. If the inquiry recommends that things should be done differently, we will accept those recommendations.

Mr. Barry Field: I understand that the advice of my right hon. Friend's Department on the durability of North sea oil supplies featured heavily in the minds of the military planners when establishing the amount of the tonnage required to service this country during time of armed conflict. In view of this dreadful disaster, will my right hon. Friend review that strategic advice.

Mr. Parkinson: I had not planned to do so to date. I hope that my hon. Friend heard my earlier answer, in which I pointed out that, at worst, the loss of production is about 12·5 per cent. of our total oil production and that we expect that figure to fall sharply when the associated fields come back on stream, which we expect to be within a few months.

Mr. Doran: The Secretary of State has already mentioned the public inquiry into the Piper Alpha tragedy. Many of the victims' relatives and survivors will wish to be represented at that public inquiry, which may be important to their compensation claims against whoever is responsible. Bearing in mind the precedents of other public inquiries, will the Secretary of State consider extending legal aid or meeting the costs of that representation for those victims and survivors?

Mr. Parkinson: I cannot commit the Government to doing that at the moment, but I am aware of the other precedents and am giving the matter serious thought.

Mr. Cormack: Is my right hon. Friend aware that his promise to accept the inquiry's recommendations will be reassuring to many people?

Mr. Parkinson: The overwhelming priority is to have a regime in the North sea that is as safe as possible. If the inquiry identifies ways of improving the present regime, of course we will adopt them, because we all have a prime interest in safety.

Acid Rain

5. **Mr. Pike:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what recent representations he has received for additional retrofitting of flue gas desulphurisation equipment at existing power stations to reduce the problems of acid rain.

Mr. Michael Spicer: A few letters have been received by my Department on this and other aspects of acid rain.

Mr. Pike: Does the Minister accept that there is obviously concern in Europe and in certain parts of the United Kingdom about the pollution and acid rain that is caused by our power stations? Is he satisfied with the CEGB's rate of progress in the retro-fitting that has already been agreed? Will he speed that up, and does he agree that there should be more?

Mr. Spicer: We accept that there is some anxiety on this matter in Europe and elsewhere. That is why the Government are committed to agreeing to the EC large combustion plant directive, by which sulphur dioxide emissions will be reduced by 40 per cent. on the 1980 figures by 1998, and by 60 per cent. by 2003. That comes on top of the 40 per cent. reduction since 1970.

Sir Trevor Skeet: Will the cost of the massive regulatory system to be introduced following privatisation be passed to the distribution industry or to the consumers, and not left with the manufacturers of electricity?

Mr. Spicer: The passing on of generating costs is being seriously considered in the context of consultations on regulation. I assure my hon. Friend that we are also seriously considering any discrimination between those which have flue gas desulphurisation and those which do not.

Mr. Barry Jones: May I have an assurance from the Minister that if Connah's Quay power station in my constituency, which is now redundant, were brought back on stream post-privatisation, desulphurisation equipment would be fitted? Does the Minister understand that up to 12 redundant power stations are being considered for use if privatisation goes forward? Does he know on average how much it would cost per power station to fit desulphurisation equipment? We should be told those figures.

Mr. Spicer: The cost per large station of, say, 2,000 MW is about £220 million. The answer to the hon. Gentleman's first question is yes, that would be required. It is a matter for Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution whether smaller stations should be fitted with this equipment.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Is my hon. Friend aware that one coal-fired power station fitted with this equipment will use about 300,000 tonnes of limestone a year and will produce large quantities of sludge which will somehow have to be disposed of? Does he agree that we are solving one problem by creating another and that it would be preferable simply to burn less fossil fuel?

Mr. Spicer: My hon. Friend makes his own point in the last part of his question. His figure of 300,000 tonnes of limestone is correct, but it must be put in context. It is 0·3 per cent. of the United Kingdom's annual production.

Mr. Wigley: In view of the Secretary of State's comments that if the full environmental cost of coal were compared with nuclear electricity the comparison would be very different, is it not incumbent upon the Government to make sure that all the expenditure necessary to minimise acid rain is undertaken so that we do not suffer the environmental consequences that Wales is presently suffering?

Mr. Spicer: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said and I repeat that we are taking major steps to reduce acid rain to 60 per cent. of the 1980 figure by the year 2003.

Nirex

6. **Mr. Simon Coombs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he next expects to meet the chairman of Nirex and what matters he proposes to discuss.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My right hon. Friend and I meet the chairman of Nirex from time to time. We discuss a range of issues.

Mr. Coombs: Is my hon. Friend aware of the widespread natural concern about the eventual location of the low-level waste disposal site? Does he agree that there is a need for Nirex to reach a decision on this matter as soon as it reasonably can? In view of the announcement in the House last week by our right hon. Friend the Secretary of State about the future of the fast breeder reactor at Dounreay, will my hon. Friend now undertake that if Nirex puts before the Department a choice of locations which include Dounreay, he will give favourable consideration to Dounreay on the grounds of the job creation that will result from the location of a low-level site there?

Mr. Spicer: I entirely understand my hon. Friend's view, which, I am sure, is shared by others, that a decision on the disposal of intermediate and low-level waste should be reached as soon as possible. We expect Nirex to report on its conclusions at the turn of the year or early in the new year. Until then it is keeping its options open on all possible disposal sites, including, but not especially,

Dounreay. I cannot give my hon. Friend any further assurances, but we are aware of the need for a speedy resolution of this matter.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: Will the Minister pay special attention to the announcement at the weekend by the vice-chairman of the Highlands and Islands Development Board that the idea of using Dounreay as a base for the dumping of nuclear waste is completely unacceptable? Will the Department of Energy bear in mind that the dumping of low-level and intermediate waste in the Highlands and Islands is greatly resented by people, who see their enduring employment from fishing, agriculture and tourism being adversely affected?

Mr. Spicer: I think that there is some controversy in the area. I understand that Caithness council is quite in favour of deep disposal at Dounreay. I repeat what I said earlier. No decisions have been taken on this matter and all options are being kept open.

Mr. Moss: Will my hon. Friend allay the fears of some of my constituents who are worried about rumours that Nirex intends to bury nuclear waste beneath the sea bed in the Wash? Will he confirm that as yet Nirex has made no decisions, and does he agree that the technology required for sub-sea burial is still unproven?

Mr. Spicer: Deep sub-sea burial is certainly one of the options that Nirex is considering. The second option is burying on land, and the third is burying under the sea from the land.

Mr. Cryer: Will the Minister bear in mind that, among the critics of coal-fired powers stations on the Conservative Benches, there are a number of enthusiasts for nuclear power, led by the hon. Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow)? Will the Minister communicate that information to the chairman of Nirex, so that he can sound them out and they can organise a welcome for the dumping of radioactive waste in every one of the constituencies of the Tory Members who are enthusiasts for nuclear power stations?

Mr. Spicer: I shall certainly ensure that the chairman of Nirex sees a copy of *Hansard*, so that he can read what the hon. Gentleman has said.

Electricity Transmission

8. **Dr. Michael Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what research his Department is sponsoring into the technology of electricity transmission; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My Department does not sponsor any research on the transmission of electricity. The CEGB is currently spending about £4·5 million a year on transmission research.

Dr. Clark: Will the application of new materials to electricity transmission lead to less unsightly pylons in the country, particularly in south-east Essex? Is there any commercial application for the materials that are associated with superconductivity, so that the size of the pylons can be reduced, making them smaller and less obtrusive?

Mr. Spicer: I am not a technical expert on this subject. The new superconducting materials were only discovered in the past 18 months or so. I understand that it is too early to say how they will affect developments in transmission.

Mr. Matthew Taylor: The Minister will be aware that, at present, transmission losses are not passed on in costs for getting electricity down to Cornwall. It is delivered to Indian Queens, and losses are paid for only after that. Can the Minister say whether that will still be the case after privatisation, or whether people in areas such as Cornwall, where there are considerable transmission losses in getting power there, will have to pay extra costs?

Mr. Spicer: I can assure the hon. Gentleman that the transmission costs will be transparent, both for the supergrid and for lower voltages. Everyone will know what the costs are, as will the Regulator when he decides which costs are allowable. That is one of the great advantages of the privatised system. Everyone will know to a far greater extent where he stands.

Mr. Knapman: Can the Minister confirm that the decision to close Berkeley power station, which is in my constituency, was made on financial grounds, and certainly not on safety grounds?

Mr. Spicer: I can confirm that. It was entirely a matter of the CEGB deciding that it would not be commercially sensible to carry out the requirements that the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate had laid down. It was entirely a commercial decision.

British Coal Corporation

7. **Dr. Reid:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he last met the chairman of the British Coal Corporation; and if he will list the subjects discussed.

9. **Mr. Janner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he last met the chairman of British Coal; and what matters were discussed.

10. **Mr. Eadie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he next proposes to meet the chairman of British Coal to discuss matters affecting the coal industry.

17. **Mr. Strang:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he last met the chairman of British Coal; and if he will list the subjects discussed.

Mr. Parkinson: I meet the chairman of British Coal regularly to discuss all aspects of the coal industry.

Mr. Janner: Has the Secretary of State discussed with the chairman of British Coal the rumour that is going around that the Government intend to close seven of the eight coal-powered stations in the Leicestershire, Staffordshire and south Derbyshire coalfields area by the year 2000? Can the Secretary of State confirm that it is intended instead to build coal-fired stations near the coast and to use imported coal? The Secretary of State will understand—if the rumours are correct—just how horrified coal miners, their families and all the people in those areas are.

Mr. Parkinson: I can truthfully tell the hon. and learned Gentleman that that is the first I have ever heard of that suggestion and that it has never been discussed at any time with me.

Mr. Eadie: When the Secretary of State told me last Question Time that an agreement between the SSEB and British Coal was imminent, was he aware that that agreement would last only until March next year? Does he agree that no industry, never mind the coal industry, can plan its operations over such a short period? In the light of his meetings with the chairman of British Coal, can the Secretary of State supply the House with information on the likelihood of British Coal taking the SSEB to court over the Longannet and Cockenzie power stations?

Mr. Parkinson: Last time we had energy questions we were approaching the deadline for agreement between the two parties, and I said that I had reason to believe that they would reach agreement. I hope that they will use the next year to negotiate to put the arrangements between them on to a long-term basis. I made it clear that both my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland and I believed that there was a good future for Scottish coal, especially with the strengthening of the inter-connector, which will open up the English market for Scottish electricity, which has previously been closed to it.

Mr. Eadie: What about the courts?

Mr. Parkinson: On the subject of the courts, the two parties are negotiating. I hope that the question of the interim interdict can be put on one side and that they can focus on reaching long-term agreement.

Mr. Ashby: Will my right hon. Friend congratulate the chairman on the most successful visit that he organised last Friday for my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State and me to opencast sites in my constituency of Leicestershire, North-West? Will my right hon. Friend remind the chairman that there are a large number of areas of dereliction caused by mineral extraction and that it is in those areas, and those areas only, that opencast mining should take place in the next 10 to 15 years?

Mr. Parkinson: I heard from my hon. Friend this morning that he had found the visit extremely interesting. I think we all recognise that there is an important place for opencast coal in meeting our future coal needs. I am sure that the hon. Member for Midlothian (Mr. Eadie), the Opposition Front Bench spokesman who speaks for Scotland on these matters, will share my pleasure that the Northern Ireland Electricity Company has decided that Kilroot will be a coal-burning station and that that coal will be supplied from Ayrshire on a very competitive basis.

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: When my right hon. Friend next speaks to the chairman of British Coal, will he make a point of congratulating the Nottinghamshire miners on turning in an operating profit of £48 million during the past year, as well as on the very steep increases in productivity obtained by those miners during the same period? Will he make it clear that the important point is for the industry single-mindedly to pursue increases in productivity as the best guarantee of competitiveness and the long-term future of the industry, regardless of whether it is in the public or the private sector?

Mr. Parkinson: I shall draw my hon. Friend's remarks to the chairman's attention. I repeat that this point is recognised increasingly throughout the industry. In the past 12 weeks, six successive productivity records have been achieved, so the men working in the industry recognise that their future is literally in their hands.

Mr. Redmond: Does the Secretary of State agree that British Coal pensioners who helped produce coal to meet the needs of the country during two world wars—with blood, sweat and tears—receive a smokeless fuel allowance that is totally inadequate? When he next meets the chairman of the Coal Board, will he ask for an increase for those pensioners and widows?

Mr. Parkinson: I confess that I have not come across that point before. I shall examine the matter and bring it to the attention of the chairman.

Offshore Installations

11. **Mr. Hanley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will explain the detailed procedures used to ensure that offshore installations are properly designed and maintained.

The Minister of State, Department of Energy (Mr. Peter Morrison): Every installation in our offshore waters must be in possession of a valid certificate of fitness. To obtain that, the owner submits to one of the independent certifying authorities information to enable an assessment of the design to be carried out. The certifying authority is required to carry out a major survey of the installation and its equipment before a certificate of fitness, which is valid for up to five years, can be issued. The authority must also carry out an annual survey.

Every offshore installation and its equipment is required, under current regulations, to be properly maintained.

Mr. Hanley: Clearly, each of the steps that my right hon. Friend has set out is vital in trying to maintain safety. Can he tell the House when the technical investigation that he has set in motion over Piper Alpha is likely to be completed?

Mr. Morrison: The technical investigation began almost immediately after we had announced it, which was shortly after the disaster. A lot of work has already been done and a number of people—about 90—have been interviewed. However, it must be said that some of the evidence is at the bottom of the seabed, and hence that will dictate the speed at which the investigation can proceed. However, it is the intention of those conducting that investigation to proceed as fast as they practicably can.

Mr. Prescott: The Secretary of State has said that safety is the first priority in the North sea. Can the right hon. Gentleman explain why the Department's report into the 1984 explosion on the Piper Alpha rig is now to be made available to the inquiry, but not available to those who have worked on that rig since 1984? What action is he now taking to reverse the decision to withdraw funds from the Institute of Oceanographic Sciences, which is a world authority on wave effects and oil rig and metal fatigue, the study of which are essential to safety in the North sea?

Mr. Morrison: The hon. Gentleman has heard on many occasions that the 1984 report will be made available to Lord Cullen. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I said the same when we met the trade unions. It will be for Lord Cullen to decide whether to publish it, but my

right hon. Friend has written to him to make the points that the trade union delegation—which approached the matter in a constructive manner last week—made to my right hon. Friend and myself. The hon. Gentleman will appreciate that the Institute of Oceanographic Sciences is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science.

THE ARTS

Business Spending

46. **Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** To ask the Minister for the Arts, if he will make a statement on the progress of his policy to promote business spending on the arts.

The Minister for the Arts (Mr. Richard Luce): I was glad to participate in the launch of the business in the arts scheme by the Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts last week. I shall be supporting it with £25,000 for each of the first two years. It joins the already successful business sponsorship incentive scheme in promoting business spending and practical help for the arts.

Mrs. Bottomley: As a member of the Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts, I welcome my right hon. Friend's new initiative and his encouragement of partnership between business and the arts, which has led to the development of high-quality art. Will my right hon. Friend outline the objectives of the new scheme? What steps will he take to spread further information about it?

Mr. Luce: I am grateful to my hon. Friend, who has continued to give encouragement to business support for the arts. The purpose of the scheme, which is organised independently by the Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts, is to complement and supplement sponsorship and donations from business to the arts by giving practical support by the provision of expertise, which many businesses in the arts world and arts organisations will welcome most warmly, the loan of people with particular expertise in specific areas, and generally to help to provide training for people in the arts world in the organisation of their businesses. I am glad to say that eight businesses have come in as sponsors, and I have made a Government contribution to this exercise.

Mr. Robert Sheldon: I welcome any business spending on the arts, but will the right hon. Gentleman consider the reverse aspect—business-spoilation of the arts? I am referring to the sale of the Lyceum theatre, which is a disgraceful business. Will the Minister ensure that he investigates this matter thoroughly with a view to ending this shameful episode in the history of the Lyceum and gets it restored as a proper theatre in London?

Mr. Luce: I welcome the fact that the right hon. Gentleman supports more business spending and support for the arts world. I understand the concern and anxieties that have been expressed by many people in the London arts world about the future use of the Lyceum theatre. It is, of course, principally the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment, with whom I am presently in touch. The right hon. Gentleman will be aware that this is a complex problem and that it is not straightforward. There are certain obligations that the residuary body must discharge to the London ratepayers. Nevertheless, I am keeping a close interest in this matter.

Mr. Jessel: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the 50-fold increase in business sponsorship of the arts from £600,000 in 1976 to £30 million in 1987 is a tremendous success story, which has benefited audiences, artists and sponsors alike?

Mr. Luce: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. It is interesting to note that the business sponsorship incentive scheme has now generated, as a result of the awards that we shall announce this week, £20 million of additional money for the arts. We now have 770 first-time sponsors as a result of the scheme and all the evidence suggests that the vast majority of those sponsors wish to support the arts for a long time.

Mr. Fisher: Returning to the question asked by my right hon. Friend the Member for Ashton-under-Lyne (Mr. Sheldon), why has the Minister for the Arts not spoken out about the Lyceum before? Everyone else has —the Arts Council, the Theatres Trust—but there has been a deafening silence from the Minister on this subject. Will he now approach the London Residuary Body and his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment and urge them to do what they have the power to do and use their discretion to consider some of the other bids, which would preserve this great theatre as a theatre?

Mr. Luce: I have, of course, retained an interest in this problem, but, as I have already told the House, it is not my direct responsibility. It is the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment. He has certain obligations, and so does the London Residuary Body. Those obligations are laid down and clearly stated. My right hon. Friend has obligations towards the ratepayers of London. All these factors must be taken into account. I made my position clear in answer to the earlier question.

Mr. Cormack: Is my right hon. Friend aware that his sympathy, which was evident in his reply to the last question and to that of the right hon. Member for Ashton-under-Lyne (Mr. Sheldon), will be much appreciated? I express the hope that he will be able to persuade our right hon. Friend that the theatre should be saved.

Mr. Luce: I am grateful to my hon. Friend, who retains a close interest in all these subjects. I should remind him and the House that this is not a straightforward issue. There are many complex aspects to it. As I understand it, an appeal is pending with regard to whether Mecca will continue to have responsibility for the Lyceum. All these factors must be taken into account.

Merseyside Arts

47. **Mr. Wareing:** To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will call for an urgent report from the Arts Council on the funds allocated to Merseyside Arts.

Mr. Luce: I see no reason to intervene in this way between the Arts Council and Merseyside Arts.

Mr. Wareing: I am sure that all who are engaged in the arts in Merseyside will be saddened by that answer. I hope that the Minister will review it. Is he aware that over the next three years there will be an estimated reduction of 7½ per cent. in the income that Merseyside Arts receives from

the Arts Council? Taking into account the slashing of local government grants from central Government, which makes it difficult for local government to make up the difference, and the abolition of the community programme, which affects many people in the arts on Merseyside, Merseyside Arts will be in for real touble. Does the right hon. Gentleman not realise that, in an area of declining resources, his answer will come as a blow?

Mr. Luce: Merseyside Arts will receive £1,100,000 worth of resources from the Arts Council. It is for the Arts Council to decide how it distributes its resources between the various regional organisations. Merseyside Arts is fourth highest per capita in terms of the amount of resources that it receives. The hon. Gentleman, who is interested in these things in Liverpool, will realise that additional resources are earmarked through the Arts Council to help all the regions of this country. They include incentive funding and extra help for touring. I hope that the Merseyside area will benefit from that.

Mr. Rathbone: In the context of the arts on Merseyside, will the Minister take this opportunity to welcome the opening of the Tate of the North in Liverpool, which is a magnificent extension of the Tate's activities, which are already well established in London?

Mr. Luce: I warmly respond to what my hon. Friend has said. This is a good example of how, by spreading our national activities outside London, we bring advantage to many parts of the country. The Tate of the North, and the vast range of other arts facilities in Liverpool and Merseyside, show the enormous scope that exists for the authorities in Liverpool to exploit this opportunity and attract more tourists, thereby earning more money for the arts organisations.

Mr. Speaker: I call Question No. 51.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: What about Question No. 48, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker: I saw the hon. Gentleman in his place, but I had notification that he had withdrawn this question. I believe that that was the Minister's impression, too.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I do not know what your Office was told, Mr. Speaker, but I have not withdrawn it.

Mr. Speaker: If that is so, perhaps the Minister would agree to answer Question No. 48.

National Theatre

48. **Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will establish an inquiry into production costs at the National Theatre.

Mr. Luce: The Arts Council evaluates the work of its clients on a regular basis, and I see no need to intervene. Assessments take account of all aspects of the National Theatre's performance—artistic, financial and managerial.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: If the costs of the National Theatre are escalating and its grant is cut, as it was in real terms this year, how can it afford to pay proper wages and salaries to all its employees? Will the Minister ensure that next year the National Theatre is given enough grant to ensure that those people are properly remunerated?

Mr. Luce: For the first time in its history the National Theatre is entitled to make arrangements with the Arts Council for three-year funding, which gives it a solid base upon which to plan in the long term. It has excellent management, an excellent artistic director, an excellent administrator and an excellent board, which has authority over the progress of the theatre. They are doing their best to raise resources, not just from Government, but from the private sector. The more they can do that, the more they will strengthen their affairs in the long term. In addition, they are entitled to incentive funding, if they qualify, and to extra funds for touring the country, which should bring benefits to them as well as to the regions.

Donations

51. **Mr. David Martin:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what information he has about donations to the arts from private or corporate sources in excess of £1 million in the six months to the end of June.

Mr. Luce: I am extremely grateful to all benefactors of the arts. I shall circulate a list in the *Official Report*.

Mr. Martin: Will my hon. Friend confirm that in the past month there have been four donations of more than £1 million each? Does it not show that interest and investment in this form of funding for the arts is thriving?

Mr. Luce: My hon. Friend is right. In one week in early July alone the arts received £7 million of support by way of donations or sponsorship. That is a clear demonstration of the amount of support and help that goes to the arts——

Mr. Allen: It is a pity that that money did not go to the CTCs.

Mr. Luce: It would be very good news if Opposition Members would welcome the process and encourage those who wish to help the arts.

Following is the list:

Table showing sponsorships of and donations to the arts in excess of £1 million since January 1988

Organisation	*Donor*	*Amount*	*Date of announcement*	*Purpose*
South Bank Programme	British and Commonwealth Holdings (sponsorship)	£1 million (over 5 years)	January 1988	Music
Tate Gallery	Anonymous	US$6·5 million	20 June 1988	To set up American Fund for Tate Gallery
National Gallery	Mr. Walter Annenberg, KBE	£2·85 million	22 June 1988	Restoration of Impressionist and post-Impressionist rooms

Organisation	Donor	Amount	Date of announcement	Purpose
Victoria and Albert Museum	Mr. T. T. Tsui	£1·25 million	20 June 1988	To create new gallery of Chinese Art and Design
BAFTA	Shell (sponsorship)	£3 million	12 July 1988	Various projects

CIVIL SERVICE

Parliamentary Answers

71. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service if, pursuant to his reply of 4 July, *Official Report*, column *730*, he will make it his policy, when answering a parliamentary question to the effect that he has nothing to add to previous replies, to indicate the precise *Hansard* reference for the answer or answers which provide the information requested.

The Minister of State, Privy Council Office (Mr. Richard Luce): I shall continue to abide by the conventions of the House.

Mr. Dalyell: Instead of pretending that questions on Westland have been answered, when they certainly have not, would it not be better for our country, and helpful from the point of view of the Commissioner going to Europe, if Ministers finally admitted that at column 657 on 27 January 1986 the Prime Minister caused much of this trouble by telling an indispensable lie to the House of Commons?

Mr. Speaker: Order. I ask the hon. Gentleman to withdraw that allegation about the Prime Minister.

Mr. Dalyell: I believe that there is cynical corruption involved in this——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I ask the hon. Gentleman to withdraw those words.

Mr. Dalyell: The words were extremely carefully chosen——

Mr. Speaker: Order. If the hon. Gentleman does not obey the Chair I shall be forced to name him, and I should be very reluctant to do that. I give him the opportunity to withdraw the allegation that the Prime Minister lied to the House.

Mr. Dalyell: The truth of the matter is that Parliament has been insulted——

Mr. Speaker: Order. If the hon. Gentleman is not prepared to withdraw those words, I shall be forced to name him. I give him one final chance.

Mr. Dalyell: I do not wish to embarrass you, Mr. Speaker. I am not asking for a final chance. I would not have said those words unless I meant them——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I name Mr. Tam Dalyell.

The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Wakeham): I beg to move,

That Mr. Tam Dalyell be suspended from the service of the House.

Question put:—

The House divided: Ayes 180, Noes 28.

Division No. 440] **[3.24 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Carrington, Matthew
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Cormack, Patrick
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dicks, Terry
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Durant, Tony
Emery, Sir Peter
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fishburn, Dudley
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forth, Eric
Foster, Derek
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Golding, Mrs Llin
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gow, Ian
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Knapman, Roger
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Latham, Michael
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lightbown, David
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
McCrindle, Robert
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
McLoughlin, Patrick
Madel, David
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Miller, Sir Hal
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Sir Charles
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Page, Richard
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil

Patnick, Irvine
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Spearing, Nigel
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stokes, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thorne, Neil
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilshire, David
Wood, Timothy

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. David Maclean and
Mr. Kenneth Carlisle.

NOES

Allen, Graham
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Buchan, Norman
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Flannery, Martin
Galloway, George
Heffer, Eric S.
Hinchliffe, David
Janner, Greville
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
McAllion, John
Madden, Max
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Redmond, Martin
Salmond, Alex
Skinner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Bob Cryer and
Mr. Bill Michie.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have to direct the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) to withdraw in compliance with the order which the House has just made.

Mr. Dalyell: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. I ask the House to allow me to deal with the matter. I have said to the hon. Member that he must now withdraw from the House, otherwise I shall have to take the next step.

Mr. Allen: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Member for Linlithgow must withdraw from the House first.

Mr. Dalyell: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have said to the hon. Gentleman that he must now immediately withdraw from the House. The hon. Gentleman has been suspended from the service of the House. I am not going to give the hon. Gentleman a further chance on this matter. I must say to him that if I have to ask the Serjeant at Arms to lay a finger upon him, he will be suspended for the rest of this Session. That is a very serious step for me to take.

Mr. Dalyell *rose——*

Mr. Speaker: Order. I must say to the hon. Gentleman that he must now leave at once, please.

The hon. Member withdrew.

Mr. Allen: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. At what point does the authority of the Chair come into play when Ministers, after one year or two years, continually refuse to answer questions directly? Is it not your role, Mr. Speaker——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The whole House knows that that has absolutely nothing to do with me.

Mr. Allen *rose——*

Mr. Speaker: Order. What I asked the hon. Member to do was to withdraw an unparliamentary phrase, which I would ask any hon. Member on either side of the House to do if he used it. The hon. Member was named for refusing to obey the Chair.

Mr. Allen *rose——*

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am not taking any further points of order on this matter.

Civil Service Agencies

The following question stood upon the Paper:

76. **Mr. Robert G. Hughes:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service what progress has been made in setting up the new Civil Service agencies.

3.37 pm

The Minister of State, Privy Council Office (Mr. Richard Luce): As I told my hon. Friend the Member for Wokingham (Mr. Redwood) earlier today, we have now identified 29 activities, covering some 170,000 civil servants, which are immediate agency candidates. One of these was, as my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport, told the House earlier today, the vehicle inspectorate, which will be established as an agency from 1 August. The project manager is examining with Departments the rest of their activities, and I hope to make a report to the House later this year.

Mr. Hughes: Does my right hon. Friend accept that his statement will be very welcome to those of us who believe that these measures will improve the delivery of service in many areas, particularly the areas that have been announced today? Will he confirm that it is important that those services should be free to act in a commercial sense and that he should get on with the process as quickly as possible? When does he hope to be able to announce further services that will be put out in that way?

Mr. Luce: I am most grateful to my hon. Friend. Of course, the whole purpose of the exercise in devolution of responsibility within the Civil Service for the executive functions is to improve the delivery of Government services, to improve management still further than the already high standards and to get the best value for money. That can best be achieved by this objective. My hon. Friend will see that the framework agreement for the vehicle inspectorate is extremely thorough and very long and highlights a number of areas where there is substantial devolution of authority. That is very important indeed.

On the latter part of my hon. Friend's question, I can assure him that we are intending to make as rapid progress as we can. I have now identified three other areas which we expect to become agencies soon—the Companies Registration Office, the DHSS resettlement units and the employment services.

Mr. John Garrett (Norwich, South): Will the Minister confirm that his officials are saying that up to three quarters of the entire Civil Service will be subjected to the agency arrangements, including DHSS local offices? How is he responding to the misgivings of the Treasury, publicly expressed, about the different pay rates for different agencies, and the misgivings of many hon. Members that under agency arrangements we shall no longer be able to call civil servants to account, particularly for some sensitive areas of public policy, such as the social fund?

Mr. Luce: The hon. Gentleman poses a number of questions. First, the project manager did state in evidence to the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee that he felt that within 10 years at least three quarters of the Civil Service could have agency status established. I see no reason to quarrel with that figure. On the hon. Gentleman's second question, the DHSS, at the request of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services, is being examined as a possible candidate for agency status. Thirdly, the hon. Gentleman will know that, through my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, we are already developing a more flexible pay policy on recruitment and retention grounds. That is already evolving, irrespective of the agencies. The vehicle inspectorate document, which is fully published, shows that there is considerable devolution of responsibility. On accountability, at the end of the day the Ministers concerned are accountable to the House and that principle must remain firmly established.

Mr. Terence Higgins (Worthing): Is my right hon. Friend aware that the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee has now taken a great deal of evidence on the subject and hopes to report soon? Clearly, I cannot anticipate what the report may say. On a personal basis, may I say that the selection of the vehicle inspectorate as an example seems to be an appropriate one.

Mr. Luce: I am grateful to my right hon. Friend. When he publishes the report by the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee, I can assure him that I and my right hon. Friends will study the findings carefully.

Mr. Giles Radice (Durham, North): Is it not the case that if there is to be such a dramatic change by the end of 10 years, it will have profound implications for democratic and parliamentary accountability, particularly for the role of Ministers, Members of Parliament, Select Committees and the Public Accounts Committee?

Mr. Luce: I know that the hon. Gentleman is taking a close interest in the matter in his role as a member of the Select Committee. I must strongly reiterate that Ministers will remain ultimately accountable. The nature of the responsibility between the Secretary of State for broad policy matters and the chief executive for day-to-day management matters has to be spelt out clearly in the framework document. That is clear in the document available for the vehicle inspectorate. At the end of the day, Ministers are accountable but it is open to Select Committees to invite the chief executive and other officials to give evidence to them.

Mr. Michael Heseltine (Henley): I welcome my right hon. Friend's statement, but does he agree that the heart of enhanced responsibility in the management of such agencies is that the managers should be recruited from the public and private sectors, that they should be recruited on contract and not on life terms and that, as long as the Treasury has control over the pay and conditions of the employees of the agencies, the concept of responsibility at which my right hon. Friend is driving still has a long way to go?

Mr. Luce: I respect my right hon. Friend's view, since he has had considerable experience in the subject and did a great deal during his time in office to help improve the management and resources of the Civil Service. I can confirm that, on the recruitment of chief executives and other officials, it is open to Secretaries of State in charge of the particular agency to recruit from outside the Civil Service if they so wish. If they think that it is more efficient that way they are entitled to do so, provided that there is fair and open competition. I agree entirely with my right hon. Friend that there are definitely advantages in having

[Mr. Luce]

fixed contracts in certain circumstances. That is what has happened for the vehicle inspectorate, where there is a three-year contract.

As for the Treasury and my right hon. Friend the Chancellor, if my right hon. Friend looks at the framework agreement for the vehicle inspectorate, he will see the extent of devolution of responsibility that has already been provided for the management of personnel, for resources and for the giving of performance-related pay, which is extremely important. It must be in the interests of the Treasury as well as that of the Government to obtain better value for money. That is the point of the agency process. It is in all our interests that it should succeed.

Mr. Robert Sheldon (Ashton-under-Lyne): All hon. Members will agree that we want value for money in all respects in these matters. Will the right hon. Gentleman accept that accountability to Parliament is the crucial test? The Prime Minister said that the agencies will be accountable to Parliament. The right hon. Gentleman's comments seem to have gone a little astray from the Prime Minister's remarks. Will he give a further assurance that accountability to the Public Accounts Committee, to the National Audit Office and to the Comptroller and Auditor General will remain unchanged?

Mr. Luce: I can give that assurance to the right hon. Gentleman without any equivocation. There is no doubt about it.

Sir Peter Blaker (Blackpool, South): Will the agencies have power to relocate staff outside London and the south-east of England, in so far as they are not already relocated, if relocation is considered desirable to save costs, for example?

Mr. Luce: I know of my right hon. Friend's interest in the matter. He may have noticed that my right hon. Friend the Paymaster General recently made a statement about the relocation of the Civil Service. Four out of five civil servants are already outside London. In terms of recruitment and retention, if Departments find it more beneficial to move civil servants to other regions, they will look seriously at the matter, and it should be regarded as a high priority.

Mr. Harry Barnes (Derbyshire, North-East): Have there been full, free and frank discussions with the relevant Civil Service trade unions about this agency in the vehicle inspectorate? The matter should be discussed with the three other agencies that were referred to, and the 25 agencies that will follow.

Mr. Luce: I can give the hon. Gentleman an assurance that, in any case, if there is to be a suggested change in the terms and conditions of the Civil Service, there will be full and proper consultations with the Civil Service. The hon. Gentleman might like to know that, last Friday, the project manager for the next steps, Mr. Kemp, saw the trade unions to consult them about the next stages.

Mr. Nicholas Soames (Crawley): Does my right hon. Friend agree that, as in the rest of the Civil Service, many benefits would accrue to the agencies were there to be a great more fluency in the coming and going between the public and private sectors? As my right hon. Friend has already given an assurance in respect of new agencies, will he seek broadly throughout the Civil Service to have many more civil servants having experience in the private sector and vice versa?

Mr. Luce: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. We are looking at ways in which we can strengthen the interchange between the private sector and the Civil Service, not just by secondments but by other means. The establishment of these agencies will do quite a lot to strengthen that process. As I said earlier, we certainly will not exclude the possibility of chief executives being part of that process.

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): Will the Minister confirm that he does not propose full privatisation but an agency because of opposition to privatisation from the road haulage industry? Will he confirm that all trade unions representing the appropriate staff have been fully consulted? Are we to take it that "a more flexible pay policy" is a euphemism for the ending of nationally agreed pay rates?

Mr. Luce: The Government's policy on privatisation has not changed as a result of the "next steps" policy. If a Minister decides that a particular function of his Department would be better carried out by means of privatisation, that must be his first priority. It is only when that is decided as not being the best process and the best next stage that an agency may be decided upon as the best move to strengthen the management of services. I simply reiterate that we have undertaken to consult trade unions whenever there are any proposed changes in terms and conditions. The project manager saw trade union leaders last Friday to talk about the next stages.

Mr. Peter Thurnham (Bolton, North-East): Does my right hon. Friend agree that service to the public should be much improved if the Companies Registration Office were put on an agency basis? Is he aware of the long delays at present? On average they are 10 weeks, and, in the case of some Barlow Clowes documents, over 200 days.

Mr. Luce: It will be for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in due course to announce the timing, if he eventually decides to establish an agency, and how he envisages an improvement in services. My hon. Friend is right to stress the importance of the improved delivery of services. That is one of the major objectives of this exercise. It is interesting that, earlier today, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport highlighted some examples of how the services of the vehicle inspectorate can be improved.

Dr. John Marek (Wrexham): Will the Minister confirm that standards of testing will be maintained in the long term, following the setting up of the agency? Secondly, will he confirm that the road haulage industry opposed privatisation due to escalating costs and therefore that the agency is not a first step towards privatisation? What guarantees can the Minister give staff wishing to transfer to or from the agency in the future? Finally, when the Minster refers to flexible pay, many of us assume that he means lower pay for people in the north, Scotland and Wales. Can he deny that?

Mr. Luce: The first two questions are principally for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport, but my right hon. Friend is happy for me to stress that, with

regard to the vehicle inspectorate, the safety interest will remain paramount. It is important to confirm that. I also confirm that my right hon. Friend has no plans whatever to take the matter a stage further to privatisation. His first and immediate priority is the establishment of an agency.

Hospital Patients (Radiation Overdose)

3.51 pm

Mr. John Hannam (Exeter) *(by private notice)*: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on the radiation overdose given to patients receiving radiotherapy at the Royal Devon and Exeter hospital, Exeter.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mrs. Edwina Currie): The telecobalt machine at the Royal Devon and Exeter hospital was installed some years ago and is of a type commonly in use in the National Health Service to treat cancer patients. On 12 February 1988, a new cobalt source was installed as part of a routine service. Due to an error of calibration, the machine was then set to give a 25 per cent. higher dose of radiation. On 12 July 1988, staff dealing with patients drew attention to side effects in a small number of patients and the machine was checked. The error was immediately found and rectified. The machine is not itself faulty and continues in use.

Immediate steps were taken to identify the 153 patients who had been treated on the machine during this period. An independent assessor, Professor Charles Joslin of Leeds university, has been asked to give an opinion on each case. All the patients concerned are being called in this week and treated or counselled as necessary.

Exeter health authority has set up an inquiry drawing on the expertise of Professor Joslin, and an independent physicist called in at the authority's regional scientific officer, and the Health and Safety Executive. Their reports are expected to go to the health authority as soon as possible. I am satisfied that appropriate action has been taken and that patients should continue to have confidence in radiotherapy as a major lifesaving treatment both in Exeter and elsewhere.

Mr. Hannam: I and all hon. Members express sympathy to those facing terrible uncertainty as a result of this unfortunate error. Is my hon. Friend aware that there is great concern about the lack of a fail-safe check-up system for the recalibration of radiotherapy equipment? Should not the Health and Safety Executive give a clear specification of the requirements for such checks and the responsibility for such a system be placed on the health authority?

Finally, can my hon. Friend say to what extent the excess doses of radiation given to patients fell within the range of normal treatment practice elsewhere by other clinicians?

Mrs. Currie: On the last question, I am sure that my hon. Friend would not wish me to give a clinical view which might reflect on particular patients, but I am assured that much of what he has said is correct.

With regard to a fail-safe device, guidelines for inspections are set out in two sets of statutory regulations, both of which are accompanied by detailed guidance which builds on earlier similar guidance. I refer my hon. Friend to paragraph 7.22 of the guidance, which does not appear to have been followed in its entirety. We expect the Exeter inquiry to address this issue and I have asked the Health and Safety Executive to advise me further.

Mr. Matthew Taylor (Truro): Will the Under-Secretary of State confirm that all patients have been or will be contacted successfully and that there is no problem in identifying all concerned in this instance? Will she also confirm that all other machines which might be subject to similar errors will be checked and all steps taken to ensure that no such overdoses are taking place elsewhere and that none will occur in the future?

Mrs. Currie: Yes, we are not in any doubt about the nature of the error, the date on which it occurred or its duration. There is no doubt which patients have been affected, and they either have been or are being contacted. As to the second part of the hon. Gentleman's question, the output of the machines should be checked monthly, which is normal practice in National Health Service hospitals. I have asked the Health and Safety Executive to advise me further on the matter.

Sir Peter Emery (Honiton): Will my hon. Friend accept that, while there is much concern about the matter, everybody in the locality has much praise for the work that the Royal Devon and Exeter hospital does? When 153 patients are involved, some of whom are young children, there is much concern. How is the division between clinical control and executive management supervision affected? It seems that a clinical decision was taken but that it was very difficult for the executive management to spot the problem.

Will my hon. Friend confirm that there will be an independent chairman of the inquiry? It has been suggested that the deputy chairman of Exeter health authority might be appointed. That would be a mistake, because somebody from outside Devon should be appointed to ensure that nothing is being hidden. Why has there been a delay of over 10 days from 12 July to date? Patients should have been notified; many of them learned about the problem only because of television. That must be a terrifying factor, that should never be allowed to happen again.

Mrs. Currie: Yes, I agree with much of what my hon. Friend says. I concur with my hon. Friend that radiotherapy machines save lives. There is no doubt that, had patients not been treated on them, the condition from which they were suffering could have been terminal. I understand that the equipment is the responsibility of the physicists, and that advice from an outside adviser who is a physicist has been called for by the health authority. As to the question of an independent chairman, the health authority has called immediately for an inquiry, and it is appropriate that the inquiry should be conducted within that framework. I have said that I expect the inquiry, through the regional health authority, to report to me with its recommendations.

As to the delay in notifying patients, I understand that the intention was first to obtain a judgment on cases, if at all possible, so that the patients could be reassured or offered further treatment if necessary. In my view—I think that my hon. Friend will share this view—notifying patients where there is cause for concern should be a top priority. I have asked my officials to advise me urgently on a possible standard procedure that we could offer to all health authorities, bearing in mind that patients should have as much information as possible to set their anxieties at rest. Patients should not hear about the problem from the press first.

Mr. Robin Maxwell-Hyslop (Tiverton): Can my hon. Friend tell me whether Professor Joslin's report will be published and when she is expecting that it will be available to hon. Members as well as to the public at large and, indeed, to the general practitioners who referred the patients to the Royal Devon and Exeter hospital in the first place, because they will obviously have the more intimate and day-to-day contact with the patients?

Mrs. Currie: I am advised that Professor Joslin is offering detailed clinical guidance, case by case, on all 153 patients treated by the machine. It would almost certainly not be appropriate for that information, which is confidential, to be published. He will, however, be making a report, as requested, to the health authority, and I expect it then to take a view about whether a summary of it may be made available. We certainly intend to learn from all the lessons.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I remind those Opposition Members who were rising that this matter specifically refers to the Royal Devon and Exeter hospital. I shall call the hon. and learned Member for Leicester, West (Mr. Janner), but it is not about Leicester.

Mr. Greville Janner (Leicester, West): No, Mr. Speaker, but it could be.

Has the Minister taken legal advice as to whether or not a prosecution would be permitted of the Royal Devon and Exeter hospital, or any other where such a hazard has been caused not only to people at work but to those who are affected by its undertaking? If such a move were excluded by Crown immunity, it is not time that the rule was changed?

Mrs. Currie: It is far too early to answer questions such as that, as the hon. Gentleman, who is a lawyer, knows perfectly well. Responsibility for the safety of this type of equipment both for patients and for staff lies with the Health and Safety Executive in the first instance. I have asked it to check that the guidance which says that the equipment should be checked monthly is being followed and to advise me whether any further action is necessary.

Miss Emma Nicholson (Torridge and Devon, West): On Saturday, I had an opportunity to see some of my constituents, who are patients affected by the higher than anticipated doses of radiation. They have asked me to convey to the Minister their genuine confidence in the work of the consultant and the hospital technicians, and their extreme confidence that ameliorative action will be taken. Although this incident has added to their anxiety about their disease treatment, they are comfortable with the action that is now being taken.

Mrs. Currie: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. That is certainly the message that I have had, too. Many of the patients being cared for in this way were receiving palliative treatment—in other words, low dosages anyway —which was designed to make them more comfortable. I understand that a number of the other patients were taking part in a trial of low dosage treatment and, therefore, my anxieties are somewhat relieved.

Mr. Ron Leighton (Newham, North-East): Will the Minister deal with the advisability of having a chairman for the inquiry from outside that health authority?

Mrs. Currie: Our procedure, which we have followed on previous occasions when there has been any cause for concern, is to ask the health authority to carry out an inquiry. In this case, the health authority has already decided to do so and we will wait to see what it proposes to do and whether any action is necessary.

Mr. Tony Speller (Devon, North): I must own that the tenor of the impressions given by my hon. Friends suggests that a bucket of whitewash is adjacent already. I wish to speak for one constituent who had a course of treatment during May. At that time she was told, "No, you never get burned by this treatment." She was burned to the extent of needing in-patient treatment in the South Molton hospital. At that stage, someone should have said, "If people are not normally burned, why has this woman been burned?"

I must state that, at 2.30 this afternoon, this lady had not had any notification since the health authority discovered the problem a fortnight ago. I am glad that the press got hold of this leak some time after the authority discovered the problem. What happened was that this lady heard about the too high dosages of radiation on the radio. She then telephoned the hotline number. She was told, "If you have not heard, you are not concerned." She therefore relaxed. The next day, on the television, she saw a picture of the apparatus, which she recognised, so she telephoned again. She was told, "Yes, you are concerned." Just imagine the feeling of this poor person.

Mr. Speaker: Briefly, please.

Mr. Speller: This is an important matter, at least to us locally. Quite frankly, the surgeon or the chap who appeared on the television gave what can only be described as a flip collection of answers, including such answers as, "Some people have asked for higher dosages because they get better quicker." There is a whiff of scandal here, which I hope we shall not try to cover up.

Mrs. Currie: I hear what my hon. Friend has said, and he knows me well enough to be aware that there is never any whitewash around when I am in charge of something. As I said a moment ago, it is my firm view that patients should be contacted with as much information as possible, and as soon as possible. I understand why that was not done in the case of the Exeter health authority—it has been trying hard to get a proper clinical view for each patient before they are contacted. That is a reasonable thing to try to do, but in the circumstances I hope it will ensure, and indeed that we can develop procedures in future to ensure, that patients are well informed in advance.

I cannot comment further on the clinical advice that my hon. Friend's constituent was given, except to say that it is quite normal to have mild side effects from treatment of this sort. If it is to cure the cancer, it sometimes causes other damage as well.

Ms. Harriet Harman (Peckham): Does the hon. Lady recognise that people are worried not just because a mistake of this nature was made, but that it remained undetected for so long? Will she ensure that all hospitals follow the good practice that is followed in some—and which is not in the regulations—which is that machines are checked on the basis of output rather than simply by calculating what the machine should be sending out? That check should be made every month and should be made by two physicists.

As the district health authority has admitted liability, will the hon. Lady ensure that compensation for suffering and anxiety is speedily assessed and paid? Will she tell the House how long ago the machine in question was installed?

Mrs. Currie: In connection with the last question, I cannot answer in detail, but I know that the machine has been in use for some time. It has been in use in Exeter for a number of years. The answer to the first question is yes.

The answer to the second question is yes, and I shall simply read into the record paragraph 7.22 of the guidance which goes out with the statutory regulations. It says:

> "A qualified and experienced radiation physicist should be made responsible for ensuring that all gamma and beta-ray apparatus is checked for correct operation and applicability of the output data in use, at least once every month".

That has been the guidance for a very long time and we would expect the health authority to know about it.

In answer to the third question about compensation, I think our first job is to look after patients' health and we can concern ourselves with other issues, if necessary, later.

European Commission (Appointments)

4.5 pm

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the appointments by Her Majesty's Government to the Commission of the European Economic Community."

The matter is specific, as these appointments are the responsibility of a Minister of the Crown and specified under a treaty to which both Government and Parliament are currently subject. They therefore arise not from prerogative powers, but from obligations specifically entered into by the House by Act of Parliament.

The appointments are of great public importance as the holders of those offices are thought to have significant powers and influence over the nature and range of legislation that can be applied indirectly to both people and Government of the United Kingdom—even, on occasion, against their express desires. It thus follows that the procedures relating to such appointments, the role of the Commissioners, the proven record of public service and the qualities of the person so nominated, transcend the normal practices relating to domestic appointments. Until recently, that principle appears to have been recognised by successive Governments, but it is now in doubt.

In addition, in respect of one of the nominees, there have been press and other reports relating to the fourth report of the Defence Select Committee, House of Commons paper for the 1985-86 Session, which in paragraph 177 referred to conduct which was "especially reprehensible", and in paragraph 179 to

"an outrageous way in which to treat a Law Officer of the Crown".

The matter is urgent because, while no formal decision on the Adjournment of the House had yet been made, the time available for debate on the matter is likely to be limited to two or three days, within which both the probability and form of debate by other means are not assured when weighed against the importance of the topic.

As the guardian of the role of the House of Commons, Mr. Speaker, you are thus instructed to be mindful of the responsibilities of Members to debate matters of urgent public importance, especially those which both assert and put into practice the accountability of Ministers of the Crown, and thus their accountability to those who sent us here.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he believes should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the appointments by Her Majesty's Government to the Commission of the European Economic Community."

As the hon. Gentleman knows, I have to decide, when making my judgment on these matters, whether an application meets the criteria laid down under Standing Order No. 20.

I listened with care to what the hon. Gentleman said, but I regret that I do not consider that the matter he has raised is appropriate for discussion under Standing Order No. 20. I cannot, therefore, submit his application to the House.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Frank Dobson (Holborn and St. Pancras): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I would certainly not wish to dispute your view that the matter that my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) raised merits taking precedence over other business, but have you had any representations from the Prime Minister about a desire, or even a lack of a desire, on her part to make a statement about the rather remarkable circumstances in which a right hon. and learned Member of the House, who resigned in disgrace from the Cabinet, is now being put forward as one of this country's nominees to serve on the European Commission? As you know from events earlier today, Mr. Speaker, there are deep and bitter feelings about the whole question of the Westland scandal and the role of Ministers in it—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have to say to the shadow Leader of the House that the application to which I have just listened was not concerned with that matter. It was concerned with the appointments—both appointments—to the European Commission.

Mr. Dobson: I was going to go on to say, Mr. Speaker, that there is most legitimate concern in this House about what happened over the Westland affair and whether significant people involved in that affair are, in effect, getting pay-offs for keeping quiet about those events. My right hon. and hon. Friends are especially concerned about the difference between the treatment of the person whom it is proposed should replace Lord Cockfield and that of Stanley Clinton Davis, a former Member of the House, a man of the highest integrity who served this country well in his post as a commissioner, and who appears to have been dispensed with entirely on the basis of personal spite on the part of the Prime Minister. In those circumstances, it is only right and proper that she who makes the appointments should come to this House to explain what she is up to——

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. If hon. Members look at the Order Paper, they will see that we have a very heavy day and perhaps even a heavy night ahead of us—*[Interruption.]* Allow me to answer this question. I can deal only with matters which are my responsibility. I have not received any notification from the Prime Minister that she wishes to make any statement. *[Interruption.]* Order. However, the House knows that she will be present here tomorrow and the House knows equally that there are other opportunities this week when this matter could be raised if hon. Members think that it is important.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. May I say briefly how totally devastated and baffled we are on this side of the House that the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) should wish to continue the reign of Lord Cockfield in Brussels? Having said that, Mr. Speaker, may I also say how baffled we are that we have just received a lecture on parliamentary morality from the Shadow Leader of the House some 10 or 15 minutes after a vote in this House to sustain your authority for which the hon. Gentleman was not present? That must be almost without precedent. The hon. Gentleman's predecessor, the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot), is here and he can tell us

whether it is without precedent. It is my belief that usually when there is a vote in this House to sustain your authority, not only the Leader of the Opposition and the Opposition Chief Whip, but the Shadow Leader of the House, also comes to your support. We on this side feel that this is totally reprehensible and quite disgraceful.

Mr. Speaker: I hope that the whole House will always support the Chair in these difficult matters. *[Interruption.]* Order. I cannot see any profit in dealing further with this matter because they are not questions that I can answer

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Several Hon. Members: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. If it is on a different issue, I will try. Mr. Winnick.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): As you will know, Mr. Speaker, there is concern that power and sovereignty are being taken from this House to the European Commission, and I should have thought that that matter would concern you. As power and sovereignty are being transferred more and more from this House to Brussels, are we not now in the ironic position where the Government's appointments of commissioners are not even being debated in prime parliamentary time?

You said a moment ago, Mr. Speaker, that this issue could be raised with the Prime Minister tomorrow, but what about the possibility of having a debate and the necessity of being able to put forward points of view? It is not just a question of the very controversial appointment of the right hon. and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan)—that may well be a matter for debate—or of what is, in my view, the justified dismissal of Lord Cockfield, the Euro-fanatic; it is also about the right of this House to be able to debate who should be our commissioners in Brussels.

Mr. Speaker: Obviously the hon. Gentleman was not here last Thursday when the Leader of the House announced the business for this week—*[Interruption.]* Well, it is not for me to give hints to hon. Members, but there is an opportunity on the summer Adjournment motion to debate this very matter.

Mr. Alastair Goodlad (Eddisbury): Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker. Is it not the case that any suggestion from Opposition Members that my right hon. and learned Friend is anything other than a man of the highest integrity and ability is not only out of order but untrue?

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The whole House will agree that the right hon. and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan) is a man of the highest integrity and that there has never been any suggestion to the contrary.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. You announced that in the business of the House there will be opportunities to raise this issue this week, such as in the Consolidated Fund debate and in the summer Adjournment debate, but I would point out that those opportunities will not provide decisions. Is it not one important aspect of this—I seek your guidance, Mr. Speaker—the fact that a decision has been announced by the Prime Minister? We should like to know in what way this House can reverse that decision if it is necessary to do so, bearing in mind that this is the last week before we reassemble on 18 October. Presumably, if this House passed a resolution reversing that decision and appointing other persons, that decision of this House would be superior to the patronage doled out by an ever-grateful Prime Minister to the right hon. and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan).

Mr. Speaker: As I understand it, the appointments do not take effect until January and in any case, if the hon. Gentleman really wishes to push this matter, he could make the case that we need not adjourn.

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): In the 40 years up to 1984, 12 Members of this honourable House were suspended on Mr. Speaker's instructions; in the past five years 14 Members—now 15 Members—have been suspended. I believe that the Select Committee on Procedure is now looking into the discipline of the House. Do you not agree, Mr. Speaker, that we have now come to a stage when, often at the end of a parliamentary Session, because suspension means little, any hon. Member who is suspended today, tomorrow, on Wednesday or on Thursday is not really suspended at all, and the abuses of privileges of this House will go on and on? As we are getting to a stage where every day is more like changing guard at Buckingham Palace, wondering who is going to go next, should not we, as a House, decide that people who wish to exercise their privilege to be suspended, should be so for a Session at least, possibly for a Parliament, since otherwise this House gets into great disrepute?

Mr. Jonathan Aitken (Thanet, South) *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Is it on the same matter?

Mr. Aitken: Yes, Mr. Speaker. On the point raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark), may I appeal to you not to suspend the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson), because he has made a most important announcement of a new leadership race in the Opposition—first because of the Leader of the Opposition having been asleep during the endless arguments about the sovereignty of this Parliament and, secondly, because he completely missed his chance in the Westland debate? We must not be allowed to exhume all those issues on the bogus issue that there is something wrong with my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan).

Mr. Speaker: Let me deal with the question that was put to me about discipline in this House. I hope that it was a slip of the tongue for the hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark) to say that it is a "privilege" to be named in this place. It is a serious step. I hope that the whole House will always uphold the authority of the Chair. If that does not happen, anarchy becomes the order of the day, and that is not the way in which we can conduct our affairs.

Mr. Dobson: Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker. Could you confirm that it is not a matter for you as Mr. Speaker if someone lies to this House, but that it is a matter for you if someone else says that they have lied?

Mr. Speaker: I confirm to the House that we do not use unparliamentary phrases, words or allegations about each

[Mr. Speaker]

other. The whole House knows the reason why the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) was suspended today.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

Mr. Speaker: With the leave of the House, I propose to put together the 14 motions relating to statutory instruments.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101(5) (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments, &c.).

Value Added Tax

That the Value Added Tax (Special Provisions) (Amendent) Order 1988 (S.I., 1988, No. 1124), dated 28th June 1988, a copy of which was laid before this House on 29th June 1988, be approved.

Urban Development

That the Tyne and Wear Development Corporation (Vesting of Land) (Various Local Authorities) Order 1988, dated 15th June 1988, a copy of which was laid before this House on 22nd June 1988, be approved.

Urban Development

That the Tyne and Wear Corporation (Vesting of Land) (Borough of Sunderland) Order 1988, dated 15th June 1988, a copy of which was laid before this House on 22nd June 1988, be approved.

Urban Development

That the Tyne and Wear Development Corporation (Vesting of Land) (British Shipbuilders and British Steel Corporation) Order 1988, dated 23rd June 1988, a copy of which was laid before this House on 29th June 1988, be approved.

Urban Development

That the Black Country Development Corporation (Vesting of Land) (British Steel Corporation) Order 1988, dated 23rd June 1988, a copy of which was laid before this House on 29th June 1988, be approved.

Urban Development

That the Tyne and Wear Development Corporation (Vesting of Land) (Port of Tyne Authority) Order 1988, dated 30th 1988, a copy of which was laid before this House on 1st July 1988, be approved.

Urban Development

That the Tyne and Wear Development Corporation (Vesting of Land) (British Coal Corporation) Order 1988, dated 28th June 1988, a copy of which was laid before this House on 1st July 1988, be approved.

Urban Development

That the Black Country Development Corporation (Vesting of Land) (Borough of Walsall) Order 1988, dated 27th June 1988, a copy of which was laid before this House on 1st July 1988, be approved.

Urban Development

That the Black Country Development Corporation (Vesting of Land) (Borough of Sandwell) Order 1988, dated 27th June 1988, a copy of which was laid before this House on 1st July 1988, be approved.

Urban Development

That the Black Country Development Corporation (Vesting of Land) (British Railways Board) Order 1988, dated 30th June 1988, a copy of which was laid before this House on 1st July 1988, be approved.

Urban Development

That the Tyne and Wear Development Corporation (Vesting of Land) (Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Executive) Order 1988, dated 27th June 1988, a copy of which was laid before this House on 1st July 1988, be approved.

Urban Development

That the Black Country Development Corporation (Vesting of Land) (General) Order 1988, dated 27th June 1988, a copy of which was laid before this House on 1st July 1988, be approved.

Urban Development

That the Black Country Development Corporation (Vesting of Land) (Central Electricity Generating Board) Order 1988, dated 1st July 1988, a copy of which was laid before this House on 4th July 1988, be approved.

Urban Development

That the Tyne and Wear Development Corporation (Vesting of Land) (City of Newcastle upon Tyne) Order 1988, dated 15th June 1988, a copy of which was laid before this House on 22nd June 1988, be approved.—*[Mr. Lennox-Boyd.]*

Question agreed to.

COPYRIGHT, DESIGNS AND PATENTS BILL [MONEY] (No. 2)

Queen's Recommendation having been signified—

Resolved,

That, for the purposes of any Act resulting from the Copyright, Designs and Patents Bill [*Lords*], it is expedient to authorise the payment out of money provided by Parliament of any increase attributable to the Act in the sums so payable by government departments in respect of Crown use of patents and designs.—*[Mr. Lennox-Boyd.]*

Orders of the Day

Copyright, Designs and Patents Bill

[Lords]

As amended (in the Standing Committee), considered.

Ordered,

That the Bill be considered in the following order: Clause 205, Clause 27, new Clauses, Clauses 1 to 26, Clauses 28 to 204, Clauses 206 to 294, new Schedules, Schedules.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

4.22 pm

Mr. Michael Foot (Blaenau Gwent): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. In connection with the selection of amendments and clauses for debate, can you tell the House whether there has been an alteration to what was put on the board earlier about the clauses to be selected? There is a widespread belief that there should be a fresh debate on the general subject of the rights of journalists and writers. I hope that the new clause put down by my hon. Friends will be selected for debate. If that is the case, I hope that you will tell the House.

Mr. Speaker: I do not know which new clause the right hon. Gentleman is speaking about, but I think I am right in saying that the new clause put down by his hon. Friends has been selected for debate.

Mr. Tony Blair (Sedgefield): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to say that it has been selected for debate and will be debated.

Clause 205

DESIGN RIGHT

Mr. Blair: I beg to move, amendment No. 224, in page 93, leave out lines 12 to 19.

Mr. Speaker: With this it will be convenient to consider the following amendments: No. 274, in page 93, leave out lines 17 to 19.

No. 225, in clause 228, page 101, line 17, leave out 'in the last five years of the design right term'.

No. 226, in page 101, line 19, at end insert—

'(a) In respect of an article which is manufactured as a replacement part.

(b) In any other case in the last five years of the design right term.'.

No. 328, in page 101, line 19, at end insert—

'(1A) Where a design right subsists in:—

(i) features of shape or configuration which enable an article to be connected to, or placed in, around or against, another article so that either article may perform its function.

(ii) features of shape or configuration dependent upon the appearance of that of which the article is intended to form part,

any person is entitled as of right to a licence to do during the design right term any act which would otherwise infringe the design right.'.right.'.

No. 227, in page 101, line 33, at end add—

'(5) In this section an article is manufactured as a replacement part if it is primarily made for use as a replacement for a thing which forms part of, or functions in connection with, another article.'.

Mr. Blair: I think it is fair to say that at times the Bill evoked an interest inside the House that was almost in inverse proportion to the interest outside the House. We have been subjected to the most intense lobbying and hardly a sector of British industry that will be affected by the Bill has not clearly made known its views to us.

The difficult balance that we have to strike in the Bill is between ensuring that industry has a proper incentive to invest and recognising that the consumer must be protected against the lack of competition that will inevitably come from copyright protection. If we protect industry too much the consumer will suffer through the abuse of monopoly, and if we give too little protection to industry it will lose the incentive to invest. Our task is not to choose between the interests of industry and the consumer but adequately to balance those interests. A competitive industry will require a powerful consumer and the wise consumer knows that the value of industry must be built on investment.

The clause that we are debating is perhaps the most contentious for industry in the entire Bill. It is about the new concept introduced by the Government of unregistered design right. Although protection is already given to aesthetic designs, there has been considerable debate about the protection that should be given to functional designs—the designs of everyday articles used in industry and in the home. We agree with the Government that reform is necessary because the law has been left in an entire mess. Functional designs enjoy protection equivalent to artistic works under copyright —life plus 50 years—whereas aesthetic designs enjoy a much shorter period of protection. In addition to that inherently unlikely and wrong position, an important court case in 1986, British Leyland and Armstrong, dealt with the whole question of functional design and car spare parts. In effect, the court said that the law needed to be reformed because it was uncertain.

The important matter to stress when talking about spare parts is that we are not talking merely about spare parts in the car industry. One of the things made clear to us in Committee and in the representations addressed to us is that if the debate proceeds simply on the basis of car spare parts we shall be in grave danger of legislating for the particular and forgetting entirely about the general. To illustrate that point more graphically I shall read from a letter sent to me by the Society of British Aerospace companies. It says:

"Unless modified, the Bill will act as an impediment to the progressive development of UK industry, particularly the aerospace industry, in its need for continued and vigorous innovation to meet world-wide competition on a fair and realistic basis."

The electrical appliance industry is also significantly affected by unregistered design right. In the briefing prepared by the Association of Manufacturers of Domestic Electrical Appliances, the association says:

"Although we believe that many parts of the Bill are an improvement on existing laws, we would take this opportunity to focus attention on one specific area of the Bill which we feel would be particularly detrimental to the interests of our member companies. Our concern relates to the manufacture and provision of spare parts."

Representations have also been addressed to us by the Variety Group which operates in industrial constructions and farm machinery. It makes the same points. A brief was also prepared by, I think, the Design Council. There have been so many briefs on this issue that it is difficult to know exactly where letters or briefings come from. The Design Council says:

[Mr. Blair]

"The zero protection proposed for a great deal of human ingenuity seems at odds with the 25 years protection proposed for the decorative panel"—

Those are designs with aesthetic qualities. The brief says:

"A cuddly toy will get 25 years' protection but a new educational construction kit will be open for all to copy from day one."

Of course the car spare parts industry is important and will be greatly affected. However, it is not the only industry that will be affected. In addition to the problem of deciding how functional designs should be protected in relation to spare parts there is also a problem about the definition of spare parts. That is because the Government have not defined spare parts in the Bill. They have gone for what is now called the "must fit"/"must match" exemption. They are saying that when a part must fit or must match another part it loses its copyright protection. In Committee we saw the anomalies to which that could lead. In a Hoover two end parts must fit and must match the main body of the machine. In the middle there is a joining part that picks up fluff.

Mr. Ted Rowlands (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney): That is called the agitator.

Mr. Blair: I thought that that was a political term, but apparently it is used in relation to Hoover spare parts. The Bill has been a continuing education for us all.

The agitator part does not get the benefit of the "must fit"/"must match" exception and is protected. However, the two end bits that join it to the machine fall within the "must fit"/"must match" exception and will not be protected. That is an inherently foolish way in which to leave the law. The solution proposed by the Government, at which I shall shortly look in detail, does not merely arouse the anxiety of many companies across the spectrum of industry. Even the definition of spare parts has been subjected to criticism.

At the beginning of my speech I spoke about a balance and such a balance applies strongly to this part of the Bill. We must pay attention to the need to reward investment while not allowing the abuse of monopoly because of anti-protection practices. Under the Government scheme, functional designs are to be given 10 years' protection. During the last five years of that 10-year term, spare parts manufacturers or copiers can manufacture that functional design under a licence of right from the original manufacturer. That scheme of 10-year protection for unregistered design right with licences of right in the last five years sits alongside the "must fit"/"must match" exception. That means that spare parts that must fit or must match lose protection altogether. The three components of the scheme are the 10-year period, the five years with the licence of right and no protection at all for spare parts that fall within the "must fit"/"must match" exception.

4.30 pm

The difficulty with the Government's proposal is that it does not address the problem of the requirement to balance the need to reward investment and the need to protect the consumer. The Government's scheme decides what spare parts will be given protection simply by reference to an accident of design; if the piece must fit and must match another, it loses protection, irrespective of the investment made and the development costs. If it does not fall foul of the "must fit"/"must match" exception, it attains full unregistered design right protection as any other functional design would, even though few research or development costs may have been involved.

The Government say that they have thought about the proposal carefully. They say that they have been through all the various arguments and reached a considered view. It is worth reminding Ministers, however, that one thing of which the Government cannot be accused in this matter is consistency. They have constantly changed their mind, and I do not entirely criticise them for that because, as I said, it is a difficult issue. None the less, the Government have swerved this way and that throughout a debate that has lasted for a period of years.

When the 1986 White Paper was published, the Government's position was as clear as it could possibly be. In the White Paper the Government clearly said that, having considered all the arguments, they believed that spare parts should be given functional design protection. That was the position that they adopted in 1986, and it was only changed the following year. The Government say that they have considered the matter over a long period, and I accept that, but they have also constantly changed their mind over a long period. At the end of the Committee stage the question arose whether they should not change their mind again and realise the strength of the arguments put to them.

I have described the Government's proposal, and I shall now deal with our alternative proposal. There are two major problems about what the Government have done. First, they have not defined spare parts but have simply introduced the concept of "must fit"/"must match". Any workable scheme to deal with functional design as it relates to spare parts must define spare parts. That is why we have provided a definition of spare parts as replacement parts for another article in amendment No. 227. To take my earlier example of the Hoover machine, the agitator would be included in the definition of spare parts along with the two end parts. That seems sensible, as we should thus avoid the absurd anomaly that one part of what is essentially the same spare part has design right protection and another does not.

I freely confess that the second part of our proposal is a compromise, but it is a compromise that has some merit, and it is certainly superior to the Government's proposal. At the moment, spare parts lose all protection if they fall within the "must fit"/"must match" definition. That is clearly wrong, for all the reasons that I have given. On the other hand, it is correct that we need to guard against the abuse of the monopoly position that copyright protection confers—a monopoly position that has been abused.

We propose, therefore, that spare parts should be given full design right protection, but that they should none the less be able to be copied under licence from the original manufacturer. If the terms of that licence cannot be agreed between the parties, there should be a right of appeal to the Comptroller-General of Patents, who will then decide what the terms of the licence should be.

That would allow copiers to carry on copying original parts, but it would ensure that they could do so only under licence from the original manufacturer. That would mean that the original manufacturer would be able to secure some reward, within the terms of the licence, for his investment—his research and development costs. I accept that that means that copying could continue, but it would

be infinitely preferable for it to continue only under licence, whereas under the Bill as drafted it could continue without any restriction.

When we pressed this point, the Government said that those arrangements would be too complicated and that it would lead to too much bureaucracy if the Comptroller-General of Patents was given the right of appeal on the licences of right. We were told that it would be too problematic to administer. The conclusive answer to that argument is that clause 228 already provides for licences of right during the five years of an unregistered design right term. In other words, there is the ability to copy any functional design, subject to licence, during the last five years of the 10-year term. That is already in the Bill.

The Opposition say that spare parts should also be able to be copied only under licence and that to give adequate protection to the consumer that licence should be available from day one, if terms can be agreed. The copier could then copy but only with the consent of, and on terms agreed with, the manufacturer. If the parties could not agree terms, the matter would go to the Comptroller-General of Patents who would adjudicate upon it. That is precisely what would happen in the last five years of the unregistered design right term in any event. Whereas our proposal does not give complete design right protection, as we suggested in Committee, it is a workable compromise between the interests of consumers and the interests of industry.

Mr. Terry Davis (Birmingham, Hodge Hill): My hon. Friend has clearly made a detailed study of this difficult matter. Specifically on the question of car spare parts and replacement parts, will my hon. Friend make it clear whether the proposal would mean that there would be a licence of right during the first five years as well as during the second five years, or does the proposal replace the existing provisions altogether?

Mr. Blair: Under the Bill as drafted, car spare parts could be manufactured without any hindrance at all. In Committee, it was strongly suggested that spare parts should be given proper design right protection, but the amendment embodying that suggestion was not accepted by the Government. Our compromise proposal would allow copying, but only under licence from the original manufacturer. That would mean that the original manufacturer could secure—in the form of royalties, for example—compensation for his development costs and other investment.

I fully accept that the car industry would like full unregistered design right protection for the entire five-year term, as with other functional designs. However, in view of the Government's opposition to that, we have produced a workable compromise. Whereas under the Bill as drafted copying could go on without any let or hindrance, under our proposal it could happen only under licence from the original manufacturer. That would allow the manufacturer to negotiate the terms on which the copying of spare parts could take place. As I said, that is a much better way of dealing with the matter than the Government's proposal.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Industry and Consumer Affairs (Mr. John Butcher): Perhaps I may clarify the position. The hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) said that under the Bill as drafted, copying could go on unhindered. That is not the case. Copying would be unhindered only for those parts of the spare part for which the alternative designer had no choice under the "must match" exception. In the case of a functional part for which an alternative design solution could be found—away from the parts of the part that must fit—there is design freedom. I would not want the hon. Gentleman to have the impression that copying of all kinds of any spare part is unlimited and free. That is not the case.

Mr. Blair: That brings us back to the great bone of contention in Committee, what "must fit"/"must match" encapsulates and what it concerns. The Minister's intervention simply underlines the point. The truth is that industry has been through this Bill carefully and it does not have the faintest idea how it will be applied. Those involved in the car industry fear that their spare parts will be copied without any hindrance or obstacle. They are concerned that that will mean that their research and development costs and the investment that they made to manufacture the original part will be lost because the copier will be able to copy the spare part without difficulty. If we are being told that "must fit"/"must match" does not do that, we are being told something different from what we understood to be the truth in Committee.

The advantage of our scheme is that it would ensure that the manufacturer had a bargaining point not merely in terms of a reward for the investment made, but, as one Conservative member of the committee said, in terms of quality. We are already aware that the quality of some of the spare parts manufactured by copiers is not the same as the originals. That is something that could be taken into account by the parties coming to an agreement or, in default of the agreement, by the comptroller. The Government argue that such a step is too bureaucratic and too complex, but the conclusive rebuttal of that argument is that licences of right will be available in any event for designs in the last five years of their term.

In Committee the Minister advanced two other arguments in defence of the Government proposals. We have done some research on them and found them lacking in substance. The first argument that the Minister advanced was that the spare parts used in the aerospace industry will not get the benefit of unregistered design right, but that, none the less, many of those things could be patented and therefore the patent law could supplement whatever deficiencies may arise regarding unregistered design right. We have studied that argument carefully and the aerospace industry has told us that that is not the case. Concorde, for example, which is a fairly advanced piece of engineering on anyone's terms, only has 12 parts that are patented. The likelihood of being able to resolve the difficulties of unregistered design right through patent law is remote.

The second argument advanced by the Minister with which I must take issue is that we are in step with other countries by not giving protection to functional design spare parts. He quoted West Germany as an example. I have studied the West German system and most of what we describe as functional design spare parts are protected by West German law. That protection is afforded in a slightly different way from our system, but none the less that protection is available.

West Germany has two particular ways in which to protect functional designs. The first is under what the

[Mr. Blair]

Germans entitle a "gebrauchsmuster", which is a utility model term of protection. Italy uses a similar device. As a result, new functional designs that include some type of technical advance are given protection. Under the German design Act new and original designs which are not purely technical are also protected. Therefore its visual appearance has some bearing. That protection is so broad that it encompasses many of the things that would fit within our ordinary unregistered design right spare parts system. Although registered designs in the United Kingdom amount to 6,500 per year, in Germany registered designs run at 65,000 a year—10 times as many. In effect West Germany offers protection in many different circumstances to spare parts.

The Minister will be aware that industry is extremely concerned about the Government proposals. There has been intensive lobbying from practically every part of British industry. Industry has said that many of the spare parts that are currently manufactured as original parts and which have protection will not be protected after the passage of the Bill. Is that correct? I asked the Minister that in Committee and I would like an answer today. Has there been a study of the exact impact of the Bill on British industry? Even allowing for the normal hype generated by lobbyists, they have made a powerful case to us about the effects of the Bill.

4.45 pm

In this Bill I do not believe that we should create some false dichotomy between industry and the consumer and that one must choose either to be pro-industry or pro-consumer. If copyright protection was abolished tomorrow it would inevitably mean that certain items would be copied and the price would come down. That might mean short-term benefits for the consumer, but in the long term there would be no benefits because industry would cease to invest. We must not make a choice between those interests, but strike a balance between them. We believe that we have struck a better balance than the Government and, for that reason, I commend our amendments to the House.

Mr. Richard Page (Hertfordshire, South-West): I should like to discuss amendment No. 274, which is tabled in my name and in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for Thurrock (Mr. Janman). Our amendment removes the "must match" exception in the Bill.

I shall not rerun the complete Committee stage. I accept the Government's argument that the existing position on functional designs needs reassessing and must be brought into better order. The recent case to which the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) referred shows that the existing system has been allowed to run for too long and that the consumer has suffered.

In Committee it was clear, as the debate went on, that there was gathering disquiet about the Government's proposals. If the amendment that I put down in Committee had been put to a vote I believe that it would have been carried. That would have meant that the "must match"/"must fit" exception would have been removed. In that debate it became clear that industry was just waking up to the effects of those exceptions. More and more industries have been contacting me day by day to outline the effects of the "must match"/"must fit" exceptions on their businesses. As time has gone by and as industry has become more aware, it is clear that the "must match" exception has given most concern.

In Committee we had a marvellous time as many hon. Members produced all sorts of exhibits to illustrate their case. The hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands) produced something which I thought at first was vaguely obscene, but which I then discovered was the seal from the front of a Hoover washing machine. One can see how a vital part such as that could be abused by a copyist.

The forms of protection that have been proposed by the Government appear to be out of kilter. It is rather peculiar that a registered design can be given for 25 years for some fairly innocent item—I gave the Committee the example of a belt buckle—but under design right an item is given only five years' complete protection and for the other five years it can be copied under licence. It now appears that design right protection has been removed with the exceptions introduced in the "must fit"/"must match" areas. Surely, as night follows day, it is inevitable that when one talks about "must match" a discussion of car panels will follow. I shall be the first person to talk about car panels, since nobody else has.

The issue that we are discussing is rather confusing. I agree with the hon. Member for Sedgefield, who said that the legislation will cause confusion. It could be a lawyer's paradise. I hope for greater clarification of the borderlines of where the exceptions will apply—and where they will not. The hon. Member for Sedgefield illustrated the point by mentioning Hoover parts, and a legal gentleman could have considerable fun and game in court ascertaining just where the line should be drawn.

Let us return to car panels. I shall not take the House through the process of making a motor car again. I bored the Committee enough with that in June.

Mr. Nicholas Baker (Dorset, North): Hear, hear.

Mr. Page: I thank my hon. Friend for his endorsement of the quality of my speeches in Committee.

A considerable investment is made. The sum of £800 million has been quoted as the price of producing a new body shell that goes on the market. As the Bill stands, that £800 million-worth of body shell can be copied in bits and pieces from day one. It is not fair that a copier can start copying the bits that he wants with no recompense for or acknowledgment of the huge investment put in by the manufacturer.

The Government say that the cry of competition is the reason. Fair enough: let us have competition, but let us make it fair. This is not fair, because a manufacturer makes a huge investment, which is entailed in his obligation to the consumer to make every spare part or panel that goes to make up a car. He cannot make only the parts that he thinks will sell in large numbers and ignore the ones that will be the subject of only limited demand.

What is the copyist's obligation? None. He will cream off the panels that get damaged and for which there is high volume demand—and to blazes with the rest. He will not produce roof panels in competition with the manufacturer or produce bulkheads to ensure that the manufacturer is given appropriate competition. Copyists will put only high-moving parts into their factories. They will assure themselves of volume sales and manufacturers will be left to pick up their obligation to the customers.

The hon. Member for Sedgefield concentrated on the exception of "must fit". I have a growing impression from the companies that have contacted me that they can live with that exception. They do not like it or think it fair but when the crunch comes they think that they can just about accept it. But they cannot accept the "must match" exception and have vigorously campaigned to try to remove it.

It is only right that we should cast an eye over what is happening in the rest of the EEC. In Germany and Italy, design registration protection is given to new and original designs, with an emphasis on aesthetic appearance. The German design law, passed in 1976, means that a typical design would require registration which would confer protection for a limited period. In France, protection is for designs that are industrially produced and of novel appearance, including designs whose shape is dictated by function. The Benelux and Scandinavian countries have a unified industrial law for designs in relation to appearance. Looking across at the EEC and some Scandinavian countries, we can see that the protection is in place there. As has already been said, there seem to be far more registrations there, too.

In the EEC countries there are laws about unfair competition in Germany, France, Italy, Benelux, Denmark and Spain. The protection that those laws provide against unfair competition has supplemented some of the missing intellectual property rights. In the Benelux countries, the law is broad enough to cover a variety of activities which, in the United Kingdom, would have to be dealt with by copyright, if they could be dealt with at all. So an unfair competition approach permits a sensible distinction to be drawn between parts that can be copied, if there is not to be a monopoly, and those which can at least be differentiated.

In the United Kingdom, now that we are a part of a larger economic unit, there is a feeling that some protection is needed for the enormous outlay of time and money involved in developing and testing new products of mass production which fall short of the test of inventiveness that qualifies a product for a patent. The hon. Member for Sedgefield mentioned a number of items that could possibly be patented that went into the construction of Concorde. I urge my hon. Friend to re-examie the provisions of the clause a little more closely. I hope he will find it in his heart to be charitable at this last-ditch stage and withdraw the "must match" exception.

Mr. Rowlands: The value of Report stage of the Bill is that it gives us the opportunity to disgest some of the arguments and issues and to scrutinise what Ministers have said. Sometimes we find they have fobbed us off, or have bent the argument; sometimes they have addressed it and produced cogent cases against our amendments. Some of us have thus scrutinised the Minister's words since Committee stage. Now we have the chance to scrutinise the Minister's case against the pitch and argument of my hon. Friend the Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) and the hon. Member for Hertfordshire, South-West (Mr. Page).

One of the Minister's arguments was that a licence of right from day one would create a horrendous bureaucracy. There is a problem with that: he is not certain which way to argue. In his earlier intervention in the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Sedgefield, the Minister seemed to imply that many designs would attract that right. At the same time he argues that horrendous bureaucracy would follow if we included a large number of parts in any form of copyright. We need to know exactly how many parts will be excluded from any design right by the "must fit"/"must match" arrangements. If a large number is involved, the Minister's argument that giving design rights and licensing rights from day one would entail bureaucracy might have some validity, but I shall argue that that grossly exaggerates the case.

The Minister must make up his mind: will a large number of "must fit"/"must match" exclusions be free of any form of design right? If so, imposing the licence to right will create bureaucracy, in the Minister's view. On the other hand, the Minister seemed to give the impression earlier that we were exaggerating the number of parts that will not attract design right. He seemed to say that many more parts would attract design right than the industries that have made representations to him or those who have presented this case think.

I shall not trespass on the subject of the important next group of amendments, which are concerned with what is original and what commonplace. That is another fundamental issue in the problem of defining how far design right reaches—or does not reach.

I wish to tackle the Minister's case against what I thought was an extremely important initiative taken by a large part of industry. I am glad that the CBI has endorsed the suggestion that one way forward in the argument over spare or replacement parts would be to grant licences of right from day one. When we discussed this in Committee, the CBI had not yet supported that principle, and we had heard from only some sections of the industrial community. Since then, there has been general acceptance of that generous compromise by those who represent industry. The granting of a licence of right from day one would also enable the designer and manufacturer to specify the quality and safety of copies. I am deeply disappointed that the Minister will not seize on that compromise and carry it forward.

5 pm

The Minister argued that the compromise would create bureaucracy. From talking to firms in my area and others, and from representations that I have received, I know that the greatest administrative burden would be placed on those who grant the licences—the very people who support the amendment. A large part of the administrative burden will fall on those who advocate granting a licence of right from day one. They are willing to carry the burden of the many applications from companies that wish to make the parts that they originally designed.

The Minister has grossly exaggerated the character of the licensing arrangements. Industry already spends a great deal of time licensing and has developed standard documentation and routines for dealing with applications. We should not be bamboozled or cajoled into conceding the Minister's argument that it would cause undue bureaucracy.

The Minister also argued that much bureaucracy will fall on the Comptroller and that, if we waited for five years, we would have some case law to follow. He exaggerates the number of cases that would go to the Comptroller under our arrangement. We should not forget that parts are usually supplied under warranty. They will not need to be copied from day one, but those who want the right to copy them will then be able to apply for a licence. The copyists are not being placed at a great

[Mr. Rowlands]

disadvantage. By the time that the negotiations have taken place and a market in those spare parts has been created —after the warranty has expired—they will have the licences to copy those parts.

In Committee, we pointed out to the Minister that we would have this problem in five years' time. Why will it be less bureaucratic after five years? The Minister said that, by that time, a considerable amount of case history will have been built up and there will be less bureaucracy, but how will case history be built up if there is a five-year delay? We shall have to deal with arguments about case history irrespective of whether licences of right are granted on day one or in the fifth year.

On 14 June, the Minister said:

"But it has been made clear to us that the European Commission would object if we increased the term or reduced or eliminated either of the exceptions."—[*Official Report, Standing Committee E;* 14 June 1988, c. 555.]

Where is the evidence for that? We had many exchanges in Committee about the EC Green Paper on copyright law. Neither the Minister nor members of the Committee had seen it, although it had been seen by those concerned with the home taping levy and had been passed on to the Japanese. I thought that that would contain the evidence for the Minister's statement, but it contains little if any reference to those issues. If the EC objected to our suggestion, there would have been a specific reference to it in the Green Paper. The Minister said that we cannot amend our Bill because the EC would object, but its Green Paper makes no reference to the issue. We should not allow his argument to stand. Even if he produces such evidence, the House has the right—in the absence of EC law—to amend the Bill as we suggest.

The Minister may try to argue about bureaucracy, but the most important thing about the key amendment in this group is that no one suggests that the original manufacturers or designers of parts should have a monopoly right. We are going much further than many others are willing to go. We are destroying the concept of monopoly and would grant people from day one the right to copy parts. That is an important compromise and, given the lack of consensus on the issue, it would be foolish for the Minister to turn his back on our important suggestions.

Sir Hal Miller (Bromsgrove): I am a stranger to the debate so far, not having had the privilege of being a member of the Standing Committee, but I feel that something needs to be said in support of the Government on the issue, with specific reference to car panels. I was not provoked on this subject by my hon. Friend the Member for Hertfordshire, South-West (Mr. Page), but I was reminded of certain facts that need to be drawn to the attention of the House in support of the Government's position.

I had intended to make the burden of my remarks on the series of amendments coupled with new clause 5, which deal with licences. I think that that is where my hon. Friend and I would find common ground, in that there should be a system of licensing that should provide for some reward for the original designer, although we might have some disagreements about how soon that licence should be obtainable and the royalty that should be paid.

My point is about the need to match. With regard to car panels, it is important to bear it in mind that the whole business came into being for two very good reasons. The first was the introduction of the MOT test, which is a measure that I hope we all welcome, but it necessitated the replacement of rust-damaged part panels. Our original equipment manufacturers were not in the habit of supplying part panels and had no wish to do so at that stage. They made a great deal more profit from supplying whole panels. We shall come to the point about the prices at which they supply whole panels, but the original concept was the rust-corroded part panel, which gave rise to the suppliers.

Mr. Page: I agree with my hon. Friend about how this all came about. In the Bill we have the design right protection for five years and more, beyond which the panel makers will be able to produce automatically those types of panels. It is most unusual for a car panel to rust away after the five years. In the second five years, one can have a licence of right. So I agree with my hon. Friend, and look forward to what he says.

Sir Hal Miller: I was coming to a further development, that the products of the independent panel makers were originally part panels, but later whole panels, for crash-damaged cars, for which there was a large demand. The whole panel's price was kept up by the original equipment manufacturers, particularly through their franchise system. Now we are reaching the subject of competition in the retailing of motor vehicles and supply of parts. The figures show that most customers remain with the franchise dealer while their vehicle is under warranty, super-cover and so on, but when that period expires there is a sharp decline in the numbers of those who travel, perhaps some distance, to the franchise dealer, and a great rise in the numbers of those who go round the corner to the man at the local garage, as I have been in the habit of doing, and ask for a repair. Many of us are familiar with the question that is asked: "Is this for insurance or are you standing the rap?" Often that produces a different answer from the customer, as to the type and extent of the repair that he wishes to be undertaken.

What is beyond doubt is the decline in the number of people attending franchise dealers for spare parts after the period of warranty has expired and the tremendous growth that we are now experiencing in alternatives to franchise dealers. I am not supposed to be advertising, but a large number of firms are growing up, which supply various parts. We are seeing that trend partly because of the rigidities, expense and restrictions of the franchise system. That area needs to be further examined.

I am not carrying out a vendetta against our car manufacturers, but when they complain about the independent panel manufacturers, we must say that they themselves have had recourse to those independent manufacturers. For example, if one peels the label of one of our well-known makers from the panel, one finds the independent panel maker's name underneath. That might strike some of us as a curious protection of the rights——

Mr. Tim Janman (Thurrock): In that example, would the original equipment manufacturer have given all the necessary details of the original design to the third-party copier so that he can manufacture the panel to the correct quality and standards?

5.15 pm

Sir Hal Miller: I am happy to respond to that question. I was not trying to lure my hon. Friend onwards, but I have to tell him that the independent company that supplied the panel from Germany is being prosecuted in this country by the same original equipment manufacturer for supplying identical panels in this country, although the manufacturer was buying the panels from the same company in another country. It was a ham-fisted attempt but that is what one is led to when trying to protect the franchise system.

In another case, one of our original manufacturers, whom I shall protect by not naming him, set up his own subsidiary in Taiwan with the express purpose of manufacturing those selfsame panels. So the idea that we are getting the panel hot off the press in this country or in Germany, from one of our original car manufacturers, is far removed from the truth. We should not mislead ourselves into thinking that that is so.

Mr. Matthew Carrington (Fulham): Does my hon. Friend agree that having multiple sources is often a great advantage for the manufacturers of body panels, in case one of the sources of the body panels has a strike, goes out of business, and so on? Frequently one finds that many manufacturers are encouraged to produce components of all sorts for the motor industry, just to ensure that there is continuity of supply.

Sir Hal Miller: I am one of those who constantly pay tribute in the House to the efforts of our major manufacturers to overcome their industrial relations problems. Those considerations are not so relevant now as they were 10 years ago. In the motor industry as a whole, it is commonplace that manufacturers seek single-source suppliers for longer-term deals and put out the design of the part, as long as the specification and quality reach the right standard. That is the trend. What my hon. Friend was talking about may have been true 10 years ago, but it is not so much the case for motor manufacturers now.

We must support the Government on the "must match" exception because the panels have to comply with the original contours of the car if they are to be an effective replacement. One of the reasons given for maintaining the hoped-for monopoly and the franchise deal in respect of the panels is that there is a commitment to keep supplies for earlier models for 10 or 12 years. I wish that that was shown to be true and that the prices, where such panels were eventually discovered in the warehouse, bore some relation to the prices for panels that could be readily obtained from the independent manufacturers. The argument is not quite so much one way as some of my hon. Friends believe.

Mr. Rowlands: I have listened carefully to the hon. Gentleman's case, but not one of his arguments has been deployed against the right to license from day one. He referred to a warranty period, which means that the right to license from day one would enable any copier to get his part into the market place in good time. The hon. Gentleman also referred to the quality of the specification. A right to license from day one could specify that. He also spoke about the relationship between the independents and the main manufacturer. A right to license from day one would take care of that. I remind the hon. Gentleman that the clause does not relate only to the body panels of cars. It deals with washing machines and other complicated machinery.

Sir Hal Miller: I said at the beginning of my speech that I intended to devote most of it to licensing, particularly registered design rights. We shall deal with that question when we consider the amendments grouped with new clause 5. I said that I thought that my hon. Friend the Member for Hertfordshire, South-West and I would reach common ground on that point. However, the Government need some support over the "must match" exception because the argument seems to be all in one direction. There are very good reasons for supporting the Government.

Mr. Terry Davis: My hon. Friend the Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands) has just reminded the House that although the clause applies to replacement parts for motor vehicles, it also applies to the aerospace industry and a number of other industries, such as the electrical appliances industry. I accept what my hon. Friend has said, but I shall concentrate my remarks on the effect of this legislation on the car industry. I worked for many years on the marketing and the supply of spare parts for the industry. That was some years ago, but I continue to take an interest in it.

My hon. Friend the Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) said that a balance must be struck in the car industry. I agree with him. He referred to the need for the industry to be neither pro-industry nor pro-consumer. I agree with him about that, too. However, he spoke as though the industry consisted solely of motor manufacturers. It is a much more complex industry than that. It includes the manufacturers of spare parts. They are an extremely important part of the industry. Manufacturers of spare parts include a wide range of businesses, from Lucas and GKN at one end to very small firms, sometimes described as back-street firms, producing items such as body panel parts, at the other.

We must also consider the dealers. There is a divergence of interest between the franchised dealer—franchised by the motor manufacturers—who receives a percentage of the price of a spare part and the unfranchised garage that does a large part of the servicing of motor vehicles. The latter is an extremely important part of the motor industry, consisting mainly of very small firms—of people starting up on their own.

Similarly, the importers of vehicles have not been mentioned in this debate, but they must also be taken into account. If the Bill protects vehicle importers, we shall bar our own industry from supplying spare parts. French, German, Japanese and Italian cars account for a considerable number of the cars that are sold in this country. I should be loth to do anything that cut our spare parts manufacturers out of that very profitable business.

Furthermore, the interests of consumers are not always identical. The original buyer of a motor car will have a different interest in spare parts from that of the person who buys a second-hand motor car. The second-hand car owner will have the greatest interest in the price of spare parts. He will require more of them, particularly the more expensive spare parts that the original owner of the car will not have to buy, unless there is an accident.

Mr. Janman: The hon. Gentleman compares the interests of a person buying a new car with those of a

[Mr. Janman]

person buying an older car. Does he accept that as a car gets older it is inevitable that the number of parts that make up the total market place for that model will reduce and become more and more slow moving? If we allowed the "must match" exception to remain, the copiers would not be interested in the slow-moving parts. Only the manufacturer of the original equipment would be interested, and the price of the slow moving parts that go into older vehicles would increase.

Mr. Davis: No, it is not like that at all. There is a business cycle for spare parts. To begin with, it is very slow moving. Then it builds up to a peak. That is when a motor vehicle is several years old. Depending on how long that model is kept in production and the number of vehicles sold, there is a rise to a peak in sales of spare parts. Then it tails off. It is not the case that the older the vehicle and the older the parts, the more slow-moving they will be. One could be selling more parts for older vehicles. I am referring to parts that wear out. There is a different pattern for parts that are replaced because of crash damage. I shall not bore the House by describing the various life cycles and business cycles of spare parts, but the hon. Gentleman has over-simplified the case.

The owners of second-hand cars have a different interest in spare parts from those of fleet buyers or the owners of new cars. They will buy different sorts of parts. The person who buys a second-hand car will have to buy more expensive replacement parts, particularly body panel parts and engine parts. However, there is some community of interest between the motor manufacturer and the small manufacturer of body panel parts. When a car goes out of production, a motor manufacturer may run out of spare parts because it was impossible to envisage how many buyers of a spare part there would be when production ended.

The motor manufacturer will want to obtain small runs of pressed parts from the so-called back-street manufacturers. If they did not exist, the motor manufacturers would be in great difficulties. Motor manufacturers rely on spare parts manufacturers in places like Coventry, particularly to provide spare parts for the kind of cars that are bought by enthusiasts and that people drive not for years but for decades. It is very difficult to obtain such body parts unless it is possible to arrange for a small run of pressed parts every few months or, more likely, every few years.

It follows that there is not a complete divergence of interest between the various sections of the motor industry, even when we speak about motor manufacturers and body panel manufacturers.

My hon. Friend the Member for Sedgefield referred to the need to reward the investment by motor manufacturers.

Mr. Rowlands: My hon. Friend referred to the life cycle of parts. Will not the design right also have been worked out for spare parts? Would not licences for spare parts exist for up to five years? During that life cycle, copying would certainly be allowed. Has not my hon. Friend argued against the amendment?

Mr. Davis: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. I am simply explaining that it is a more complicated industry than has been suggested. I shall turn to my hon. Friend's point in a moment.

It is necessary to reward the motor manufacturer: but how is he to get his reward? It has been suggested in this debate that the motor manufacturer will be rewarded for his investment by selling spare parts. To do that, he will ask a lower price for the vehicle when it is sold and then ask a higher price for replacement parts. It is rather similar to a razor blade manufacturer who is prepared to give away razors, provided that he is allowed to sell the blades that fit the razor. But the interests of consumers vary. If we are not careful, we shall penalise consumers who buy second-hand cars. Generally speaking, they are in the lower income groups.

To turn directly to the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Merthy Tydfil and Rhymney, it is not a question of body parts only. One of the largest segments of the spare parts business is exhaust systems. They do not last five years on a new car. The owners of cars often have to replace the exhaust system before the cars are five years old, so the replacement of exhaust systems becomes important within five years. Therefore, within that five-year period, some of those reasonably expensive parts and systems will be sold.

It has been suggested that there should be a right to a licence from day one. That is a constructive suggestion. The difficulty is how much the licence will cost—that is, how much the motor manufacturer will charge the spare parts manufacturer for a licence from day one. That is where the conflict will occur. Of course, it will be in the interest of the motor manufacturer to extract the highest possible price for a licence from the replacement parts manufacturer. I am concerned as to how that will be sorted out.

5.30 pm

My hon. Friend the Member for Sedgefield suggested that there should be an appeal to some registrar. I understand that. But we are talking about many parts. It is not a case of a licence to make a single part. A very large number of parts will be involved, presumably with a different licence fee for each part.

I am not surprised that at least some motor manufacturers agree with the idea of a right to licence from day one, provided that they can set the price of the licence. That is a key point. While they are negotiating, does the spare part manufacturer have the right to make the body panel or other part? That is an extremely important issue which my hon. Friend did not mention.

My hon. Friend the Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney raised the very important questions of safety and quality. There are other ways of ensuring the safety of spare parts, and it is wrong to try to do it through this Bill, which does not deal with safety. There are laws on product liability and regulations on British standards. It is quite right that we control the safety of spare parts. As for quality, again it may be against the interests of the consumer for motor manufacturers to impose a quality standard upon the manufacturers of spare parts. Some famous names entered the replacement parts business making parts of a lower standard and quality than the original equipment provided by the motor manufacturers, but of a quality and standard acceptable to the consumer.

A classic name is the pioneer of exhaust systems known as Quinton Hazell, who founded his business on that principle. The consumers did not want the equivalent of gold-plated exhaust systems; they wanted serviceable exhaust systems, and he built a whole business on that concept by setting a standard of quality acceptable to the consumer, but of a lower standard than the original equipment from the manufacturers. That is part of the right of the consumer to choose. If a consumer pays a far lower price, he will not expect a standard of quality which he would receive from the original equipment manufacturer at a higher price.

Mr. Page: Although an exhaust pipe is obviously not a safety part of a motor car, some manufacturers would be extremely concerned about the quality of any product made under licence, particularly a body panel, for example, that had taken part in crash tests to conform to the various regulations, and would not wish a cheapjack copier to make it out of much thinner material that would not deform in the same way, and give controlled deceleration and therefore, if it were fitted, would put the occupants of the car through the windscreen.

Mr. Davis: The hon. Gentleman and I have no difference in our concern about road safety. We differ as to how those standards, which are important for road safety, should be imposed and monitored. I suggest that there are other ways to control the safety and quality of products. There are other laws which do that—not by giving the motor manufacturer a monopoly over the supply of replacement parts. That is the difference between us, although we have the same objectives.

I am not surprised that the motor manufacturers do not like the "must fit"/"must match" concept. I am not surprised that the CBI does not like it because the CBI tends to reflect the views of the motor manufacturers, and I am not convinced that the CBI reflects the view of those who make the replacement parts. Certainly it would be to the disadvantage of those manufacturers, which are small firms, and if we are not very careful about the way in which we engage in this legislation, it may lead to higher prices to the consumers. The motor manufacturers are, by any definition, big business. Some of the manufacturers and suppliers of replacement parts are small firms, and their consumers tend to be people in the lower income groups.

I have reservations about some of the views expressed by my hon. Friends, and I shall listen carefully to the Minister's reply.

Mr. Janman: It is worth looking back at the Standing Committee, and worth remembering that when we had a long and intensive debate on the "must match" exception clause, every Conservative Member who spoke on the clause either counselled the Minister to proceed with at least caution, or expressed total opposition to it.

Although I do not wish to repeat all that I said on Second Reading or in Standing Committee, I wish once again to make some comments against the "must match" exception and with that in mind I wish to speak in support of amendment No. 274, tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Hertfordshire, South-West (Mr. Page) and me. It is also worth noting that when we debated the clause in Standing Committee, I hope that I am right in saying that we did not go to a vote because the Opposition had been left in a state of limbo as industry, through various different bodies—the CBI being the most notable—had not really got its act together in presenting a coherent alternative strategy to the one which the Government were proposing at the time.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hertfordshire, South-West said earlier that if there had been a vote in Committee on the "must match" exception clause, knowing how some Conservative Members would have voted or abstained in that Division, that clause would have been taken out of the Bill in Committee. I can verify that.

Today, we are discussing how to improve the market place for the consumer. My hon. Friend the Minister will acknowledge that I am a strong supporter of increasing choice for the consumer and freeing up and deregulating markets and liberalising them so that the consumer has more choice. On the other hand, we wish to maintain fair competition and an adequate reward for the considerable investment in design and innovation by original equipment manufacturers.

I agree with the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) that this is not a case for deciding whether one is pro-consumer or pro-industry. I do not believe that the "must match" exception clause is pro-consumer, although I agree with earlier comments that the exception will hit a large number of manufacturers across the face of British industry and in many different industrial sectors—white goods, electronics, the motor industry and others. Because of my experience of working in the motor industry, I wish to focus my comments on how it will not help the consumer in that spare parts sector because the consumer does not have an interface with the people who are supplying the body panel. The middle man has that interface.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bromsgrove (Sir H. Miller) was quite right when he said that if one goes to a back-street garage or a franchised dealer, one does not normally go there for a body panel. One goes there to have one's car serviced or, if body panels are involved, one is more likely to be going there to have a car repaired. One goes there to buy a repair service, not one particular body panel. Therefore, the consumer has no direct connection with the decisions as to which body panel and which supplier is used, whether it is a Taiwanese import, an import from the original equipment manufacturer or a body panel made in this country by the original equipment manufacturer. The consumer does not have the chance to exercise choice and value judgment as to the difference in quality, albeit accepting that a bottom-line safety net of quality and safety exists.

The consumer is not in a position to make that choice because he does not come into contact with the supplier. The person carrying out the repair will decide whether he puts on a copied body panel or one from the original equipment manufacturer. He will decide what price is passed on to the consumer. If there is some fiddling going on—as there often is in this area—the consumer will be none the wiser as to what type of body panel is being fitted and whether the price paid correlates with that asked by the original supplier of the body panel.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bromsgrove pointed out that in about 80 per cent. of cases, the consumer is not paying for the work done. Therefore, the consumer's interest in the intricacies of where the repairer is obtaining supplies is somewhat diminished. It would be different if the consumer was paying for it with readies from his own pocket. Whether it is a company car or a car owned by the consumer himself, in 80 per cent. of cases the repair is paid

[Mr. Janman]

for by the insurance company. It is fair to say that insurance company inspectors do not take much notice of whether the panel being fitted to the car says "Made in Dagenham" or whether it is made in Milan or wherever.

Mr. Page: From my experience, when the inspector comes to estimate a job, he does not see any panels, because at that stage they would not have been ordered.

Mr. Janman: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for pointing that out. It is a useful clarification of my point.

To some extent I bow to the superior knowledge of the hon. Member for Birmingham, Hodge Hill (Mr. Davis), given his experience in this sector of the motor industry. However, surely he would accept that the total amount of business available to spare part manufacturers, whether it be the original equipment manufacturer or a copier, for gearboxes, front wing body panels or whatever for a 10-year-old mark I or mark II Escort is different from the business available for a one, two or three-year-old Sierra. He will acknowledge that the number of parts being sold for two or three-year-old Sierras is far greater than for 10-year-old Escorts. Therefore, the market for body panels for two or three-year-old Sierras is far more lucrative than that for 10-year-old Escorts.

The copiers do not have to invest in copying the panels, because they do not have the original specification. They simply set up shop cheaply many thousands of miles away and copy the fast-moving panels. Therefore, understandably they are able to vastly undercut the original equipment manufacturer. The original equipment manufacturer will be left to supply the slower-moving parts and its margins will be squeezed because of the inevitable reduction in market share of fast-moving parts. Therefore, they will put up their margins on slow-moving parts. People on lower incomes who generally own older cars will have to pay the price if the "must match" exception clause remains in the Bill.

I understand that the United Kingdom consumer organisations have expressed support for this liberalising measure. However, it is interesting that the BEUC, the European consumer body, understands what the ramifications will be for the overall standard of quality and safety and realises that the "must match" exception clause will lead to a diminution of quality. Therefore, it is not surprising that the BEUC did not intervene in the Veng *v.* Ford body panel case, brought by the European Commission. It takes the view that it will be against consumer interests for the Government to press ahead with the principle of the "must match" exception clause.

We have to decide whether there are benefits to the consumer; I do not believe that there will be. We also have to decide whether there will be benefits to the nation as a whole; again, I do not believe that there will be. The legislation would put us out of step with design right protection for spare parts manufacturers in virtually every major European Community nation. The loss of revenue and the reduction of jobs in, for example, Ford, British Leyland and Vauxhall will not be balanced by any increase in opportunity for the small number of British-based copiers.

Also, there will be no opportunities for new British-based copiers to spring up because they will not have European markets available to them in the same way as foreign copiers do, because of the difference in law in terms of the strength of protection given to spare parts manufacturers in this country and the rest of Europe. Therefore, the jobs lost in the original equipment manufacturing sector of the industry will not be compensated for by any gains in the spare parts sector.

5.45 pm

The answer to the problem is not to move ahead with the "must match" exception clause but to give the right of compulsory licensing if there is proven monopoly abuse. I do not think that there is monopoly abuse at present. Because the original equipment manufacturer has to invest in the original technology and design of all parts, his costs for producing a particular body panel are much greater than those of a copier in Taiwan who has not had to invest in the early stages. It is worth noting that, in 1986, Ford's return on investment in body panels was only 3·6 per cent. That is hardly ripping off the consumer. Given an environment of fair competition and the costs that large manufacturers face when they first design a car, we do not want consumers to be ripped off. We should force manufacturers who are abusing their position to give licences to other people to compete.

Unless circumstances of monopoly abuse prevail, the "must match" exception clause is not to the benefit of the consumer in the motor industry. It will have a detrimental effect on our manufacturing base in the motor industry and in the other industries affected. Therefore, I repeat the request by my hon. Friend the Member for Hertfordshire, South-West and ask my hon. Friend the Minister, at this late stage, to think again on this misguided course.

Mr. Butcher: I thank hon. Members for continuing what has become a firm tradition of the Bill, which is to focus entirely on the merits of the argument. Yet again we have seen a diversity of opinion on both sides of the House. Without immediately displaying which side of the argument I wish to favour, all I will say is that my hon. Friend the Member for Bromsgrove (Sir H. Miller) and the hon. Member for Birmingham, Hodge Hill (Mr. Davis) did not grace our Committee. However, they have a reputation in the House as Members who are assiduous in the representation of all sectors of the motor industry and the interests of midlands manufacturing generally. There was much in what they said, and in the past I have found it to be compelling. I hope that the hon. Member for Hodge Hill will not be embarrassed, given the traditions of debates on this subject, if I say that his was a fine speech. There were many fine speeches in Committee and I hope that there will be many more on Report.

The advantages of the Report stage and remaining stages are many. The hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands) reminded us that we have a chance to look at the recorded comments and to re-analyse and retune our own arguments. It is also an opportunity to continue the discussions on several items within the Bill that remain controversial. It was during that period that hon. Members have spoken to several people outside who consider that vital interests are at stake. They have done so at all times with a sense of perspective and fair play.

I hope that Opposition Members who have keyed some of their arguments against the position of the CBI as reported and of the British aerospace companies will not mind if I point out that I do not believe that the amendments have the unanimous support of the CBI. A

couple of weeks ago, I received a letter from the chairman of the CBI working group, which had been looking into design rights. He considered that he had to write to let me know that he could not support the CBI's views on the matter. The chairman's view was:

"The Government had got its design proposals just about right."

We have received further letters from other industrial sources who are also of the view that, at present, the design right proposals offer the right balance between the needs of designers and competitors. We had further discussions with the CBI.

British aerospace companies are concerned because some matters of interpretation and principle are at issue. One of the outcomes of my discussion with them is that they better understood some of the terminology that we were using, but, perhaps most important of all, I was able to point out that the term of protection will not begin until articles made to a design are actually manufactured and are made available for sale or hire. I recently met representatives of the Society of British Aerospace Companies. They seemed to be content, particularly with the formulation of that part of the Bill. They suggested that the trigger for the term of protection might be the granting of an airworthiness certificate—that aircraft must be granted a certificate of airworthiness before they can be sold. So, usually, the 10-year term will begin only after such a certificate is granted.

I agree with the hon. Member for Hodge Hill and my hon. Friend the Member for Bromsgrove. We discussed the interests of the motor industry in a variety of ways, but, on most occasions, it was said that, for every job in vehicle assembly plants, there are three or four jobs outside for those who supply components and parts to vehicle assemblers. We must bear in mind the interests of that part of the industry if the preoccupation of Opposition Members—I am sure that it is the case with Conservative Members—is with jobs, competitiveness and opportunities for such companies.

Opposition Members have told us many times that we should be concerned about the ratio of imports into the United Kingdom. It is a matter of some sadness to those hon. Members who have loyalties to the midlands in particular to note the fall in the share of the British car market that is occupied by domestic manufacturers. It has happened. No doubt, on another day, we shall debate why it happened, but if 50 per cent.-plus of the car park, which is the term that manufacturers use, now rattling around this country is of foreign manufacture, should we not give an opportunity to British components and panel suppliers —those in the "must match" exception—to compete to supply Renaults, Volkswagens, Datsuns, and "fow-vays"? All such people could be legitimate targets for companies that hitherto have not found a friendly environment in which to ply their art, certainly in regard to industrial copyright.

The hon. Member for Hodge Hill asked several questions. He asked whether it is true that industry will lose protection for spare parts when the Bill becomes law. The answer is that, in most cases, spare parts will gain the protection that they now lack. He referred to the judgment in the BL *v.* Armstrong case. Therefore, he should know that their Lordships held that copyright does not protect spare parts. However, design right will protect spare parts, subject to the "must fit"/"must match" exceptions. In summary, the protection of spare parts will, in general, be increased rather than decreased by the Bill. The amendments bring us to those main features—"must fit"/"must match".

I shall refer to the amendments tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Bromsgrove in a few moments, but first I shall summarise my understanding of the main thrust of the amendment moved by the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) to make sure that we are all on the same wavelength. The hon. Member wants to delete the "must fit"/"must match" exceptions and, instead, provide that licences of right will apply to all spare parts from day one. He believes that that will allow competition in what would otherwise be captive after-markets, while giving original designers more of a say in what goes on.

The hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney has a slightly different solution. He wants to subject "must fit"/"must match" features to licences of right, again from day one. In some ways, the proposals are perfectly respectable—I can say that in respect of what is essentially a non-political Bill—but they suffer from one fundamental and, I am bound to say, fatal flaw. They would both mean that, every time someone wanted to compete by making an article that had to be fitted or matched to another article, he would need a licence.

I appreciate that licences would enable the rights owner to exercise some control over what a competitor produces —for example, in respect of matters such as safety and quality. But any intellectual property right comes to an end at some point. In the case of design right, it is after 10 years in the market. All the factors such as safety that are of concern to the hon. Gentleman, are just as important after the intellectual property right has run out. At that point, the intellectual property law is of no help. That is why we have left a whole raft of separate, free-standing legislation and regulations on safety, and that is how it should be. In my view, the existing provisions on safety provide all that is necessary, and additional licensing provisions in design right are not necessary.

That is particularly so because the licensing arrangements that have been proposed would have a number of highly undesirable consequences. First, the need for a licence would arise not only when a competitor wanted a copy the whole of an article in its entirety, but when a competitor wanted to use his own design and his own technology.

We must bear it in mind that hon. Members have tried to champion the cause of the creative designer. In such circumstances, he would still need to copy the connecting features to make his product fit. The need either to seek a licence or to negotiate the terms and conditions of a licence of right could, at best, act only as a disincentive to design innovation. With the hon. Gentleman's amendments, if the article is not a replacement part, the design right owner could refuse a licence in the first five years. That would result in a monopoly that would shut everyone else out, and that would be the ultimate disincentive.

Mr. Blair: If the "must fit"/"must match" exceptions do not apply, whoever wants to manufacture or copy a certain design must apply for the permission of the original designer in any event.

Mr. Butcher: At this stage of a Bill's consideration, amendments are tabled as alternatives in a last try to come to a consolidated and considered view. The effect of the hon. Gentleman's amendment is as I have described it. He

[Mr. Butcher]

tests me on the practicalities of my own position. I am bound to say that there is a surety to give suppliers of component parts a clear idea of what is required of them. In general, it is in common with median protection in other parts of western Europe. In taking this route, we have listened carefully to those who argued, as the hon. Gentleman has just argued, that we should seek a much better period of protection for original designers or we should erode it almost in its entirety. The hon. Gentleman's amendments seem to face in both directions. That is not a criticism of Opposition Members. They have had to wrestle with the same dilemma. To return to the comment of the ex-chairman of the CBI committee, I believe that we have the balance about right.

6 pm

I should do the hon. Member for Sedgefield the service of replying to the other implications of his amendments. The second, related problem is that they would involve a great deal of unnecessary red tape, although I do not intend to labour that point. The hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney teased me about this in Committee and has done so again today. Nevertheless, it is true that, whenever a competitor wished to produce something that fitted or matched something else, a licence would be required. In some circumstances he would be entitled to a licence of right, but he would still have to negotiate the terms and conditions.

We are working—I hope—to create a larger, more open, more competitive market. The thought of industry having to negotiate licences on every occasion as a precondition of competition does not merely irritate me or lead me to question the bureaucracy involved—it makes my blood run cold. It is simply not true that there are large areas of industry in which there will be no argument about licences. I have been involved with design protection for some years and one thing is crystal clear—there is controversy and argument wherever one looks.

Under the Bill as drafted, the licence of right provisions will come into play only when a competitor wishes to copy an entire article or that part of an article for which there is design freedom and for which an alternative design is possible. They will not apply whenever somebody wishes to compete, as would be the case under the proposals of the hon. Member for Sedgefield. The difference in the number of times that licences would be needed under the two sets of proposals would be many orders of magnitude. To me, that difficulty is of itself fatal to both the hon. Gentleman's proposals.

There are other detailed but no less important problems with the hon. Gentleman's amendments. For example, when is a replacement part not a replacement part? The hon. Gentleman made a valiant stab at a definition, but it is important to bear in mind that that question will have to be answered as each article is made. A single article cannot be "primarily made" as a replacement part. Amendment No. 227 states:

"an article is manufactured as a replacement part if it is primarily made for use as a replacement".

But it either is or is not made as a replacement part. I shall not go into that at length; I am sure that the hon. Member for Sedgefield does not wish me to reinterpret his amendment for him at this stage.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bromsgrove again spoke eloquently in defence of the "must match" condition that he seeks for the original manufacturer. Reference has been made to the possibility of the consumer being duped —for instance, a supplier taking a margin on what may be sold as an accredited spare panel from the original manufacturer. As the hon. Member for Hodge Hill reminded us, that is perhaps more within the remit of other legislation. Misleading the consumer can be dealt with in that way.

With regard to safety, there are the general safety requirement and the British standards. I accept those arguments, and the insurance industry is highly interested in them, although there are times when it finds replacement parts fitted by non-original manufacturers perfectly acceptable for insurance purposes. I am familiar with the example given by the hon. Member for Hodge Hill—that of Quinton Hazell and his exhaust pipes. We discussed exhaust pipes at great length in Committee and at the current rate of progress we shall probably still be discussing them at 4 am tomorrow. Many companies begin their lives offering the customer cheaper alternatives and then move up market to become considerable and respected members of the industrial community.

I have tried not to recast the arguments used in Committee in exactly the same way or on the same basis. The Opposition will, however, expect a reply from me on two important questions, and this is the last opportunity for me to give the information that they have demanded.

I was asked what evidence we had that the European Commission would object to our increasing the term of design protection or removing the exceptions. I accept that there is no published evidence in recent Commission documents or elsewhere, but we discussed the matter with the Commission in the run-up to the Bill. The Commission had already objected to the excessive protection for functional designs given by United Kingdom copyright and was equally concerned that any new design law should not move out of line with protection elsewhere in the Community.

The Commission was satisfied with our proposals on this basis but made it clear that additional protection might well lead to a formal complaint under the European Community treaty. That does not amount to being dictated to by the European Commission, because 10 years' protection, with appropriate exceptions and licensing arrangements, represents what we regarded as necessary in any event. It shows, however, that there is no truth in the allegation that we are giving less protection than the rest of the Community.

Several references were made to design protection in Germany and the basic facts were largely correct. There is protection for basic designs under a utility model or petty patent system. There are also large numbers of design registrations; the Opposition were absolutely right about that. The essential point, however, is that neither of those forms of protection is equivalent to the design right protection provided by the Bill. Petty patents are granted only for inventive designs and registrations are possible only where the appearance of the design matters. A large number of designs, especially for spare parts, do not fall into either category, but they would be protected in the United Kingdom when the Bill becomes law although they are not protected in Germany.

I hope that I have met the points raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Bromsgrove and by the Opposition

and that hon. Members will not seek to divide the House on an amendment which is not just illogical but impracticable.

Mr. Blair: I entirely accept that these are difficult matters of judgment and I welcome the contributions of the hon. Member for Bromsgrove (Sir H. Miller) and my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Hodge Hill (Mr. Davis). I repeat, however, that the problem must not be seen merely as one concerning car spare parts. There is a great deal more to "must fit"/"must match" and design right than that. The Opposition have been accused of seeking a monopoly for the original manufacturer, but the basis of our proposal is that no such monopoly would exist. Rather, there would be a licence of right from the first day. That seems to take care of many of the objections, apart from the Minister's last point. The amendment would not affect the vast majority of original manufacturers or, indeed, of component manufacturers, so the car industry could operate very much as before, but under licence of right.

The Minister found great difficulty in defining a replacement part, but that is as nothing compared with the difficulties of "must fit"/"must match", which give rise to enormous problems as to how much of a replacement part would have protection and the absurdity of some parts of the part having protection while others did not. If that exception is not applied, there is total protection over the entire period of the design right term. The Minister accused the Opposition of facing both ways on this. In fact, we are merely seeking a compromise between the interests of industry in rewarding its investment and the interests of the consumer.

It is important to attain that compromise if we can. The only argument that has been advanced against it is that it would be too bureaucratic. I cannot believe that that is right. Licences of right and the concept of licensing apply throughout industry. Licences of right for the last five years of a design right are written into the Bill. Any function or design has a licence of right in its last five years, so provision is already made for licences of right in the Bill.

I cannot believe that sensible people could not come to agreement in the vast majority of cases. Where they cannot, a body of case law will grow up from appeals, and the position will become clearer. We cannot allow manufacturing industry and its forward pattern of investment to be distorted, because a view is taken based simply on the problems of the motor industry.

Our amendment is the best way forward as it provides for a workable compromise. We believe that it has the support of those in industry, who should know best how to look after their own affairs, and that the concept of licences of right for spare parts will protect the consumer.

Nothing that the Minister has said convinces us that those arguments are wrong, so I ask my hon. Friends to support the amendment in the Lobby

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 132, Noes 257.

Division No. 441] **[6.11 pm**

AYES

Allen, Graham
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Margaret
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Coleman, Donald
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Galloway, George
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Heffer, Eric S.
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Lamond, James
Leighton, Ron
Litherland, Robert
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Meacher, Michael
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
O'Brien, William
Page, Richard
Palmer, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Quin, Ms Joyce
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sheerman, Barry
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mrs. Llin Golding and
Mr. Frank Haynes.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Ashdown, Paddy
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bigg-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham

Brown, Michael *(Brigg & C'T's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Durant, Tony
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fishburn, Dudley
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Kennedy, Charles
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkwood, Archy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
Maclennan, Robert
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Sir Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Sir Charles
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Wavaney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rost, Peter
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thorne, Neil
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Walden, George
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wigley, Dafydd
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wood, Timothy
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Alan Howarth
Mr. David Lightbown.

Amendment accordingly negatived.

Mr. Rowlands: I beg to move amendment No. 322, in page 93, line 22, at end insert—

'in determining whether a design is commonplace those features which are not visible to the naked eye shall be taken into account'.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): With this it will be convenient to take amendment No. 323 in, page 93, line 22, at end insert—

'(4A) A design is not commonplace for the purposes of this part if the creation of the design required a substantial input on the part of the designer of that design in terms of time and cost.'.

Mr. Rowlands: I remind the House that clause 205(4) says:

"A design is not 'original' for the purposes of this Part if it is commonplace in the design field in question at the time of its creation."

Hon. Members who served on the Committee will know that we had considerable discussion, not about the semantics, but about the real meaning of the words "original" and "commonplace". I remind the Minister that, on 14 June, he said:

"I am not able to accept the hon. Gentleman's amendment. I do not think that it was designed to be accepted, but we wish to achieve its objective. If 'commonplace' will not suffice, we shall try to find another solution."

A little later he said:

"I am not wedded to the word 'commonplace'. Amendment No. 407, tabled by the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney, is a good attempt to refine the expression."

Therefore, he offered me some hope that he would study those words and their definitions.

The Minister further said:

"The meaning of 'commonplace' is a matter of ordinary English."

I believe it is, but it is not an easily definable term when relating to design matters. The Minister continued:

"Whether a design is commonplace will be determined on the facts of the case. If we can find a better way of handling the matter, we shall do so."—[*Official Report, Standing Committee E*, 14 June 1988, c. 575-766.]

We considered several illustrations in Committee, one of which was the armature which I am holding. It is for a Hoover washing machine. We asked whether it would be a commonplace part or whether it would attract a design right. For example, we asked whether the design of this door seal of a Hoover washing machine, which I am holding, is commonplace or whether it attracts originality and, therefore, a design right. Those are reasonable illustrations of the difficulty of matching practicality to legislation. The Minister assured us that he was not wedded to those words and therefore he felt that was a case for looking for another solution. That is what I am now trying to do.

I am rather disappointed about the events that have fallen between Committee and Report stage. The Minister and his Department—I am sorry to make this criticism—but especially his Department, seem to have taken a completely passive, if not negative, view of the efforts made by others to define or redefine the words "original" and "commonplace". The Department just stood back and said, "If you lot can come up with any ideas to redefine the words, we will look at them." It has made little or no effort to join in a partnership of consideration to redefine the terms in subsection (4) and to decide whether the design of the Hoover armature or of the door seal would be a commonplace or an original design.

Various industries and companies went to the Department and put up one or two suggestions which the Department, understandably, took apart. I have not, therefore, tabled amendments such as were discussed in Committee, but instead I have introduced two new ideas. Actually, they are not new and I shall describe their parentage.

Before doing so, I remind the House that this is not just a matter of semantics and fiddling around with words—it is an important and serious issue. There is a fundamental difference of interpretation of the Bill as it stands as to what will attract design right and what will not. The Minister believes that many more parts in industry will attract design right and will be considered original, as opposed to commonplace, than at present, especially in a company such as the one I am privileged to represent in Merthyr Tydfil—Hoover. It believes, however, that parts of its washing machines would be deemed in law to be commonplace, but the Minister and his officials may believe them to be original. It is not just a matter of semantics—it is one of considerable concern as there are differences of interpretation.

Having reminded the House of the two illustrations that I gave in Committee, I turn now to my two amendments, which seek to redefine first the word "commonplace" and secondly the word "original". Amendment 322 suggests that

"in determining whether a design is comonplace those features which are not visible to the naked eye shall be taken into account".

6.30 pm

Where did I get those words? They did not come from any outside lobby. They were not from industry or from an axe-grinding group. I took them almost word for word from the Department's own notes on the clause, especially those to the subsection. The valuable notes that were given to hon. Members serving on the Committee should be made available to any hon. Member. I draw attention to paragraph 3, which helped us to amplify and explain subsection (4) and the word "commonplace", and which stated:

"It is important to note that there is no requirement that the design be aesthetically pleasing for design right to subsist. Nor is there any requirement for the design to be visible to the naked eye. Thus, for example, a design of the aesthetic appearance of a table lamp, the functional form of the external and internal parts of a pump and the functional internal layout of an integrated circuit microchip could all give rise to design right."

That is why I am travelling with the hope that the Minister will accept my amendment. The words

"not visible to the naked eye"

are taken from the Minister's Department's interpretation of the subsection, so they have impeccable parentage. If the Department regards something that one cannot see as being relevant in design terms, it is worth stating that in the clause.

Mr. Dafydd Wigley (Caernarfon): As the hon. Gentleman knows, I have an interest in Hoover as I am a previous employee. Following our debate on this point in Committee, the British Automotive Parts Promotion Council has raised with me the point that stopping water coming out and dampening down harmonic vibrations would be a technical argument, as opposed to one relating to the shape of the configuration, and that as such it would not be a criterion for design right protection. How does the hon. Gentleman respond to that? I believe that we are both trying to go in the same direction.

Mr. Rowlands: The hon. Gentleman is absolutely right. If he recalls, the issue of the design of the Hoover door seal for a washing machine arose on the basis of the amendment that I was moving, which would state that technical factors would be taken into account in determining whether a part or the design of a part attracted design right. We used the door seal to illustrate that point. The very design of that part had an important effect on the whole performance of the machine. The Minister commented that he was not against the objective of my amendment when we discussed it in Committee.

Amendment No. 322 about

"not visible to the naked eye"

is a way of recognising that the technical features are factors which could attract design right. Therefore, although to some extent I am going back to earlier arguments, on this occasion I am resting my case on the Department's own words. In paragraph 3 on the note of the clause, the Department made the clear point that the functional character of the design and not just its look, and therefore, in my view, its technical efficiency, could be a deciding factor whether the design is "commonplace" or "original". The hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley) is making an important point. I believe that my amendment reaches towards that principle.

Amendment No. 323 tackles the issue slightly differently. It tries to establish that

"A design is not commonplace for the purposes of this part if the creation of the design required a substantial input on the part of the designer of that design in terms of time and cost."

That would capture the designs of the two parts that I have used as illustrations, but it would also cover many other parts. I believe that it expresses in words what the Minister

[Mr. Rowlands]

claims that the Bill states. I got those terms from a letter that the Minister sent to the Association of Manufacturers of Domestic Electrical Appliances. In an interesting and important paragraph, rejecting one suggestion from the industry, the Minister replied:

"As I explained in Committee, and as I understand my officials said during your recent meeting,"—

that is a reference to the meeting between AMDEA and his officials—

"the term 'original' by itself does not require a design to be in any way different from what is widely known and used. Consequently the term 'commonplace' is needed simply to prevent mundane, routine, everyday, well-known designs from acquiring design right."

I am sure that we all understand that because it is a reasonable statement. What interested me is that the letter continued:

"For example, if someone were to 'design' a piece of uniform hollow tubing, such a design would be unlikely to pass the 'commonplace' test, and I would hope you would agree that this is the right result. It is, of course, not a question of whether the article is commonplace, but rather whether the design is commonplace,"

The key words are:

"I think if a company had spent two years designing something the result would be hardly likely to be a commonplace design."

Therefore, in responding to a series of suggestions by the industry about what the words "commonplace" and "original" mean, the Minister's letter gave an important interpretation of the difference. He introduced the concept that if the design of the part had taken two years, it would be highly unlikely that it would be a commonplace design. That prompted me immediately to table amendment No. 323, which turns into legislative form the interpretation placed on the difference between commonplace and original in the Minister's letter to the industry. Therefore, I travel hopefully on both these amendments because of their excellent parentage.

Mr. Thomas McAvoy (Glasgow, Rutherglen): As my hon. Friend knows, I too am a former employee of the Hoover company, having worked at the Cambuslang plant. I am sure that my hon. Friend will agree that the substantial input into design and investment by the Hoover company in Cambuslang and in Merthyr has resulted in stable employment in those areas, and that the Government's proposals put that at risk.

Mr. Rowlands: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. I seem to be surrounded by former employees of Hoover. I never had the privilege of having a start at Hoover. I never qualified and I do not think that the company would have let me near its factories. However, I am sure that both my hon. Friend and the hon. Member for Caernarfon speak from experience.

I am simply saying that I do not see how the Government and the Minister could object to my two amendments because one comes from a note on the clause issued by the Minister's own Department and the second comes virtually straight from a letter that the Minister sent to the industry explaining and interpreting what "design", "commonplace" and "original" mean and the difference between them.

As we all know, the problem is that *Hansard*, letters from Ministers and notes on clauses are not the law and have no legislative force when it comes, as no doubt it will in the not-too-distant future, to a court case about what is commonplace and what is original. Therefore, I am seeking to make sure that what the Minister intends or what the Minister tells people that he is intending is translated into legislative form.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): I am interested in these two amendments because they seem to provide the sort of protection to which a manufacturer should be reasonably entitled. I was not a member of the Committee and there is sometimes a sort of understanding that only hon. Members who served on the Bill Committee have a contribution to make. That is not the case.

I should like the Minister to elaborate on the case of a manufacturer of motor car pistons in my constituency. That manufacturer is Hepworth and Grandage Ltd. Are motor car pistons regarded as commonplace? If they are it would mean that any manufacturer could make or replace Hepworth and Grandage pistons. That firm has developed pistons that cause engines to use less oil than more conventional pistons. For example, the firm uses hardening in sections of the aluminium pistons. Such a difference is not often visible to the naked eye and would fall within the criteria of amendment No. 322.

Hepworth and Grandage use many and varied techniques that are also covered by amendment No. 323. The firm has spent a great deal on research and development. For example, it has fitted sets of pistons that it has designed into test engines made by manufacturers such as British Leyland and Jaguar and those engines have been run over many hours. The engines were then dismantled and the pistons carefully examined to see where wear has taken place and to see what disadvantages accrued from the design features being tested.

Such tests cost a great deal and it seems quite wrong that the design, testing and development of an object which to all intents and purposes, and certainly to the average onlooker, seems commonplace should be set to one side. Those processes might cost many hundreds of thousands of pounds and put a British manufacturer at a clear disadvantage. In any case, Hepworth and Grandage is at a clear disadvantage because it is the only major piston manufacturer left in the United Kingdom. Several have gone out of business in the past quarter of a century and we must make sure that we protect our diminishing manufacturing base.

I remind the Minister that about 2 million jobs in manufacturing have gone since 1979. There has been an onslaught on the manufacturing base that the Government inherited in 1979. We are entitled to say that manufacturers that do not simply copy other products but invest in research and development and produce products superior to others should have the right not to have their products treated as commonplace and therefore open to imitation and production by other manufacturers. Such other manufacturers may not have invested in research and development and may not employ research and development staff. Such staff are often expensive to employ because of their specialist skills.

Hepworth and Grandage is the largest private manufacturer in Bradford, with the largest number of workers. Its expertise and skill have enabled it to obtain a contract to provide pistons for the American company Buick. Because of its acknowledged position as one of the world's leading piston manufacturers it is building for Buick a piston manufacturing plant in America. That

world position has been achieved only because of its investment in research and development and for that reason I seek the Minister's assurance that amendments Nos. 322 and 323 will be accepted. If the Minister does not accept them, will he assure us that it is because there is within the Bill adequate protection for manufacturers such as Hepworth and Grandage? Will the Bill protect such a company from pirate imitations by manufacturers working on rock bottom prices and therefore able to obtain a competitive advantage?

6.45 pm

The Minister may talk about the market place being the sole criterion, but to adopt such an attitude would be extremely unfair. That is because it is easy for a manufacturer to pick up an object that it claims is commonplace and manufacture it without any research and development costs, thereby gaining a competitive advantage. That may seem attractive to the Minister, but if further research and development is needed to keep up with international competitive developments, a manufacturer such as Hepworth and Grandage will be placed at a severe disadvantage. It seems fair and reasonable to give such a company some protection.

I look to the Minister to accept the amendments that were tabled and explained in Committee and based on the words of the Minister and a briefing provided to the Committee. If the Minister does not accept the amendments, will it be because he is satisfied beyond peradventure, as the lawyers say, that the Bill provides adequate protection? Almost certainly lawyers will become involved in this legislation and our job is to try to keep the lawyers out. When there is confrontation in court because of ambiguities in legislation it means that despite all the scrutiny in Committee upstairs and in the House this place has failed to provide clear legislation that will not lead to confrontation in court.

I hope that no obscurities will exist in the legislation because of the Minister's refusal to accept the amendments that clarify and perfect the legislation in the way that my hon. Friend the Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands) has suggested. On the face of it those amendments seem to put forward very strong arguments.

Mr. Butcher: I agree with the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) that our objective must be to design—if I may use that word—the Bill so that interpretation is minimal or at best simple. As a parliamentarian of some experience, he will know that trying to do that is never easy. Sometimes the efforts of parliamentary counsel who wish to clarify matters for the lawyers confuse things for the legislators, and we have even greater difficulty understanding some of the jargon.

I shall shortly deal with the hon. Gentleman's point about that excellent company Hepworth and Grandage. Before I do that I should tell the House that my motivation was to try to find a better word than "commonplace". After consultation with my officials who consulted all these infamous draftsmen, I wrote to the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands) and said —I hope he did not think I was being flippant—that we had difficulties in finding another word that gave the benefits he sought to achieve.

The hon. Gentleman criticised us for being passive, but that is a little unfair. Over many years my Department has been active in attempting to draw up clear and workable provisions for the Bill. The word "commonplace" was chosen not at random but after much consideration, including the deliberations of a working group which looked at the protection of semiconductor chip design at European Community level. We have looked at the matter again to be sure, but try as we might we have not seen a better formulation.

The hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney teased us about whether the notes on clauses and their relationship to my letter to him and subsequent observations meant that we were entirely convinced and not only agreed with his objectives but agreed that we should try to find another way. The passage that the hon. Gentleman quoted from the notes on clauses is, as he said, an explanation of the meaning of "design". Design does not need to be visible to receive design right. Amendment No. 322 is about the meaning of "commonplace", and that meaning is not assisted by adding other words out of context. The hon. Gentleman is still worried about the effect of the exclusion of commonplace designs. As I explained in Committee, the word "original" has the same meaning as that used in copyright in part I of the Bill—that is, independently created and not a copy.

By itself, the word "original" does not require the design to be in any way different from what is already widely known and used, and that is too generous a test for the acquisition of rights in designs. We therefore need a test to prevent well-known, everyday, standard designs from acquiring rights. That is all that the commonplace test is intended to do. I said in Committee that I was open to suggestions about how that might be expressed in the Bill and the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney is now seeking to refine the meaning of the word "commonplace". I believe that the word "commonplace" expresses our intention well. I have considered the hon. Gentleman's suggestions carefully, but I do not think that they would help—indeed, amendment No. 323 could be positively harmful.

Amendment No. 322 would require features that are not visible to the naked eye to be taken into account when assessing whether a design is commonplace. The problem is that that does not need saying. Design right is not restricted to visible features. There is nothing in the wording of the Bill that limits design right to features that are visible to the naked eye. Those features that are not visible to the naked eye, whether because they are internal, concealed features in the finished product or because they are too small to be seen, are covered by the Bill and, as a result, will automatically be taken into account at all levels. The only possible effect of stating the obvious—which is what the amendment seeks to do—is to cast doubt where none existed before.

Amendment No. 323 is slightly different. The Bill does not achieve what the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney wants, and I do not think that it should. If the amendment were accepted, a designer who had spent a lot of time and money to come up with a well-known, everyday, commonplace design would get rights in that design. That is not the sort of design that we want to encourage.

The test must be an objective one—is the design an everyday, commonplace design? If it is, there is no basis for an intellectual property right. It is for that reason, and not because we have not tried, that I have been resisting the amendment.

Mr. Rowlands: I should like to answer the Minister's comments on amendment No. 323. I tabled the amendment to establish that time and input should be a factor in determining whether a design was commonplace or original because in his letter, the Minister said specifically:

"I think if a company had spent two years designing something the result would be hardly likely to be a commonplace design."

Yet he has now said to the House that that is not the sort of design that he wants to encourage. Did he mean the words when he wrote them, and is he now withdrawing them, or what? I do not understand his argument. I have used his own words and criteria in the amendment.

Mr. Butcher: We are now interpreting plain English and attempts to make the English plainer or clearer. It is perfectly legitimate for me, or any hon. Member, to consider designers who make a considerable effort. The pistons which were mentioned by the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer), although an allegedly commonplace article, required considerable effort, whether in heat treatment or a characteristic which gave a particular performance.

If I identified as commonplace a paper clip or a piece of straight tubing that had been chopped into certain lengths, I believe that that would be a fairly accurate assessment. In saying that items that need far more intellectual effort and investment are not commonplace, I am not saying anything that the House under normal circumstances would find unacceptable.

The hon. Member for Bradford, South made a fine speech on behalf of the prime employer in his constituency and asked whether the motor pistons that it produced were commonplace. I am afraid that that is the wrong question. As I have explained on several occasions, the question should be whether the piston design is commonplace. Some pistons will receive design right protection and some will not. It will depend on whether the design features employed are or are not commonplace.

The hon. Member for Bradford, South mentioned a particular feature of a particular piston and said that it deserved protection; that is an argument that we have to meet. As I understand the example, the feature concerned was the material used, not the shape and configuration of the pistons.

Design right applies only shape and configuration and it cannot and should not protect materials and composition. Such features should be protected under the patent system if they have sufficient merit.

I agree with the contention of the hon. Member for Bradford, South. Massey-Ferguson in my own constituency is very concerned with the behaviour of mixtures of metals at very high temperatures; and it uses special heat treatment processes to produce special features in its components.

Mr. Wigley: The Minister said that design right applied to shape and configuration. Surely that is the whole point of the amendment, which seeks to apply design right to what is out of sight, which is excluded at present.

Mr. Butcher: We have wrestled with this matter for a long time. It is my duty, and it was the duty of the Committee, to try to make clear what would happen in the aftermath of our decision. Having gone through the matter with my officials and listened to advice from outside, I believe that the use of the word "commonplace" will satisfy the requirement to deal with this thorny duty that I thought the House had placed upon us. Unfortunately, this is our last chance to do that, so we must treat the matter very seriously, and I think that this is the very best shot that we can make.

Mr. Cryer: Does not the Minister agree that if there are to be differences from the commonplace in design, the relevant materials must be involved? For example, motor car pistons often work at high temperatures. The design shape is retained by virtue of the materials that are used, and they are part of the design. The piston is designed to maintain the compression of gases in the combustion chamber and to prevent the excess burning of oil from the crank case chamber. Designers therefore cannot ignore the material which, under pressure and heat, will change in one instance but remain true to the original design in the other, thus showing a superior design. The materials are not entirely separate from the shape and design. Amendment No. 322 deals with features that are not apparent to the naked eye, and materials must be among those.

Mr. Butcher: I think that we are arguing at cross purposes. There is not much between us on the question of the interplay between materials and processes of manufacturing, but there is a distinction between those features and the shape and configuration of the article. Consider the most modern techniques of precision casting or heat treatment; certain shapes may become possible only if such technologies and techniques are introduced.

Let me return to the practicalities. Someone may come along and try to rip off the shape of a piston into which a lot of work has gone. A competitor can do that only if the performance of the rip-off part is the same under certain engineering conditions. It is therefore legitimate to argue that we are discussing related issues. It is certainly true that some design options become possible because of the performance of certain materials, but the protection that the hon. Gentleman seeks is already there. A Taiwanese operation might want to supply rip-off, straight-copy pistons to given specifications but it would, I think, have great difficulty in convincing General Motors, for example, that the performance of those pistons—the aspects in which General Motors would be interested—would be adequate.

The hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney tested me further and said that the letter I had sent to him showed that I was inconsistent. I said that it was unlikely that anyone who spent two years and a lot of money on a design would come up with something commonplace, but that it was just possible that he might. As I have said, in that case he should not get protection. There is nothing inconsistent between the letter that I wrote to industry and what I said today.

7 pm

Mr. Rowlands: I am extremely puzzled and rather disappointed by the Minister's reply. I would have thought that the Minister would have reached out to us more in an attempt to assure us, if nothing else, about the cases that we have quoted.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) has spoken about the close interrelationship between a design and the materials used to create it. The

Hoover washing machine door seal took a considerable time to design, but its success also depends upon the materials used to create it. Without such a combination there would be many problems regarding the performance of that machine.

We have sought to emphasise the aspects of a design that are not naked to the eye and it is a strong case to make —it was mentioned in the Department's report. The time and effort that is put into a design should also be taken into account when determining whether something is commonplace or original.

Mr. Cryer: The Minister has said that a rip-off imitation could be easily detected, but does my hon. Friend agree that that is not necessarily true? An original manufacturer of pistons may produce one that lasts for 90,000 miles and provides good service. The rip-off piston may only provide good service for between 20,000 and 30,000 miles, but by that time it is possible that the source of the rip-off will have been forgotten.

Mr. Rowlands: It is true that a copy may work perfectly well for a given period of time, but when it breaks down the consumer will not complain to the copyist, but to the manufacturers, for example Hoover. The same is true if a piston or other car part breaks down.

I shall not push this amendment. The Minister says one thing, but industry says another. We give the Minister notice that if we find that we were right and he was wrong after the Bill has been passed, we shall demand amending legislation as quickly as possible. We shall have to wait and see. I hope that we are wrong and that the Minister is right, but if not we shall have to come back to it.

In the light of the arguments, I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 27

MEANING OF "INFRINGING COPY"

Amendment made: No. 162, in page 12, line 26, at end insert—

'section *(Transfer of copies of works in electronic form)* (2) (further copies, adaptations, &c. of work in electronic form retained on transfer of principal copy),'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Corporate Affairs (Mr. Francis Maude): I beg to move amendment No. 242, in page 12, line 31, leave out from beginning to 'or'.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): With this it will be convenient to discuss the following amendments:No. 6, in page 27, line 26, leave out clause 69.

No. 234, in clause 69, page 27, line 26, leave out from 'private' to end of line 35 and insert—

'purposes of—

(a) a recording of a broadcast or cable programme, or a copy of such a recording, or

(b) a photograph of a television broadcast or cable programme, or a copy of such a photograph,

does not infringe any copyright in the broadcast or cable programme.

(2) An act done with a view to the thing made being sold or let for hire, played or shown in public, broadcast or included in a cable programme service shall be treated for the purposes of this section as not done for private purposes.'.

No. 316, in page 27, line 29, leave out—

'or in any work included in it'.

Government amendment No. 243.

Amendment No. 25, in schedule 2, page 152, line 21, leave out from 'purpose' to end of line 23.

Mr. Maude: This amendment is about time shifting and it is a subject that has given pleasure to many people. I am bound to say that I have some hesitation tonight in proposing to the House that we should remove from the clause that element that has given so much innocent fun to so many.

In Committee, when I moved the proposal to legalise private recordings which were kept for 28 days or less, I did not foresee the excitement that that modest proposal would generate. It was regrettable that those who expressed opinions so vividly and so swiftly left out the usual preliminary stage of finding out what the proposal was about. I was astonished, for example, only a day or so after the Committee had reached its decision, to read in the newspaper the remarks of a Queen's counsel who thought that the Government's proposal was outrageous and that it was quite wrong to use the criminal law to prohibit home copying. The propositions that we were invoking the criminal law and that in some way we were taking steps to restrict home copying were wrong, as a cursory examination of the proposal would have disclosed.

I am bound to say that, in the middle of all the innocent fun that was had, some serious harm was done by those who reacted in a somewhat hysterical way to the proposal.

I received a number of letters from people, especially from the elderly, who were in genuine distress and anxiety at the spectre of police invading their homes to check the age of their video recordings. The pundits and the politicians who made those fanciful suggestions must or should have known how far from the truth they were.

Let us be quite clear about the present position. It is a breach of copyright to copy any television programme except a live broadcast of, for example, a sporting event. Therefore it is legal to record the test match live in the afternoon—should there be any play and should anyone want to—but not legal to record the highlights in the evening. Presently, virtually all video recording of television programmes is in breach of copyright law. The amendment that was passed by the Committee was thus a liberalising measure and not a restrictive one. Perhaps I should read that out again at dictation speed to make sure that it is understood. The amendment made legal much more than is at present legal. It sought to bring within the law those people who are at present outside it.

Because it is widely accepted that the practice of time shifting—the recording of a programme in order to watch it at a more convenient time—does no harm to the copyright owner, we have sought to make it legal. Because the building up of video libraries by individuals may well cause detriment to the copyright owner, it is necessary under the Berne convention that copyright law should continue to apply to those recordings.

Clause 69 will allow recording of a broadcast or cable programme solely for the purpose of enjoying it at a more convenient time without infringement of any copyright, whether of the broadcast or cable programme or of any work included in it. Under its provisions, Members of this House could set their video recorders to record this evening's television broadcasts in order to view them tomorrow morning or at the weekend and they would not infringe any copyright.

When the clause was introduced in Committee, we added the 28-day proviso since we thought this would

[Mr. Maude]

provide an additional safeguard to copyright owners against practices which damage their interests. The rest, as they say, is history. The rule gave some people a lot of fun, some of it perhaps at my expense. I do not begrudge them their fun all that much.

It occurs to me that there may be those—no doubt the same people who criticised the first proposal—who will seek to present this amendment as a U-turn. They would be as wrong now as they were then. The 28-day proposal made the law more liberal than it is now. By removing the 28-day proviso the law will be more liberal still. So, far from making a U-turn, this is a further move in exactly the same direction.

Clause 69 minus the 28-day rule still only permits time shifting. It does not permit the recording and long-term retention for repeated viewing of television programmes. Such practices may, and in the case of broadcast feature films do, damage the copyright owner's interest by their impact on the rental market, and to a lesser extent on cinema exhibition.

The adoption of amendments Nos. 242 and 243 will allow the public to record television programmes for the purposes of time shifting. In passing I assume that amendment No. 25 is an error and was tabled in over-enthusiasm to remove the 28-day period. The 28-day period in schedule 2, which amendment No. 25 would delete, is concerned with the broadcasters' so-called "ephemeral right" only and is set out in clause 67.

I commend the amendment to the House.

Mr. Mark Fisher (Stoke-on-Trent, Central): We have heard a delightful and extremely subtle speech from the Minister. Anyone coming into this debate might have felt that he was treating us to an example of time shifting since there were times during his speech when I thought I was back in Committee listening to exactly the same speech that he gave us about 28 days ago.

Perhaps people will wish to delete both speeches and erase them from their recorder and library of video tapes of the Minister's favourite speeches. Hon. Members who have been treated to his speech before found it a little rich that he tried to pass this off as a great liberalising measure. He may have convinced himself, but I doubt whether he will convince many members of the public who have suffered anxiety and distress on this score. He limited legality to 28 days and said that from then on people would be in breach of the law, which caused anxiety, so it was difficult for him to say that it was an example of his great liberalising mood. However, he kindly said that he did not begrudge us our fun—adding slowly, "all that much." His hon. Friends behind him may not have seen his icy, stretched smile when he said that. Nevertheless, the words came out even if the eyes and mouth remained static.

The truth is that the Government and the Minister got themselves into the most almighty mess in Committee and were justly ridiculed there and, the next day, in the press. One of the more serious newspapers referred to the Minister as a parliamentary jester. Many hon. Members might think that my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) fills that role to everyone's satisfaction, but obviously the Minister was trying to compete with him. He certainly awoke to fame the next morning, but it was fame of an unfortunate sort. Being a reasonable and sensible man, he set to work with his civil servants to review the matter and find some alternative. The difficulty was that he had considered the obvious solution—to delete subsection (2)—in Committee and categorically refused it. I do not want to rub salt in his wounds, but it is worth repeating his words: that deleting subsection (2)

"would be in breach of the Berne Convention and it would not be a reasonable balance between the rights of copyright owners and the users."—[*Official Report, Standing Committee E*, 9 June 1988; c. 479.]

Having so categorically ruled out the one thing that would get him off the hook, the Minister has had difficulty in recent weeks squaring the position. I am delighted to say that he has now come forward with an amendment that will delete subsection (2), in spite of the fact that, as far as I can see, nothing has changed. Certainly, the Berne convention has not. If the Minister believed this was in breach of it then, it still is now. Nor has the Government's view of the convention changed; nor has the balance between the rights of consumers and users. In any case, the Government have come to their senses and now propose to leave out subsection (2). If hon. Members look at the Order Paper they will notice that it must be enormously encouraging for the Government to know that they have the unqualified support of the hon. Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow), without which no Government can survive.

Although this is a huge improvement which will relieve the anxiety and distress to which I have referred, the provision is by no means perfect yet. There are still problems. I hope the Minister understands them. The last seven words of subsection (1)—

"or in any work included in it"—

mean that internal composite copyrights as part of any broadcast are still included. That presents some problems, unfairnesses and potential dangers which could, in future, become very serious.

There are still anomalies in merely deleting subsection (2). Hon. Members on both sides must understand that the Minister is legalising off-air recording, but tape-to-tape recording will remain illegal. The Minister may have some way out of that, in which case I hope he will tell us about it. The distinction between off-air recording and tape-to-tape is not easily made. Even after the Government amendment goes through, tape-to-tape will be illegal, and off-air recording legal. Is that reasonable? How can the Minister possibly enforce it? It is as unenforceable as his original 28-day ruling.

7.15 pm

There is a further difficulty, in that the rights of copyright owners will be harmed. Libraries of film, opera and other broadcast work will be able to be built up, to the financial detriment of copyright owners. That is in breach of the Berne convention, article 9 of which states that unless there is compensaion such actions are serious matters. So, although this gets the Minister out of being ridiculed by the popular press and most people in pubs all over the country, the new provision does not deal with these and other anomalies and problems which remain.

The difficulties are genuine. We all want time shifting for domestic purposes to be legal—so much is common sense. Broadcasters want that, too. However, we should not ignore the rights of copyright owners and of composers which, in five or 10 years' time, when there will be different technology, more tape-to-tape machines, more

stereos with better quality of recording for sound and more satellite services, will be more complex than we can anticipate now. So we must get it right now. I fear that although we have freed ourselves of one difficulty with this amendment, which we welcome, we have not solved all the problems.

Possibly the only way to deal with this is the tape levy, which we shall consider later. It is a solution that other European countries have come up with. But for the time being, we welcome the Minister's having admitted, with some dignity, the error of his former ways on time shifting —though not perhaps with the enormous grace and humour for which we had hoped. In doing so, he has pleased a great many people.

Mr. Simon Coombs (Swindon): I join the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher) in congratulating my hon. Friend the Minister on the way in which he has escaped from his dilemma and spoken about the subject.

I had the misfortune not to catch the eye of the Chairman of the Selection Committee and was not a member of the Standing Committee. I learned of this proposal on a Friday morning while mowing my lawn. I received a phone call from my local newspaper reporter who asked me for a comment. It is said that we can all remember where we were when the late President Kennedy was assassinated. I can vividly remember the sense of shock on coming to the phone and being asked to comment on a proposal by the Government that we should impose a 28-day restriction on the recording of programmes from the television.

My immediate reaction is recorded in the Swindon *Evening Advertiser* as having been an expression of surprise, which was an understatement. I used rather stronger language than that. I said that I thought the proposal would be unenforceable and that it was very unlikely that a civil action would be taken by film manufacturers—in the case of films shown on television —or by the television companies which caused the films to be shown. I wondered aloud to my friend the reporter how the evidence would be obtained which would show when recordings had been collected, and the most recent occasion when they had been used, which would call into question the number of days for which they had been kept.

The hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central put the argument clearly and I shall not repeat it. Time shifting cannot reasonably be limited to 28 days. I received a letter from the wife of an army officer who is serving abroad. She said that she would like to be able to keep programmes that she had recorded until her husband's return from his next tour of duty abroad, which would not be within 28 days. Under the Bill, that would constitute a more reasonable time, but it would not be within 28 days.

People have told me in my surgery that they have stayed within the law all their lives but wonder whether they will be put outside it by this provision. However innocent and well intentioned my hon. Friend's proposal may have been, it caused genuine distress to a large number of people. What is time shifting? Under the Bill, even with subsection (2) deleted, we are told that it is keeping a recording until a more reasonable or convenient time in order to watch a product that has been recorded. Why is that not the case with a tape library compiled by someone who is busy in his normal life but considers that he would like to watch a film in the future which he does not have time to watch at present? It could be argued that tape libraries fall within this general principle of time shifting, and I invite my hon. Friend to comment on that.

I am delighted that the Government have not looked for half measures and have not tinkered with the subsection, but have agreed to delete it completely. That is much the best way of resolving the problem. I welcome the Minister's conversion, and I enjoyed the way in which he justified it in terms of greater liberalisation. It is interesting that the Government are prepared to change their mind on the matter not once, but twice. It gives me hope that they will listen to our arguments on another important aspect of the Bill. When we come to the debate on home taping, we must persuade the Government to change their mind on that aspect, too. In the end, it is not the change of mind that matters but getting the Bill right. In this instance, they have got it right—for the time being. In the other case, we still have an argument to make. I am pleased to support the amendment.

Mr. Page: I welcome the withdrawal of the subsection. I was a member of the Committee—I heard my 5 per cent. of the debate—and I was grateful to the Whip on duty who released me from the Committee five minutes before the end, which enabled me to turn a cowardly cheek towards the more ribald comments of my less-than-respectful constituents during that weekend.

But the withdrawal of the subsection does not mean the disappearance of the problem of breach of copyright. In the absence of compensation to copyright owners under clause 69, it is doubtful whether it complies with article 9 of the Berne convention. We shall have more than enough time during the debate on the blank tape levy to deal with those points, but I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will consider the protection of copyright and the introduction of some recompense to copyright owners when the Bill proceeds to another place.

Mr. Maude: I appreciate the dilemma in which my stance put the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher). He could not make up his mind whether to carp or gloat, so he did a bit of both. But his carping was misplaced. He asked about my remarks in Committee on the Berne convention. The convention says that copying must not conflict with normal exploitation of the work, or unreasonably prejudice the legitimate interests of the copyright owner. Even without subsection (2), the clause is limited to time shifting and, as we have said on previous occasions, time shifting does not conflict with normal exploitation or unreasonably prejudice legitimate interests.

Subsection (2) was included to reinforce the fact that subsection (1) does not permit indefinite retention of recordings, but we now accept that specifying an arbitrary limit would produce the wrong result in many cases of genuine time shifting. Removal of subsection (2) legitimises genuine cases, but practices going beyond time shifting will continue to infringe copyright. The Berne convention must be given an interpretation that produces a realistic and practical result, and we consider that our approach in this difficult area does that.

My hon. Friend the Member for Swindon (Mr. Coombs) said that his constituents who had always abided by the law were anxious that my proposals would put them outside the law. That is not the case. Anyone who has been recording television programmes has been in breach of

[Mr. Maude]

copyright law. The proposal that I moved in Committee would have brought some of them within the law. It would not have put outside the law anyone who is at present inside it. It is important to get that straight. It is not a question of withdrawing the amendment that we moved in Committee, which was a liberalising measure. Removing the 28-day subsection is a further liberalising measure. Both move in the same direction: bringing people who carry out an essential innocent activity within the law. I commend the amendment to the House.

Amendment agreed to.

New clause 3

APPLICATION FOR REVIEW OF ORDER AS TO LICENCE

'.—(1) Where the Copyright Tribunal has made an order under section 123 or 124, the licensing body or the persons entitled to the benefit of the order may apply to the Tribunal to review its order.

(2) An application shall not be made, except with the special leave of the Tribunal—

(a) within twelve months from the date of the order or of the decision on a previous application under this section, or

(b) if the order was made so as to be in force for 15 months or less, or as a result of the decision on a previous application under this section is due to expire within 15 months of that decision, until the last three months before the expiry date

(3) The Tribunal shall on an application for review confirm or vary its order as the Tribunal may determine to be reasonable in the circumstances.'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.

New clause 4

EFFECT OF ORDER OF TRIBUNAL AS TO LICENCE

'.—(1) Where the Tribunal has made an order under section 123 or 124 and the order remains in force, the person entitled to the benefit of the order shall if he—

(a) pays to the licensing body any changes payable in accordance with the order or, if the amount cannot be ascertained, gives an undertaking to pay the charges when ascertained, and

(b) complies with the other terms specified in the order,

be in the same position as regards infringement of copyright as if he had at all material times been the holder of a licence granted by the owner of the copyright in question on the terms specified in the order.

(2) The benefit of the order may be assigned—

(a) in the case of an order under section 123, if assignment is not prohibited under the terms of the Tribunal's order; and

(b) in the case of an order under section 124, if assignment was not prohibited under the terms of the orginal licence.'.—*[Mr. Butler.]*

Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.

New clause 5

PROVISIONS WITH RESPECT TO CERTAIN DESIGNS REGISTERED BEFORE COMMENCEMENT

'.—(1) Where a design is registered under the Registered Designs Act 1949 in pursuance of an application made after 12th January 1988 and before the commencement of this Part which could not have been registered under section 1 of that Act as substituted by section 255 above—

(a) the right in the registered design expires ten years after the commencement of this Part, if it does not expire earlier in accordance with the 1949 Act, and

(b) any person is, after the commencement of this Part, entitled as of right to a licence to do anything which would otherwise infringe the right in the registered design.

(2) The terms of a licence available by virtue of this section shall, in default of agreement, be settled by the registrar on an application by the person requiring the licence; and the terms so settled shall authorise the licensee to do everything which would be an infringement of the right in the registered design in the absence of a licence.

(3) In settling the terms of a licence the registrar shall have regard to such factors as may be prescribed by the Secretary of State by order made by statutory instrument.

No such order shall be made unless a draft of it has been laid before and approved by a resolution of each House of Parliament.

(4) Where the terms of a licence are settled by the registrar, the licence has effect from the date on which the application to the registrar was made.

(5) Section 11B of the 1949 Act (undertaking to take licence of right in infringement proceedings), as inserted by section 260 below, applies where a licence is available as of right under this section, as it applies where a licence is available as of right under section 11A of that Act.

(6) Where a licence is available as of right under this section, a person to whom a licence was granted before the commencement of this Part may apply to the registrar for an order adjusting the terms of that licence.

(7) An appeal lies from any decision of the registrar under this section.

(8) This section shall be construed as one with the Registered Designs Act 1949.'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.

New clause 6

TRANSFER OF COPIES OF WORKS IN ELECTRONIC FORM

'(1) This section applies where a copy of a work in electronic form has been purchased on terms which, expressly or impliedly or by virtue of any rule of law, allow the purchaser to copy the work, or to adapt it or make copies of an adaption, in connection with his use of it.

(2) If there are no express terms—

(a) prohibiting the transfer of the copy by the purchaser, imposing obligations which continue after a transfer, prohibiting the assignment of any licence or terminating any licence on a transfer, or

(b) providing for the terms on which a transferee may do the things which the purchaser was permitted to do,

anything which the purchaser was allowed to do may also be done without infringement of copyright by a transferee; but any copy, adaptation or copy of an adaptation made by the purchaser which is not also transferred shall be treated as an infringing copy for all purposes after the transfer.

(3) The same applies where the original purchased copy is no longer usable and what is transferred is a further copy used in its place.

(4) The above provisions also apply on a subsequent transfer, with the substitution for references in subsection (2) to the purchaser of references to the subsequent transferor.'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.

New clause 7

PERIOD AFTER WHICH REMEDY OF DELIVERY UP NOT AVAILABLE UNDER PART I

'(1) An application for an order under section 98 (order for delivery up in civil proceedings) may not be made after the

end of the period six years from the date on which the infringing copy or article in question was made, subject to the following provisions.

(2) If during the whole or any part of that period the copyright owner—

(a) is under a disability, or

(b) is prevented by fraud or concealment from discovering the facts entitling him to apply for an order,

an application may be made at any time before the end of the period of six years from the date on which he ceased to be under disability or, as the case may be, could with reasonable diligence have discovered those facts.

(3) In subsection (2) "disability"—

(a) in England and Wales, has the same meaning of the Limitation Act 1980;

(b) in Scotland, means legal disability within the meaning as in the Prescription and Limitation (Scotland) Act 1973;

(c) in Northern Ireland, has the same meaning as in the Statute of Limitations (Northern Ireland) 1958.

(4) An order under section 108 (order for delivery up in criminal proceedings) shall not, in any case, be made after the end of the period of six years from the date on which the infringing copy or article in question was made.'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

Motion made and Question proposed, That the clause be read a Second time.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): With this it will be convenient to discuss the following: Government new clause 8—*Order as to disposal of infringing copy or other article.*

Government new clause 9—*Jurisdiction of county court and sheriff court: Part I.*

Government new clause 10—*Period after which remedy of delivery up not available under Part II.*

Government new clause 11—*Order as to disposal of illicit recording.*

Government new clause 12—*Jurisdiction of county court and sheriff court: Part II*

Government new clause 13—*Order as to disposal of infringing article, &c.*

Government new clause 14—*Jurisdiction of county court and sheriff court: Part III.*

Government amendments Nos. 164 to 169, 174 to 177, 180 to 183, 185 to 190, 193, 195 to 198.

Amendment No. 279, in clause 288, page 133, line 40, leave out from 'court' to end of line 5 on page 134, and insert

'before which a person is charged with an offence under section 58A may, whether he is convicted of the offence or not, if it appears to the court that he has in his possession, custody or control any goods or material which are

(a) good or material in respect of which any offence under section 58A has been committed; or

(b) goods of the same description as those in respect of which the offence was committed, or material similar to that in respect of which the offence was committed, bearing a mark identical to or nearly resembling that in relation to which the offence was committed; or

(c) goods or material which fall within paragraph (a) or paragraph (b) of section 58A(1) and whose resemblance to the goods or material bearing a registered trade mark is such as to satisfy the court that they have been created with the intent mentioned in paragraph (b) of section 58A(2) (whether or not the creator is before the court);

order that the goods shall be forfeited and destroyed or otherwise dealt with as the court may think fit.'.

Government amendments Nos. 199 to 203.

Mr. Iain Mills (Meriden): The Minister knows my strong views on counterfeiting and the need for forfeiture. It is highly desirable to ensure that all articles identified as counterfeits are removed from circulation. As I understand it, clause 288 allows for forfeiture only when a person has been convicted.

I am grateful to the Minister and his officials for listening to my comments on the matter when we met recently, and I had hoped that he might have had some sympathy or a more wide-ranging power. It is important to summarise the fact that forfeiture should not be altered on the sole ground that counterfeit goods have been found under the present powers in the Bill. If the goods are counterfeit, forfeiture should be possible.

7.30 pm

Mr. Butcher: My hon. Friend's amendment would make it possible for a criminal court to order forfeiture of a person's property whether or not he had been convicted of an offence. Such provisions appear in earlier clauses in relation to copyright and performance rights, but not here in relation to counterfeits.

There is a fundamental difference between counterfeits and articles that infringe copyright or performance rights. Counterfeits are essentially trade mark infringements that are created or used with the purpose of passing them off as being genuinely associated with a legitimate user of the mark in question. Whether that additional element is present is a question for the court to determine, and it cannot do so on the basis of goods or materials alone. It depends on the state of mind of the accused. If there has been no conviction, we can see no way in which the courts could, in law, distinguish between counterfeits and purely civil trade mark infringements. It would be wholly wrong to give criminal courts jurisdiction over purely civil infringements. That is the function of the civil courts and the procedure applying there.

For that reason only, I cannot accept my hon. Friend's amendment as drafted.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause read the Second time, and added to the Bill.

New clause 8

ORDER AS TO DISPOSAL OF INFRINGING COPY OR OTHER ARTICLE

'(1) Where an infringing copy or other article has been delivered up in pursuance of an order under section 98 or 108, or has been seized and detained in pursuance of the right conferred by section 99, an application may be made to the court—

(a) for an order that it shall be forfeited to the copyright owner or destroyed or otherwise dealt with as the court may think fit, or

(b) for a decision that no such order should be made.

(2) In considering what order (if any) should be made, the court shall consider whether other remedies are available in an action for infringement of copyright would be adequate to compensate the copyright owner and to protect his interests.

(3) Provision shall be made by rules of court as to the service of notice on persons having an interest in the copy or other articles, and any such person is entitled—

(a) to appear in proceedings for an order under this section, whether or not he was served with notice, and

(b) to appeal against any order made, whether or not he appeared;

and an order shall not take effect until the end of the period within which notice of an appeal may be given or, if before the

end of that period notice of appeal is duly given, until the final determination or abandonment of the proceedings on the appeal.

(4) Where there is more than one person interested in a copy or other article, the court shall make such order as it thinks just and may (in particular) direct tht the article be sold, or otherwise dealt with, and the proceeds divided.

(5) If the court decides that no order should be made under this section, the person in whose possession, custody or control the copy or other article was before being delivered up or seized is entitled to its return.

(6) References in this section to a person having an interest in a copy or other article include any person in whose favour an order could be made in respect of it under this section or under section *(Order as to disposal of illicit recordings)* or *(Order as to disposal of infringing article, &c.)* of this Act or section 58BA of the Trade Marks Act 1938 (which make similar provision in relation to infringement of rights in performances, design and trade marks).'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.

JURISDICTION OF COUNTY COURT AND SHERIFF COURT: PART I

'.—(1) In England, Wales and Northern Ireland a county court may entertain proceedings under—

section 98 (order for delivery up of infringing copy or other article),

section 101(5) (order as to exercise of rights by copyright owner where exclusive licensee has concurrent rights), or

section (*Order as to disposal of infringing copy or other article*) (order as to disposal of infringing copy or other article),

where the value of the infringing copies and other articles in question does not exceed the county court limit for actions in tort.

(2) In Scotland proceedings for an order under any of those provisions may be brought in the sheriff court.

(3) Nothing in this section shall be construed as affecting the jurisdiction of the High Court or, in Scotland, the Court of Session.'.—*[Mr. Butler.]*

Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.

New clause 10

PERIOD AFTER WHICH REMEDY OF DELIVERY UP NOT AVAILABLE UNDER PART II

'(1) An application for an order under section 190 (order for delivery up in civil proceedings) may not be made after the end of the period of six years from the date on which the illicit recording in question was made, subject to the following provisions.

(2) If during the whole of any part of period a person entitled to apply for an order—

(a) is under a disability, or

(b) is prevented by fraud or concealment from discovering the facts entitling him to apply,

an application may be made by him at any time before the end of the period of six years from the date on which he ceased to be under a disability or, as the case may be, could with reasonable diligence have discovered those facts.

(3) In subsection (2) "disability"—

(a) in England and Wales, has the same meaning as in the Limitation Act 1980;

(b) in Scotland, means legal disability within the meaning of the Prescription and Limitation (Scotland) Act 1973;

(c) in Northern Ireland, has the same meaning as in the Statute of Limitations (Northern Ireland) 1958.

(4) An order under section 194 (order for delivery up in criminal proceedings) shall not, in any case, be made after the end of the period of six years from the date on which the illicit recording in question was made.'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.

New clause 11

ORDER AS TO DISPOSAL OF ILLICIT RECORDING

'(1) Where an illicit recording of a performance has been delivered up in pursuance of an order under section 190 or 194, or has been seized and detained in pursuance of the right conferred by section 191, an application may be made to the court—

(a) for an order that it shall be forfeited to such person having performer's rights or recording rights in relation to the performance as the court may direct, or shall be destroyed or otherwise dealt with as the court may think fit, or

(b) for a decision that no such order should be made.

(2) In considering what order (if any) should be made, the court shall consider whether other remedies available in an action for infringement of the rights conferred by this Part would be adequate to compensate the person or persons entitled to the rights and to protect their interests.

(3) Provision shall be made by rules of court as to the service of notice on persons having an interest in the recording, and any such person is entitled—

(a) to appear in proceedings for an order under this section, whether or not he was served with notice, and

(b) to appeal against any order made, whether or not he appeared;

and an order shall not take effect until the end of the period within which notice of an appeal may be given or, if before the end of that period notice of appeal is duly given, until the final determination or abandonment of the proceedings on the appeal.

(4) Where there is more than one person interested in a recording, the court shall make such order as it thinks just and may (in particular) direct that the recording be sold, or otherwise dealt with, and the proceeds divided.

(5) If the court decides that no order should be made under this section, the person in whose possession, custody or control the recording was before being delivered up or seized is entitled to its return.

(6) References in this section to a person having an interest in a recording include any person in whose favour an order could be made in respect of the recording under this section or under section *(Order as to disposal of infringing copy or other article)* or *(Order as to disposal of infringing article, &c.)* of this Act or section 58BA of the Trade Marks Act 1938 (which makes similar provision in relation to infringement of copyright, design right and trade marks).'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.

New clause 12

JURISDICTION OF COUNTY COURT AND SHERIFF COURT: PART II

'.—(1) In England, Wales and Northern Ireland a county court may entertain proceedings under—

section 190 (order for delivery up of illicit recording), or

section *(Order as to disposal of illicit recording)* (order as to disposal of illicit recording),

where the value of the illicit recordings in question does not exceed the county court limit for actions in tort.

(2) In Scotland proceedings for an order either of those provisions may be brought in the sheriff court.

(3) Nothing in this section shall be construed as affecting the jurisdiction of the High Court or, in Scotland, the Court of Session.'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.

New clause 13

ORDER AS TO DISPOSAL OF INFRINGING ARTICLE, &C.

'(1) Where an infringing article or other thing has been delivered up in pursuance of an order under section 222, an application may be made to the court—

(a) for an order that it shall be forfeited to the design right owner or destroyed or otherwise dealt with as the court may think fit, or

(b) for a decision that no such order should be made.

(2) In considering what order (if any) should be made, the court shall consider whether other remedies available in an action for infringement of design right would be adequate to compensate the design right owner and to protect his interests.

(3) Provision shall be made by rules of court as to the service of notice on persons having an interest in the article or other thing, and any such person is entitled—

(a) to appear in proceedings for an order under this section, whether or not he was served with notice, and

(b) to appeal against any order made, whether or not he appeared;

and an order shall not take effect until the end of the period within which notice of an appeal may be given or, if before the end of that period notice of appeal is duly given, until the final determination or abandonment of the proceedings on the appeal.

(4) Where there is more than one person interested in an article or other thing, the court shall make such order as it thinks just and may (in particular) direct that the thing be sold, or otherwise dealt with, and the proceeds divided.

(5) If the court decides that no order should be made under this section, the person in whose possession, custody or control the article or other thing was before being delivered up or seized is entitled to its return.

(6) References in this section to a person having an interest in an article or other thing include any person in whose favour an order could be made in respect of it under this section or under section *(Order as to disposal of infringing copy or other article)* or *(other as to disposal of illicit recordings)* of this Act or section 58BA of the Trade Marks Act 1938 (which make similar provision in relation to infringement of copyright, rights in performances and trade marks).'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.

New clause 14

JURISDICTION OF COUNTY COURT AND SHERIFF COURT: PART III

'.—(1) In England, Wales and Northern Ireland a county court may entertain proceedings under—

section 222 (order for delivery up of infringing article, &c.),

section *(Order as to disposal of infringing article, &c.)* (order as to disposal of infringing article, &c.), or

section 226(5) (application by exclusive licensee having concurrent rights),

where the value of the infringing articles and other things in question does not exceed the county court limit for actions in tort.

(2) In Scotland proceedings for an order under any of those provisions may be brought in the sheriff court.

(3) Nothing in this section shall be construed as affecting the jurisdiction of the High Court or, in Scotland, the Court of Session.'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.

New clause 16

BRITISH SHIPS, AIRCRAFT AND HOVERCRAFT: PART I

' .—(1) This Part applies to things done on a British ship, aircraft or hovercraft as it applies to things done in the United Kingdom.

(2) In this section—

"British ship" means a ship which is a British ship for the purposes of the Merchant Shipping Acts (see section 2 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1988) otherwise than by virtue of registration in a country outside the United Kingdom; and

"British aircraft" and "British hovercraft" mean an aircraft or hovercraft registered in the United Kingdom.'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.

BRITISH SHIPS, AIRCRAFT AND HOVERCRAFT: PART II

' .—(1) This Part applies to things done on a British ship, aircraft or hovercraft as it applies to things done in the United Kingdom.

(2) In this section—

"British ship" means a ship which is a British ship for the purposes of the Merchant Shipping Acts (see section 2 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1988) otherwise than by virtue of registration in a country outside the United Kingdom; and

"British aircraft" and "British hovercraft" mean an aircraft or hovercraft registered in the United Kingdom.'.*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.

New clause 18

CROWN USE OF DESIGN RIGHT: COMPENSATION FOR LOSS OF PROFIT

' .—(1) Where Crown use is made of a design, the government department concerned shall pay—

(a) to the design right owner, or

(b) if there is an exclusive licence in force in respect of the design, to the exclusive licensee,

compensation for any loss resulting from his not being awarded a contract to supply the articles made to the design.

(2) Compensation is payable only to the extent that such a contract could have been fulfilled from his existing manufacturing capacity; but is payable notwithstanding the existence of circumstances rendering him ineligible for the award of such a contract.

(3) In determining the loss, regard shall be had to the profit which would have been made on such a contract and to the extent to which any manufacturing capacity was under-used.

(4) No compensation is payable in respect of any failure to secure contracts for the supply of articles made to the design otherwise than for the services of the Crown.

(5) The amount payable shall, if not agreed between the design right owner or licensee and the government department concerned with the approval of the Treasury, be determined by the court on a reference under section 242; and it is in addition to any amount payable under section 232 or 233.

(6) In the application of this section to Northern Ireland, the reference in subsection (5) to the Treasury shall, where the government department concerned is a Northern Ireland department, be construed as a reference to the Department of Finance and Personnel.'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

Mr. Butcher: I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take the following: Government new clause 19—*Crown use of registered design: compensation for loss of profit*

Amendment No. 14, in clause 231, page 102, line 41, at end insert—

'(d) purposes of protecting the environment.'.

No. 15, in page 102, line 41, at end insert—

'(d) civil defence purposes'.

Government amendment No. 99.

Amendment No. 32, in page 102, line 46, after 'matters', insert—

'and which agreement relates specifically to the articles concerned or to equipment embodying such articles'.

No. 26, in page 103, line 11, at end insert—

[Mr. Deputy Speaker]

'"competent authority" means a Secretary of State, a Minister of State or a Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State acting in person.'.

No. 28, in page 103, line 19, leave out 'either before or after the use and'.

No. 29, in page 103, line 21, at end insert— 'but may not be given after the use'.

No. 27 in clause 232, page 103, line 26, leave out subsection (1) and insert—

'(1) Subject to this section, Crown use of a design by a government department, or by a person authorised by a government department, under section 231 shall be made only after a competent authority has given notice in writing to the government department concerned authorising such use.

(1A) No authorisation shall be given under this section unless the competent authority has notified the design right owner in writing of the intention to use or authorise the use of his design for the services of the Crown and such authorisation shall not be given unless either—

(a) at the expiration of three months beginning with the date of service of the notice on the design right owner no agreement between the design right owner and the government department has been concluded; or

(b) before the expiration of said period the design right owner has given notice in writing to the government department concerned that no such agreement is likely to be concluded within that period.

(1B) An authorisation under this section may be given by a competent authority without compliance with subsection (1A) of this section in any case where the government department concerned.

(a) is unable to ascertain the identity of the design right owner on reasonable enquiry; or

(b) where, and for so long as, it appears to the competent authority that the disclosure of use of the design for the services of the Crown would be prejudicial to the safety of the State.

(1C) Where Crown use is made of a design, the government department concerned shall, in cases not falling within paragraphs (a) and (b) of subsection (1B) of this section, give to the design right owner such information as to the nature and extent of use as he may from time to time require.'.

Government amendments Nos. 335 to 337, 245, 249 and 157.

Mr. Butcher: New clauses 18 and 19 and amendments Nos. 335 to 337, 245 and 249 deal with the issue of how the compensation to be paid for Crown use is to be calculated, especially in relation to lost profits. That was a point raised in Committee by my hon. Friend the Member for Canterbury (Mr. Brazier) and we think that it is right that there should be compensation for lost manufacturing profit. In this respect, a rights owner will be able to claim compensation both for lost trading profit and for losses in respect of underused capital assets. Of course, any claimant must be in a position to supply the Crown from his existing capacity; he will not be able to claim losses by arguing that he could supply the Crown by building a new factory, and he will not be able to claim for further losses. For example, where a foreign Government order from the same source as the Crown, the claimable loss will not include lost profits in respect of foreign orders that go elsewhere because the Crown has gone elsewhere.

I am sure that those new arrangements will make a very significant contribution towards ensuring that the Crown user provisions do not act in any way as a disincentive to those who would invest in R and D. Unlike a number of other issues arising on Crown use, they are concerned only with the practical, economic effects of Crown use and do not depend on the nature of the property right involved. We are therefore proposing to make the necessary change in respect of design right, registered designs, and patents, which will mean that any manufacturer can be sure that he will receive fair and proper compensation, irrespective of the type of right he holds.

Another point raised in Committee by my hon. Friend was the width of the provisions on foreign defence. His point was that the Bill would allow any article to be supplied to a foreign Government wherever we had any sort of agreement with the Government concerned. Amendent No. 99 includes the words "in pursuance of", which has exercised my hon. Friend to a considerable extent, the idea being that there must be a connection between what is in the agreement and what is supplied to the Government concerned. I do however recognise that my hon. Friend may see amendment No. 99 as a case of one step forward, one step back, because it refers to "agreements or arrangements".

The inclusion of a reference to "arrangements" will cover any memorandum of understanding that we have with a foreign Government. That is unavoidable because the United Kingdom has very few formal "agreements" with other countries. In this regard, "agreements" is a legal expression and most of the United Kingdom's dealings with other countries will not qualify as an "agreement". The expression "arrangement" is therefore quite proper. However, my hon. Friend made the point that many of these "arrangements" are cast in very broad terms, without any reference to particular equipment. His argument is that, as a consequence, clause 231 will give the Ministry of Defence carte blanche to supply any equipment to those countries.

I can, however, tell my hon. Friend that the Ministry of Defence does not intend to rely on general, non-specific memoranda of understanding that do not define the equipment to be supplied. It is concerned here with the more specific arrangements that refer to particular equipment, and it would not normally expect to use the Crown use powers to supply equipment to foreign Governments without giving the rights owner prior notification, which is the key point for my hon. Friend.

I appreciate that my hon. Friend would prefer to see all that written into the Bill, but we have found it impossible to distinguish in statute between the different types of "arrangements". I must therefore ask my hon. Friend to accept what I have said about the Ministry of Defence not seeking to abuse the unavoidable width of the provision.

Mr. Julian Brazier (Canterbury): I should repeat the declaration of interest that I made to the Committee. Before I came to the House I worked as a management consultant and several of my clients were in the defence industry. However, I severed all financial ties with them when I was elected to the House.

I thank my hon. Friend the Minister for the considerable amount of time that both he and his officials have put into the area of Crown user provisions, and I welcome the introduction of new clause 18 and amendment No. 249. The House will recall that my concern with the Crown use provision in clauses 231 to 233, relating to the Crown's rights to seize design rights outside emergency situations, was that such powers accidentally strangle the goose that lays the golden eggs. Companies will invest their own money in design only if they feel that they will benefit from the results. Therefore,

I welcome new clause 18, which, as my hon. Friend rightly said, provides for a proper level of compensation if the Crown user rights are invoked, and which takes account of the loss of manufacturing profit and of unused manufacturing capacity that would result from the award of an order somewhere else.

I have two concerns and one question on new clause 18, and also one question on amendment No. 249. My view and the view of the industry, or such parts of it as I have been able to consult since new clause 18 was tabled, is that it provides adequate safeguards for the bulk of the defence industry, but I am concerned about the position of smaller companies which cannot afford to go to court to enjoy the protection that new clause 18 would give.

In particular, the small company is opened up to two weaknesses, one of which is being threatened: there is nothing to stop an official in a negotiation saying to a company, "If you don't cut your prices a bit further, we will get one of these slapped on you," in the knowledge that the company cannot afford to go to court. The other weakness is the problem of retrospective use. If, by accident, the Ministry should leak information and as a result do millions of pounds' worth of damage to a company, as the law is now drafted, it could retrospectively authorise that leak.

That is why I have introduced some safeguards in my suggested amendments. The first is in amendment No. 26, which says that a Minister must authorise use of these powers. That means that it will not be done lightly by an official. Secondly, amendment No. 27 imposes a three-month cooling-off period. Both amendments were incorporated in the Defence Contracts Act 1958, which dealt with technical information. The second provision ensures a clean break between a company and the Ministry on one hand and the point at which the powers are invoked on the other. Thus the small company can talk to its Member of Parliament, trade association and so on in the knowledge that that is next best to being able to go to court if the company cannot afford that. In amendments Nos. 28 and 29, the retrospective use of those powers is banned.

My hon. Friend the Minister more or less covered the other area of concern, which is the extreme width of the foreign defence purposes clause. Let me expand a little on what my hon. Friend said. Basically, there are two types of arrangements or memoranda of understanding between the British Government and foreign Governments. There are general ones that cover a blanket agreement to trade and can be signed at the drop of a hat by the Ministry, without consultation with industry. There are specific ones, which involve a specific agreement to supply a specific type of equipment. My concern, which is embodied in amendment No. 32, is that the Ministry should invoke those powers only in the second case where there is a specific agreement by the Ministry with the foreign power, covering a specific piece of equipment.

The Minister has assured us that, if powers are to be invoked for foreign defence purposes, the company will be given notice. Notice is worth something, but if the Minister is unable to accept amendment No. 32 I hope that he will go a little further and say that the Ministry will not invoke it without a specific agreement being entered into on that particular equipment.

If I read new clause 18 correctly, the compensation for which it provides is in addition to the small licence fee to which a company will be entitled under clause 232. I hope that the Minister will confirm that I am right. Amendment 249 deals with a completely new matter, a change to the Patents Act 1977. That was completely unexpected. Indeed, such a change was not asked for in Committee. It is a bold move and I welcome it. It will encourage companies to invest their money in projects that might lead to the issue of patents, in the full knowledge that they will enjoy the benefit of those patents. It is a good move and I strongly support it.

I understand the merits of this proposal for future agreements on patents, but I am not sure that the Ministry of Defence's flank is covered regarding past agreements. I hope that the Minister will confirm, either now or in writing, that past agreements are covered and that the Ministry will not have to pay compensation to companies for patent rights for which it has already paid under past agreements.

Abraham Lincoln, that great statesman, said that the introduction of patents into the American economy added the fuel of interest to the fire of innovation. My hon. Friend has gone to much trouble to meet my requests about design rights and he has taken a very bold step regarding patents. The defence industry will be much healthier for it. More defence companies will be willing to put their money up front. I congratulate him.

Mr. Frank Doran (Aberdeen, South): I am pleased that the hon. Member for Canterbury (Mr. Brazier) has modified his position since Committee, when he thought that the clause would

"effectively destroy our armed forces' re-equipment programme in the next century."—[*Official Report, Standing Committee E*, 16 June 1988, c. 602.]

My conversion will not be quite so dramatic.

Mr. Brazier: If the hon. gentleman looks at my words, he will see that I said that the clause unamended would do that. I tabled amendments and the Government have gone a long way towards meeting my criticism.

Mr. Doran: My conversion will not be quite so dramatic, but I welcome the compensation arrangements in the new clause.

As for amendments Nos. 14 and 15, clause 231(2) introduces an interesting element. For some years, the Government have had the power to override design right and patents in the interests of defence. They have now introduced the power to override design right for what subsection (2)(c) refers to as "Health Service purposes." The point was made forcibly in Committee that this was an interesting concept for a Conservative Government, and we teased the Minister about the effect, had such a clause been introduced by a Labour Government. It opens up the possibility of local health authorities using the powers. There is nothing to prevent them from doing so. They act as agents of a Government Department and they would be entitled to ignore the design rights of the drugs industry.

The two amendments deal with other important matters that affect the public interest—the defence of the realm, foreign defence purposes and health service purposes. It is important that the Government should also consider the use of these powers for the purpose of protecting the environment. The Select Committee on Agriculture is to publish a report tomorrow that we understand will be fairly critical of the Government's response to Chernobyl. We may in future be faced with a similar tragedy to that of Chernobyl in this country. The clause is restricted to foreign defence purposes and the

[Mr. Doran]

defence of the realm. It says nothing about civil defence purposes. I hope that the Minister will consider that issue. Purposes to protect the environment and civil defence purposes are two important issues.

I urge the Minister to let us have his views on that matter. I hope that he will also say how Health Service purposes, which he did not explain properly in Committee because he was slightly embarrassed by the points that were put to him, will work in practice.

7.45 pm

Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith (Wealden): As I take a keen and active interest in defence matters, I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will accept that the new clause will be welcomed by those who work in the defence industry. I have to declare an interest. I am associated with a subsidiary of Philips which is known as MEL. My interest is wider than that, as is my concern. My hon. Friend knows that considerable apprehension was felt in the defence industry about the possibility of this Bill being passed unamended. We live in a tougher and, rightly, more competitive world for defence equipment. It is only right that money that is wholly funded by defence companies should be treated as set out in the Bill.

My hon. Friend the Member for Canterbury (Mr. Brazier) expressed other concerns. He shows a deep appreciation of the need for defence and takes an active interest in this country's defence policy. We cannot expect to get everything at one go, but we much appreciate what has already been done.

Mr. Butcher: The House is indebted to my hon. Friend the Member for Canterbury (Mr. Brazier) for the work that he has done. It is almost unprecedented for a colleague in his position to change so much in so short a period. It involved two, and possibly three, Ministries. I witnessed the way that he went about it, not least in my office, but he was perfectly amenable and agreeable in the way that he put forward his arguments. He impressed two Government Departments simultaneously. I hope, however, that he will not mind if I refer first to amendments Nos. 14 and 15 that deal with civil defence and environmental protection.

Amendments Nos. 14 and 15 would add environmental protection and civil defence to the purposes for which the Crown use provisions could be activated. These are two important and worthy topics. I do not wish the fact that I shall advise the House to resist the amendments to be taken as decrying their significance. There are other significant areas that are not covered by the powers in clause 231, because defence and Health Service purposes are unique. For example, the soldier in the field needs to be completely familiar with his equipment, especially in difficult circumstances. That means that as far as possible the equipment must be uniform and instantly recognisable. If the new manufacturer cannot manufacture exactly to the old design, the service man may hesitate while working out how to use the equipment. In those vital moments of hesitation under battlefield conditions the battle may be lost. For defence purposes we need to be able to manufacture to an established design.

Similar considerations apply to the Health Service. Where health, or life and death, is an issue, there can be no compromise on design. The Health Service must have the best equipment, whether it is surgical, artificial joint replacements, or whatever. The existence of a design right covering the best equipment must not prevent the health authorities from going for the best. Important as they are, environmental protection and civil defence do not have that ultimate level of immediacy. Defence and Health Service purposes bear directly upon life and liberty in a particularly final manner. In our view, neither environmental protection nor civil defence qualify in quite the same way.

As I have been reminded repeatedly over the past few weeks, the Crown use powers represent a limitation on the rights of designers. We should not seek to limit design right except where it is necessary in the national interest, and that is the case only in defence and the Health Service and that is why the Crown use powers should be limited to those areas.

I now come to the points raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Canterbury (Mr. Brazier) and endorsed by my hon. Friend the Member for Wealden (Sir G. Johnson Smith). It is appropriate for me to record, as I did earlier, the cogency and enthusiasm of my hon. Friend the Member for Canterbury. He first made his case in Committee and I undertook to write to him and to other members of the Committee with our conclusions. I have done that on the four points he raised in Committee. I dealt with manufacturing profit in my earlier remarks and I shall now deal with the other matters in turn.

First, on ministerial authorisation, the question whether Crown use powers should only be invoked by a Minister personally, we have been persuaded that only Ministers should invoke those powers. Vigilant hon. Members will have noticed that we have not tabled an amendment on that matter. That is because that very question was dealt with when the Defence Contracts Bill, as it then was, was before the House. The view then was —and nothing has happened since to change it—that the most appropriate way of ensuring that only Ministers exercise the power is an assurance to that effect in the House. My hon. Friend has cited the resulting Act, the Defence Contracts Act 1958 as his precedent, and it would therefore be appropriate for me to deal with the matter in the same way as it was dealt with under that precedent. Therefore, we have decided, and we shall ensure that the powers in clause 231 will be invoked only by a Minister personally, and will not be delegated.

I now turn to the cooling-off period. I have to say that we cannot accept that in the form proposed by my hon. Friend. Formal invocation of the Crown powers will happen only where there is no alternative. The very urgency of which I spoke earlier will be paramount. A cooling-off period would compromise a vital need for continuous supplies in defence or the Health Service and for that reason I am not able to agree to one. Nevertheless, I appreciate that small firms in particular may be placed at a disadvantage because they are unfamiliar with the ins and outs of Crown use power. To meet that point, we have decided that, as soon as it appears that there is a need to invoke the powers set out in clause 231, steps will be taken to ensure that people concerned are aware of the rights and obligations of both sides. I cannot of course give any commitment on how far in advance of the powers being exercised this will happen, simply because the circumstances will inevitably vary from case to case.

Nevertheless, the Ministry of Defence will always endeavour to give the firm concern as much notice as

possible of its intention to use the Crown use powers. I hope that my hon. Friend will accept that assurance, which will mean that everyone will know where they stand so that negotiations can proceed on a fair and sensible basis.

Returning to my hon. Friend's point on foreign defence, I have already explained why we cannot avoid using the expression in pursuance of an agreement or arrangement. I can only reiterate that there is nothing sinister about the expression. It has been used to define the United Kingdom's dealings in statutes going back to 1949 and earlier. I have also said, and I am happy to repeat, that the Ministry of Defence does not intend to rely on general, non-specific memoranda of understanding. That is my hon. Friend's concern. It intends to consider only those arrangements which relate to specific equipment. It would expect to give rights owners prior notification if it intends to supply equipment to a foreign Government under the Crown use powers.

That is as far as I wish to go. I am sorry that my hon. Friend has at times—and he would argue, with due cause—seen my hon. Friends in other Ministeries in a particularly bleak light. He will not be surprised if I say that his views are not as justified as he may think, but I am satisfied that they will deal sensibly and responsibly if they ever have cause to use the design right Crown use powers. It is the time-honoured way of things that my hon. Friends at the MOD have not demurred in that draft.

I shall also say a few words about retrospective authorisation. My noble Friend has already given an assurance in the other place that the Crown use provisions will not be used to legitimise someone who has deliberately infringed design right. I am happy to repeat that assurance today.

As to the question whether loss manufacturing profit compensation will be in addition to payment fees for the right, the answer is yes. On compensation on manufacturing profits, my hon. Friend asked whether the payment which industry will obtain under the new clauses is additional to the payment industry will be entitled to under clause 232 or the equivalent patent or registered design provision. I am happy to assure him that it will be an additional payment and that is expressly stated in the new clauses.

Existing patent agreements fall into two categories. Where the MOD has made a settlement with a patentee manufacturer based on the use of a privately owned patent, that manufacturer will be able to renegotiate terms for all use after commencement. Where the MOD places a contract for the development of new equipment, and the contractor makes an invention with public funds, the practice is for the contractor to retain ownership. The MOD retains the right to use the invention free of charge for the services of the Government. That practice is not expected to change.

I apologise for the length of my reply, but in Committee all members of the Committee brigaded behind my hon. Friend, and the Committee expected such a reply to be forthcoming on Report.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause read a Second time and added to the Bill.

New clause 19

CROWN USE OF REGISTERED DESIGN: COMPENSATION FOR LOSS OF PROFIT

'.—(1) In Schedule 1 to the Registered Designs Act 1949 (Crown use), after paragraph 2 insert—

"*compensation for loss of profit.*

2A.—(1) Where Crown use is made of a registered design, the government department concerned shall pay—

(a) to the registered proprietor, or

(b) if there is an exclusive licence in force in respect of the design, to the exclusive licensee,

compensation for any loss resulting from his not being awarded a contract to supply the articles to which the design is applied.

(2) Compensation is payable only to the extent that such a contract could have been fulfilled from his existing manufacturing capacity; but is payable notwithstanding the existence of circumstances rendering him ineligible for the award of such a contract.

(3) In determining the loss, regard shall be had to the profit which would have been made on such a contract and to the extent to which any manufacturing capacity was underused.

(4) No compensation is payable in respect of any failure to secure contracts for the supply of articles to which the design is applied otherwise than for the services of the Crown.

(5) The amount payable under this paragraph shall, if not agreed between the registered proprietor or licensee and the government department concerned with the approval of the Treasury, be determined by the court on a reference under paragraph 3; and it is in addition to any amount payable under paragraph 1 or 2 of this Schedule.

(6) In this paragraph—

'Crown use', in relation to a design, means the doing of anything by virtue of paragraph 1 which would otherwise be an infringement of the right in the design; and

'the government department concerned', in relation to such use, means the government department who or on whose authority the act was done.".'.

(2) In paragraph 3 of that Schedule (reference of disputes as to Crown use), for sub-paragraph (1) substitute—

"(1) Any dispute as to—

(a) the exercise by a Government department, or a person authorised by a Government department, of the powers conferred by paragraph 1 of this Schedule,

(b) terms for the use of a design for the services of the Crown under that paragraph,

(c) the right of any person to receive any part of a payment made under paragraph 1(3), or

(d) the right of any person to receive a payment under paragraph 2A,

may be referred to the court by either party to the dispute.".

(3) The above amendments apply in relation to any Crown use of a registered design after the commencement of this section, even if the terms for such use were settled before commencement.'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.

New clause 22

COPYRIGHT IN ACTS AND MEASURES

'(1) Her Majesty is entitled to copyright in every Act of Parliament or Measure of the General Synod of the Church of England.

(2) The copyright subsists from Royal Assent until the end of the period of 50 years from the end of the calendar year in which Royal Assent was given.

(3) References in this Part to Crown copyright (except in section 160) include copyright under this section; and, except

as mentioned above, the provisions of this Part apply in relation to copyright under this section as to other Crown copyright.

(4) No other copyright, or right in the nature of copyright, subsists in an Act or Measure.'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Brought up and read the First time.

Motion made and Question proposed, That the clause be read a Second time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss also Government new clause 23, and Government amendments Nos. 253, 254, 256 to 259 and 261 to 264.

Mr. Blair: I wish to raise just one point. This provision is obviously necessary following the separation of the Crown and parliamentary copyright. I understand that the regime is essentially that Bills will enjoy parliamentary copyright up until Royal Assent or rejection, whereas Acts of Parliament after Royal Assent will be Crown copyright. I understand that that has been done after consultation with officials from both Houses. Has the Minister received any other representations about this?

Mr. Butcher: We have received no other representations in relation to this matter.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause read a Second time and added to the Bill.

New clause 23

Copyright in Parliamentary Bills

'.—(1) Copyright in every Bill introduced into Parliament belongs, in accordance with the following provisions, to one or both of the Houses of Parliament.

(2) Copyright in a public Bill belongs in the first instance to the House into which the Bill is introduced, and after the Bill has been carried to the second House to both Houses jointly, and subsists from the time when the text of the Bill is handed in to the House in which it is introduced.

(3) Copyright in a private Bill belongs to both Houses jointly and subsists from the time when a copy of the Bill is first deposited in either House.

(4) Copyright in a personal Bill belongs in the first instance to the House of Lords and after the Bill has been carried to the House of Commons to both Houses jointly, and subsists from the time when it is given a First Reading in the House of Lords.

(5) Copyright under this section ceases—

(a) on Royal Assent, or

(b) if the Bill does not receive Royal Assent, on the withdrawal or rejection of the Bill or the end of the Session:

Provided that, copyright in a Bill continues to subsist notwithstanding its rejection in any Session by the House of Lords if, by virtue of the Parliament Acts 1911 and 1949, it remains possible for it to be presented for Royal Assent in that Session.

(6) References in this Part to Parliamentary copyright (except in section 161) include copyright under this section; and, except as mentioned above, the provisions of this Part apply in relation to copyright under this section as to other Parliamentary copyright.

(7) No other copyright, or right in the nature of copyright, subsists in a Bill after copyright has once subsisted under this section; but without prejudice to the subsequent operation of this section in relation to a Bill which, not having passed in one Session, is reintroduced in a subsequent Session.'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.

New clause 24

Use of the term "patent attorney": supplementary provisions

'.—(1) The term "patent attorney" may be used in reference to a solicitor, and a firm of solicitors may be described as a firm of "patent attorneys", without any contravention of section 265.

(2) No offence is committed under the enactments restricting the use of certain expressions in reference to persons not qualified to act as solicitors—

(a) by the use of the term "patent attorney" in reference to a registered patent agent, or

(b) by the use of the term "European patent attorney" in reference to a person on the European list.

(3) The enactments referred to in subsection (2) are section 21 of the Solicitors Act 1974, section 31 of the Solicitors (Scotland) Act 1980 and Article 22 of the Solicitors (Northern Ireland) Order 1976.'.

Brought up, and read the First time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss the following: New clause 15—*Authorised persons for purpose of acting as patent agents etc.*—

'(1) A person holding an authorisation granted by the Secretary of State under the provisions of this section is an authorised person for the purpose of carrying on the business of acting as agent for others for the purpose of—

(a) applying for or obtaining patents, in the United Kingdom or elsewhere, or

(b) conducting proceedings before the comptroller relating to applications for, or otherwise in connection with, patents.

'(2) An application for authorisation by the Secretary of State may be made by an individual, partnership or body corporate.

(3) The Secretary of State may make rules:—

(a) regulating the manner in which any such application shall be made and any authorisation granted, and providing for the withdrawal, termination or suspension of any such authorisation, and

(b) regulating the competence, professional practice, conduct and discipline of authorised persons.

(4) Without prejudice to the generality of the preceding subsection, rules under this section shall:—

(a) prescribe minimum standards of general education that must have been obtained by persons who seek to hold an authorisation,

(b) prescribe any education or training to be undergone by persons who seek to hold an authorisation,

(c) require authorised persons to take out and maintain insurance with authorised insurers, and prescribe conditions which an insurance policy must satisfy, and

(d) provide for a fund to indemnify members of the public against any losses incurred as a result of the advice or actions of authorised persons.

(5) In subsection (4), "authorised insurers" means a person permitted under the Insurance Companies Act 1982 to carry on:—

(a) insurance business of class 13 in Schedule 2 to that Act; or

(b) insurance business of classes 1, 2, 14, 15, 16 and 17 in that Schedule.

(6) Rules under this section shall be made by statutory instrument which shall be subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament.'.

Amendment No. 18, in clause 263, page 119, line 10, leave out from beginning to 'carry' in line 11 and insert 'A person shall not'.

Amendment No. 229, in page 119, line 16, after 'patents', insert

', unless he is a registered patent agent, a solicitor, or an authorised person holding an authorisation under the provisions of section [*authorised persons for purpose of acting as patent agents etc.*]'.

Amendment No. 20, in page 120, line 1, leave out clause 265, and insert—

'(1) An individual shall not practise, describe himself, or hold himself out or permit himself to be described or held out as, or under any name, title, addition, or description which states or implies that he is, a patent agent or a patent attorney unless he is a registered patent agent.

(2) A partnership shall not practise, describe itself or hold itself out or permit itself to be described or held out as, or under any name, title, addition or description which states or implies that it is, a firm of patent agents or patents attorneys unless all the partners are registered patent agents or the partnership satisfies such conditions as may be prescribed for the purposes of this section.

(3) A body corporate shall not practise, describe itself or hold itself out or permit itself to be described or held out as, or under any name, title, addition or description which states or implies that it is, a firm of patent agents or patent attorneys unless—

(a) all the directors of the body corporate are registered patent agents or the body corporate satisfies such conditions as may be prescribed for the purposes of this section; or

(b) in the case of a company which began to carry on business as a patent agent before 17th November 1917, a director or the manager of the company is a registered patent agent and the name of that director or manager is mentioned as being so registered in all professional advertisements, circulars or letters issued by or with the company's consent on which its name appears.

(4) No individual, partnership, or body corporate shall take or use any name, title, addition or description, nor permit the use of any name, title, addition or description which states or implies that the individual, partnership, or body corporate is authorized by or is in any way connected with the Patent Office.

(5) This section is not contravened by the use of the term "European patent attorney" or "European patent agent" in the circumstances specified in section 266.

(6) A person who contravenes this section commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale; and proceedings for such an offence may be begun at any time within a year from the date of the offence.'.

Government amendments Nos. 108, 284, 285, 109 and 286.

Amendment No. 228, in clause 269, page 123, leave out lines 12 to 16 and insert—

'(c) a person whose authorisation has been withdrawn, terminated or suspended;".

Mr. Butcher: New clause 24 and amendments Nos. 284 to 286 concern the use of the expression "patent attorney". At present, this term as such is not in general use in the United Kingdom, although I understand that solicitors specialising in patent matters sometimes refer to themselves as "patent attorneys", particularly when dealing with foreign clients. Patent agents are, however, currently inhibited from using the term by the Solicitors Acts, which make it an offence for an unqualified person to pretend to be a solicitor. It is arguable that the use of "patent attorney" by a non-lawyer would contravene these provisions.

As far as possible, the Bill has attempted to maintain the status quo on the use of titles by those providing patent services in the United Kingdom. However, since it was felt to be highly likely that the newly-legalised unqualified patent practitioners would, in the absence of a specific prohibition, adopt the term "patent attorney" as an alternative to the restricted title "patent agent" the Bill provides that it is to be an offence for a person who is not a registered patent agent to call himself a "patent attorney". The question whether, under the Solicitors Acts, a registered patent agent could do so is left open.

Following representations made to us by the solicitors' profession, we now realise that that approach fails in its objective of maintaining the status quo. In fact, the balance has shifted significantly away from solicitors by banning them from using the title "patent attorney". There are good reasons for allowing patent agents and solicitors to use the title. Following consultations with the professional bodies involved, that is what we have decided to do. I am pleased to say that both the professions are able to agree to the common-sense approach.

8 pm

Mr. Doran: Apparently, word is on the tapes that the Minister will be moving to another job. I congratulate him on that move and I welcome the fact that he is able to complete the Bill. When we realised who was to be his successor, it was a tremendous relief to those of us involved in the Bill that the Minister will be able to see it through.

There is serious concern about what the Government intend to do. At present, the office of patent agent is well known. It is regulated, there are strict entrance requirements and there is registration, which ensures that unregistered patent agents are an unknown concept in Britain. Obviously, solicitors can act as patent agents. After an Office of Fair Trading inquiry in 1986, the Government seemed to have accepted the recommendation that there should be deregulation in this area also. I will not say that I oppose the concept of deregulation: monopolies are there to be broken. If there was a monopoly of patent agents, I would not expect the Government to sit on their hands once the monopoly had been examined.

The Government's proposals have caused severe disquiet. There was a serious and long debate on this matter in Committee and I do not propose to rehearse all the details, because I know that we are under pressure of time. However, it is important to draw out one or two points.

One of the major reasons for breaking up any monopoly would be consumer protection. It is difficult to see that consumers will be protected by this set of proposals. The Bill prohibits the use by individuals or partnerships of the expressions "patent agent" and "patent attorney". However, that will not prevent the spread of what I regard as unscrupulous operators.

The Minister accepted that we would have a two-tier system where those who could afford it would seek the services of the fully registered and qualified patent agent or attorney and those who could not or did not want to afford them could seek advice in a sort of black market, which would be totally unregulated. The only restriction would be that those who practise in that area would not be entitled to call themselves patent agents. That is totally opposed to the interests of consumers. For that reason, we have tabled new clause 15, which would oblige the Secretary of State to seek in some way to regulate that part of the market.

We raised an analogy in Committee, and we had the benefit of the experience of my hon. Friend the Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell), who had been heavily involved in what we might regard as the deregulation of

[Mr. Doran]

the legal profession. He made a significant contribution to the passing of the Administration of Justice Act 1985, which created the new concept of the licensed conveyancer. I took the trouble to check that Act and it is fascinating to see the difference between what is proposed for patent agents and what the Government did in 1985. For patent agents the only restriction is the inability to use the expression "patent agent". There is nothing to say that analogous descriptions such as "patent expert" could not be used. The Comptroller-General of Patents is given the power to refuse to deal with anyone who transgresses in any way.

It is important to look at the 1985 Act. There are 26 sections dealing with the regulation, training, licensing and so on of conveyancers. Patents are extremely complicated. I have had 10 years experience of conveyancing in Scotland and I know that patents are a far more complicated area than modern-day conveyancing. Yet there is to be a totally unregulated market. Individuals will be able to pass themselves off as experts and, without any prior condition, qualification, registration, licence or anything of the sort, they will be able to set themselves loose on the public.

Clause 269 (2) gives the Comptroller-General the power to refuse to deal with certain agents. It gives no redress or compensation for the victims of bad advice or inadequately drafted patents. Often, that will not become known until the damage is done. In Committee we made the point forcibly that there should be a requirement for professional indemnity insurance. The Minister rather glibly dismissed the idea out of hand, on the basis that if anyone wanted to use an unlicensed patent agent, they were entitled to do so. He did not say that it should be necessary to protect the public.

It should be borne in mind that there are other areas where it would be difficult for people to find out about bad advice and so on, until the damage has been done. For example, what about an inventor who is told by an unlicensed or unregistered patent agent that his invention is not patentable? He may accept that advice, because he has chosen to use that patent agent, but he has no redress because the Government do not seek to provide it. There are no provisions for the payment of compensation or the finding of negligence. That will not even come before the Comptroller-General because he will not be exercising supervision over what goes on in the offices.

There are serious matters of public concern, which, as I said, were forcibly and fully expressed in Committee. We seek to allay the fears and the general concern by new clause 15, which would require the Secretary of State to regulate the market. The Government have done that forcibly for conveyancers, and there is no reason why they should not do the same in this equally important area.

Mr. Butcher: The issues raised by the hon. Member for Aberdeen, South (Mr. Doran) were looked at in some detail in Committee. However, the arguments bear further examination, although the hon. Gentleman will be disappointed to know that I am no more persuaded of the strength of his arguments now than I was before.

We believe that these proposals are unwarranted and burdensome. The Director General of Fair Trading made it clear in his report published in 1986 that restrictions on those wishing to offer patent services have a detrimental effect on costs to users of the system. He found in particular that under the present system many small firms and private inventors were being deterred from seeking advice. New clause 15 and other amendments consequential to it would ensure that they would continue to be deterred by the establishment of a new burdensome regulatory procedure.

We have said that there should continue to be a register and reserved titles that will signal which practitioners have undergone practical and theoretical training and hold a certain qualification. Such practitioners will no doubt continue to offer a high standard of service, but there should also be competition and choice in the provision of patent services.

We must recognise that those who require patent services are a relatively specialised class of consumer and must surely be credited with sufficient awareness to be able to chose the type of service that they need and can afford. A balance has to be struck between the seriousness of the risks to the consumer and the disadvantages that restrictions entail. Financial risk alone is not a decisive reason for the existence of restrictions. The patents profession is not alone in dealing with complex matters; anyone can offer an architect's services, although not call himself an architect. Anyone can offer legal advice—for example, staff of the citizens advice bureaux do so every day—without being solicitors. The activity and title of accountant are also unrestricted. In such cases, the consumer decides whether to employ a fully qualified practitioner or whether his needs can be met by someone else.

The new clause and its consequential amendments do not merely seek to restrict entry. They seek also to impose rules on practitioners, including the obligation to insure and to provide for a fund to indemnify against loss. That runs directly contrary to the need to create a more competitive environment by allowing a wider range of services and a reduction in costs to develop in response to consumer demand.

Restrictions still exist on the provision of conveyancing. The hon. Member for Aberdeen, South emphasised the need to protect the consumer of patent services from the unqualified, and drew comparisons with controls in that respect. As I have said, we recognise that there are risks involved in seeking advice from unqualified patent practitioners, but we must not lose sight of the fact that patent agents are employed by those whose business, to some extent, is that of inventor. Conveyancing services are used by millions of ordinary people who cannot be expected to have an appreciation of the procedures or risks involved in taking unskilled advice. It will be for the individual practitioner to decide what protection he requires against the possibility of giving poor advice. The individuals who are most likely to benefit from the reduction in costs and the wider availability of advice are those who currently receive no advice at all. It must be for them to choose a practitioner and to decide what value to put upon the protection that he is able to offer.

Mr. Lewis Stevens (Nuneaton): Does my hon. Friend agree that many inventors will not necessarily have any great business expertise, but many have an excellent idea? They can easily be dissuaded by an unqualified person from recognising the need for a patent. I should have thought that it is necessary to differentiate much more

clearly between those who can act on behalf of ordinary people with an idea and those whose advice can be recognised as having professional status.

Mr. Butcher: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. As he will know, when we considered the issue in other contexts we usually came to the view that competition coming in from the bottom end of the profession normally has a beneficial effect. My hon. Friend talked about that class of potential users who currently may not wish to go straight to a full-blown patent agent. Many people do not get advice. We are saying that there can be a lower tier of people who do not have a formal and detailed qualification to offer advice to that group of people who most often do not seek the advice that we think they should have. We are convinced that, in this respect as in others, the consumer —in this case, the inventor—gets a wider choice and advice is more widely available to those who need it most, very often an individual inventor or a small firm.

It will come as no surprise to the hon. Member for Aberdeen, South that I am unable to accept amendment No. 20 either. The restrictions in subsection (1) of the proposed new clause are so wide that it would be virtually impossible for anybody who is not a registered patent agent to advertise the fact that patent services were available. Thus the clause would defeat our overall objective of lifting restrictions on who may offer patent services. Similar arguments apply in respect of subsections (2) and (3), which relate to partnerships and companies.

I now refer briefly to subsection (4). I cannot really see why this provision should exist. It deals with misuse of the title patent office or related words. The subject matter is already covered by section 112 of the Patents Act 1977, which is not affected by anything in this Bill. Admittedly, section 112 is framed in different and slightly narrower terms, but we have never received any representations that it is deficient and ought to be extended in scope.

For those reasons I must resist amendment Nos. 18, 20, 228 and 229 and new clause 15.

8.15 pm

Briefly, amendments Nos. 108 and 109 relate back to amendments made in Committee. They were intended to ensure that the use of words related to the protected titles patent agent and patent attorney would also be caught by the clause. We had in mind expressions such as "patent agency". Since then, we have received representations that the amended clause is still too restricted in scope. For example, it has been put to us that, even though the letters "RPA" after a person's name are the normal abbreviation for registered patent agent, as it now stands the clause would not prohibit the use of those letters by an unregistered person.

Although we do not accept that a court would necessarily take that view, it does no harm to put the matter beyond doubt, so we are making these amendments so that the clause will refer to expressions rather than just words.

Mr. Blair: We can briefly deal with this new clause, as we had a full debate in Committee. I endorse what my hon. Friend the Member for Aberdeen, South (Mr. Doran) said. We are not against ending the monopoly for patent agents. We are simply concerned to ensure that those who have ideas and may hold themselves out to people as patent experts and patent consultants have some minimum qualifications. The Minister drew an analogy between the staff of citizens advice bureaux and patent experts giving advice. It seemed to be entirely beside the point. Staff of citizens advice bureaux make it absolutely clear that they are giving an informal service. They do not hold themselves out as experts.

Yet, under the provisions of the Bill, if the Opposition's new clause is not accepted, someone can say that he or she is a patent expert or patent consultant, but have no qualifications, no training whatsoever, no indemnity insurance, and absolutely no regulations whatsoever covering them in the conduct of their business. That seems to be wrong. A much better analogy is licensed conveyances. There should be an open, competitive market, but it should be subject to basic rules of protection for the consumer. Our new clause 15 gives such rules and protection, and the Government do not. I ask my hon. Friends to support our new clause in the Division Lobby tonight.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause read a Second time, and added to the Bill.

New Clause 15

AUTHORISED PERSONS FOR PURPOSE OF ACTING AS PATENT AGENTS ETC.

'(1) A person holding an authorisation granted by the Secretary of State under the provisions of this section is an authorised person for the purpose of carrying on the business of acting as agent for others for the purpose of—

(a) applying for or obtaining patents, in the United Kingdom or elsewhere, or

(b) conducting proceedings before the comptroller relating to applications for, or otherwise in connection with, patents.

(2) An application for authorisation by the Secretary of State may be made by an individual, partnership or body corporate.

(3) The Secretary of State may make rules:—

(a) regulating the manner in which any such application shall be made and any authorisation granted, and providing for the withdrawal, termination or suspension of any such authorisation, and

(b) regulating the competence, professional practice, conduct and discipline of authorised persons.

(4) Without prejudice to the generality of the preceding subsection, rules under this section shall:—

(a) prescribe minimum standards of general education that must have been obtained by persons who seek to hold an authorisation,

(b) prescribe any education or training to be undergone by persons who seek to hold an authorisation,

(c) require authorised persons to take out and maintain insurance with authorised insurers, and prescribe conditions which an insurance policy must satisfy, and

(d) provide for a fund to indemnify members of the public against any losses incurred as a result of the advice or actions of authorised persons.

(5) In subsection (4), "authorised insurers" means a person permitted under the Insurance Companies Act 1982 to carry on:—

(a) insurance business of class 13 in Schedule 2 to that Act; or

(b) insurance business of classes 1, 2, 14, 15, 16 and 17 in that Schedule.

(6) Rules under this section shall be made by statutory instrument which shall be subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament.'.—*[Mr. Blair.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

Motion made and Question put, That the clause be read a Second time:—

The House divided: Ayes 130, Noes 223.

Division No. 442] **[8.18 pm**

AYES

Allen, Graham
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashton, Joe
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Margaret
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Corbett, Robin
Cousins, Jim
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Fraser, John
Galloway, George
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Haynes, Frank
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
Kirkwood, Archy
Lamond, James
Leighton, Ron
Litherland, Robert
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
O'Brien, William
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Quin, Ms Joyce
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sheerman, Barry
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Spearing, Nigel
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Worthington, Tony

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Allen McKay and
Mr. Robert N. Wareing.

NOES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Bigge-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Durant, Tony
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Fishburn, Dudley
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forth, Eric
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Sir Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Sir Charles
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine

Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rost, Peter
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thorne, Neil
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Tredinnick, David
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Stephen Dorrell and
Mr. David Maclean.

Question accordingly negatived.

New clause 20

RECORDINGS OF FOLKSONGS

'.—(1) A sound recording of a performance of a song may be made, for the purpose of including it in an archive maintained by a designated body, without infringing any copyright in the words as a literary work or in the accompanying musical work, provided the conditions in subsection (2) below are met.

(2) The conditions are that—

(a) the words are unpublished and of unknown authorship at the time the recording is made,

(b) the marking of the recording does not infringe any other copyright, and

(c) its making is not prohibited by any performer.

(3) Copies of a sound recording made in reliance on subsection (1) and included in an archive maintained by a designated body may, if the prescribed conditions are met, be made and supplied by the archivist without infringing copyright in the recording or the works included in it.

(4) The prescribed conditions shall include the following—

(a) that copies are only supplied to persons satisfying the archivist that they require them for purposes of research or private study and will not use them for any other purpose, and

(b) that no person is furnished with more than one copy of the same recording.

(5) In this section—

(a) "designated" means designated for the purposes of this section by order of the Secretary of State, who shall not designate a body unless satisfied that it is not established or conducted for profit,

(b) "prescribed" means prescribed for the purposes of this section by order of the Secretary of State, and

(c) references to the archivist include a person acting on his behalf.

(6) An order under this section shall be made by statutory instrument which shall be subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

8.30 pm

Mr. Norman Buchan (Paisley, South): I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take the following: New clause 21—*Parody in folk material*

"The publishing of a song in print or a sound recording does not infringe any copyright, where the words of the song are totally or substantially different from the original, the authorship is unknown, and the publishing is in connection with the study or dissemination of contemporary folk-lore.'.

Amendment No. 252, in page 152, line 1, at end insert—

'Recordings of folksongs

6A.—(1) A recording of a performance of a song may be made for the purpose of including it in an archive maintained by a designated body without infringing any of the rights conferred by Part II, provided the conditions in sub-paragraph (2) below are met.

(2) The conditions are that—

(a) the words are unpublished and of unknown authorship at the time the recording is made.

(b) the making of the recording does not infringe any copyright, and

(c) its making is not prohibited by any performer.

(3) Copies of a recording made in reliance on sub-paragraph (1) and included in an archive maintained by a designated body may, if the prescribed conditions are met, be made and supplied by the archivist without infringing any of the rights conferred by Part II.

(4) In this paragraph—

"designated body" means a body designated for the purposes of section *(Recordings of folksongs)*, and

"the prescribed conditions" means the conditions prescribed for the purposes of subsection (3) of that section;

and other expressions used in this paragraph have the same meaning as in that section.'.

Mr. Buchan: I owe a debt of gratitude to the Department of Trade and Industry. I apologise for not being involved in the Bill at an earlier stage—to some extent I should have been. The response that I received from the Department of Trade and Industry did not go as far as I should have liked, but if the new clause is accepted it will create a modus vivendi for those concerned with copyright.

I support the case for the individual artist's remuneration and moral rights, whether he be a writer or a musician but we are dealing with material that is or should be in the public domain and which, if it is unamended, may create difficulties if the copyright laws are applied too strictly. I am seeking to create not a loophole but a modus vivendi for serious researchers, serious collectors and, where possible, for the dissemination of information and material to interested and involved people.

It might be useful to describe the material that will be affected. All folk material is derivative and imitative. Bronson printed 200 tunes for "Barbara Allen". They are all recognisable as Barbara Allen tunes but different variants are equally recognisable as separate variants. No one copyrighted "Barbara Allen" material: it was mentioned as long ago as the 1660s when Pepys heard what he called the "little Scotch ballad of Barbara Allen".

The problem facing the contemporary collector of such material, or someone who wishes to write about it, as I have, is that since the time of Pepys and all the early collectors—Bishop Percy and others—copyright has been developed. If a man hears a tune now, learns it and writes other words to it, as I and others have done, he faces a problem if the tune is copyrighted. Sometimes the material is such that the dissemination of it, if it were disseminated let alone collected, would not cause the composer much fear. A sea-song from the last war goes as follows:

"My job is to clean a naval latrine,
I'm the man with the plan for the pan that everyone uses."

Hon. Members might guess that is the beginning of the tune, Beguine the Begin. I do not think that Cole Porter or

[Mr. Buchan]

whoever wrote it would be worried that the tune has been published in a book of seamen's songs, some of which are serious and some funny.

Doctor Ian Russell of the *Folk Song Journal*, in a paper called "Parody and Performance", found that he would be charged quite a lot of money for a publication that would not raise much. He intended to print the tune with a parody of "Show Me the Way to Go Home" but, because the tune was copyright, he was to be charged.

How do we cope with the problem of making parodies of tunes that are copyrighted? We argue that parodies are a part of the public domain and of our contemporary heritage. Some of them are funny and some are bawdy, but nevertheless they are a means of repeating what people said. I was reminded of Hamlet talking to the players, when he said:

"let them be well used; for they are the abstracts and brief chronicles of the time: after your death you were better have had a bad epitaph than their ill report while you live."

I remember an incident not long ago, which hon. Members may also remember, in which one of the verses went:

"For there was a Tory and a Ryebuck Red,
Fighting out the Cold War in Christine's bed."

Some hon. Members may recall the incident that it described.

Parodies are used to comment because it is important to know what people are commenting about. Hon. Members will be aware of the well-known children's song:

"Now the war is over, Hitler he is dead,
He went to Heaven with a pain in his head.
The Lord said, 'No, you'll have to go below—
There's only room for Elvis and his wee banjo.'"

Another parody says:

"Now the war is over, Vaseline's dead."

I puzzled for some time as to what was meant by vaseline. Of course, Hitler is remembered, but Mussolini is completely forgotten.

We had to seek means by which material could be disseminated because of the greater consciousness of copyright as a result of this Bill, and the greater importance of the moral rights of the person who does not want his material to be used, and even has the ability to intervene to prevent matters being commented on by its use in another way.

I suspect that new clause 21 will be opposed. I talked to the copyright bodies and said that as the clause was imperfect I expected that it would be opposed. It sets out what we should like to establish in one form or another so that we can publish a song, whether it be a children's song or a seaman's; where the words of a song are substantially or totally different from the original, when the authorship is unknown and the publication is in connection with the study or dissemination or contemporary folklore.

I do not think that new clause 21 will be accepted. I recognise that the inclusion of the word "dissemination" will worry the copyright bodies. I hope that they will recognise that when a work such as "Grey Funnel Lines" is published it should become part of the public understanding and within public view.

I am reminded of an older song, which says:

"Hark the herald angels sing,
Mrs. Simpson's pinched our King."

I move the new clauses and amendment so that such material can be preserved, remembered and pass into our history.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett (Denton and Reddish): I join my hon. Friend the Member for Paisley, South (Mr. Buchan) in supporting the new clauses and the amendment. I apologise to the House for coming rather late to the debate. I was made aware by my wife, who is a member of the Folklore Society, of the concerns about the recording and copyrighting of material.

I am concerned not only with the folksong and the parody, but with the song, the dance, the folk tale, the traditional play, the urban legend and matters such as herbal remedies, children's rhymes, Xerox jokes that are printed on many copying machines and even graffiti. That is all traditional material, but it belongs to people rather than the individual. The first concern is how far one individual can secure copyright for material simply because he records it.

Traditional material feeds on what is clearly copyright material. Songs are parodied. A most obvious example is the way in which children use jingles from television advertisements and put new words to them. I suspect that none of the television companies or advertisers would mind in the slightest, although sometimes the jingle becomes fairly derogatory to their product.

The worry is that, if somebody parodies or uses material in some new form, he may become liable to a charge under copyright law. Because material is in the public domain, it is difficult for anyone to demand a fee for its use. No one will accuse a group of children singing a song in a street of taking the tune for their song from a television jingle, and it is unlikely that anyone will raid a public house where folk singers are performing a song for which they have taken the turn from recently published copyright material and put a parody to it. It is not worth anyone pursuing them at that point, even if the folk singers are being paid a small sum or are taking a collection.

The problem arises when someone records the material in some form. An example is to be found at party conferences—for Labour it is the Red Review, but I am not sure what the Tory review is called. Those reviews almost always use popular songs and send up various political figures to their tunes. I do not suppose that anyone would chase for the copyright of a tune at that point, but an excerpt may then be shown on television or recorded in some form. It is at that point that people may start to pursue a royalty on the material.

The importance of the new clause is that it makes it absolutely clear that if people record material either in written or in taped form, they should not be liable; they are the people who would be pursued for a royalty.

There is a slight question mark in my mind about whether, if there is an academic study, and material is recorded, its nature is changed. That is my reservation.

I look forward to hearing what the Government have to say. I hope that they will assure use that the Bill will not make it easier for an individual to steal a copyright on material that is in general circulation and that, when people take material in the general public domain, adapt and alter it, and do not normally make any money from it, there will not be restrictions and difficulties for those who wish to record the material either in taped or written form.

Mr. Butcher: I am pleased to say that the Government are able to go some of the way towards meeting the worries expressed by the hon. Members for Paisley, South (Mr. Buchan) and for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett).

It appears to be de rigeur to think of a piece of material that may be relevant here. I can only commend an alternative version of the Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám to this gathering. I especially commend it to parliamentary draftsmen who once every two decades come forward with a Copyright, Designs and Patents Bill. It goes something like this:

"The moving finger writes and having writ, moves on and writes another bit."

The difficulty is that in the House we appear to be writing more and more bits with greater and greater frequency, but in this case I believe that our boulder in the avalanche of legislation which some say afflicts the House is important.

One can argue that, infrequent as these Bills are, we should get them right. It is with that objective in mind that I hope that Opposition Members will confirm that this has been as close as one can get to an exercise in open government by way of open doors, open to ideas, close relationships and advice from officials in the Department of Trade and Industry and hon. Members of all parties. This trio of new clauses and amendments comes into that category, and I believe that, although I can accept two, and have to resist one, they benefit from a free and open exchange of views.

In this country we have always celebrated events of both national and personal importance in song. From the balladeer of the medieval court to the songs heard today at a rugby match, folk music provides a lively guide to our social development. However, many of our modern folk songs consist of new words being fitted to existing copyright music and that can cause problems for those who want to research and collect folk music.

I do not think that these problems are as severe as the hon. Member suggested. The Bill already allows fair dealing with musical works for the purposes of research, private study, criticism or review. However, we accept that there is a difficulty in relation to the making of sound recordings of performances of the folk versions of the copyright music.

8.45 pm

New clause 20 provides a way round this difficulty. It is a new exception to copyright which, together with amendment No. 252, its corresponding exception in schedule 2, I am happy to accept. The clause will allow recordings of performances of songs to be made for the purpose of inclusion in an archive maintained by a designated body without infringing the copyright in the words or music. This is, however, subject to several conditions which will safeguard the interests of composers, lyricists and performers. The practical effect is that only the copyright in the music is overriden and for a very limited purpose.

Subsequently, anyone requiring a copy of the recording for the purpose of research and private study will be able to obtain it from the archivist. I believe this is a reasonable exception to copyright that will result in an archive providing a useful insight into our social history.

Unfortunately, I cannot be so accommodating about new clause 21.

Mr. Wigley: There is obviously some inspiration behind the wording of new clause 20. Am I right to say that, although the title is "Recordings of folksongs" the definition of folk songs is broad? The new clause relates not only to folk songs, but to anything that falls within the definitions that we have here.

Secondly, will the Minister confirm that the designated bodies will be wide-ranging enough to take in the bodies that exist in Scotland, Wales and Ireland, as well as in England, that involve themselves in those activities?

Mr. Butcher: I am 90 per cent. sure at this stage that the answer to the hon. Gentleman's second question is yes. I will do my best to discharge an obligation to reply to the hon. Gentleman's first point before I resume my seat. In the interim, I will continue with my observations on new clause 21.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: I understand that suggestions have been made to the Minister about who the designated bodies will be. My only slight reservation is that several of the designated bodies have put together collections which were made by individuals. Those designated bodies would not have such good collections but for the work of individuals in the past. The slight reservation is that there are private individuals who have put together a collection which, in the future, will become a valuable archive. It appears that they are excluded from new clause 20, which is being accepted. Has the Minister any observations on that?

Mr. Butcher: Again, I will attempt to give the hon. Gentleman satisfaction before we complete this debate. There are several examples of individual collections being incorporated in national archives. That is a trend which we all want to be consolidated and enhanced. I hope that my reply supports what is the universal objective of the House.

New clause 21 goes far beyond the archival exception that I have just explained. It could seriously affect the legitimate interests of copyright owners. It would allow the publication of books and records of any song, providing that the words were different from the original. There are safeguards, but I do not think that they are adequate. The clause says that the author of the words must be unknown and that the publishing has to be in connection with the study or dissemination of contemporary folklore. That would, however, open the way for the commercial exploitation of music without any control by, or payment to, the owner of copyright in the music. A record company could, for example, claim that it was merely disseminating folklore if it were to become aware of an anonymous set of words having been put to some already popular music, and were to issue a professionally produced sound recording of that version. It would clearly be quite wrong to deny the writer of the original music any say in that.

While I realise that new clause 21 is motivated by a genuine concern to allow the research and dissemination of folklore, it would take away the basic rights of the copyright owner to an unacceptable degree and would be incompatible with our obligations under the Berne convention.

New clause 20 and the existing provisions ensure that those genuinely involved in folk music research can collect and maintain archives of such music and can report the results of their research without infringing copyright. To take the exception any further would undermine the legitimate interests of composers and, at this late stage, I regret that I must ask hon. Members not to press new clause 21.

[Mr. Butcher]

As regards the definition of "folk song", which was the issue raised by the hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley), there is no definition, because it covers any unpublished anonymous words set to copyright music whether or not it would be called folk song. Therefore there is no need to refer to "folk song" in the clause, because it would not add anything to the identification of what is covered. However, it is useful to refer to folk song as a shorthand in the title of the clause. That title will have no legal effect. It is merely a signpost.

I hope that hon. Members are satisfied, but I should point out to the whole House that there is a tradition which was established in Committee that hon. Gentlemen who wish to have a question answered immediately are obliged to stand up and make a not-too-lengthy intervention while the answer is prepared.

Mr. Buchan: In that case, I shall try to oblige the Minister and to give the House a little help. First, I congratulate whoever suddenly produced the definition of folk song as not being amenable to definition. That is absolutely right. My shelves are full of definitions, none of which can totally agree because they all become restrictive. It is rather like the story of Attlee replying to an organisation set up in, of all unlikely folk bodies, the Labour party—which if hon. Members recall, should not set up other organisations. Nobody could define what was meant by an organisation, so he said, "Well, we cannot define an elephant but we can recognise it when it comes through the door." In reply Zilliacus then told the famous story of the plague of rabbits in the Ukraine. All the rabbits poured over the border into Poland and the Polish rabbits said, "What are you running away from?" The other rabbits said, "They have declared a purge on all camels." The Polish rabbits said, "But you are rabbits". The other rabbits replied "Have you tried proving that to the OGPU?" That shows that what is available is always amenable to one's own definition.

I should like to make two points. First, the Minister has been slightly over-restrictive, which was unfortunate. We have no intention of opening any loopholes, and I do not believe that the new clause would do that. I can understand that, as with the definition of folk song, this definition might seem to open up a loophole, but that is most unlikely. Even in dissemination, if the song had been printed in a particular book about the man who cleaned the latrines, it would not have given Cole Porter a sleepless night. There can be a modus vivendi and the best thing that we can do is to have a chat with the copyright bodies—I intend to do that—to see what will happen.

Secondly, nothing more pleases some people who write songs than to write a song and then find, as I found recently, that it is being sung as traditional. Although that deprived me of my copyright fees, I was pleased that it passed as traditional—once in a learned book and then on a disc, so in the end I was quite pleased that it happened.

The classic case is that of a song of the last war, "Those D-day dodgers"—we now know who wrote it—which then became in every other way a folk song. I was in the 8th Army and we all knew the song long before I met the man who wrote it, Hamish Anderson. It contained some beautiful lines about Nancy Astor:

"Dear Lady Astor . . .
England's sweetheart and her pride,
We think your mouth's too bloody wide."

That was from the D-Day Dodgers way out in Italy.

I should now like to make a serious point because I think that the Minister will have collected his thoughts by now. I want to talk about private collectors and their collections in relation to organisations. I hope that we can put our heads together about the organisations, including obviously, the School of Scottish Studies, Cecil Sharp house and the institute in Sheffield. In addition to those bodies, many academic bodies, including most polytechnics and universities, have cultural curricula and institutions of some kind. I hope that all those fall within the scope of the provisions.

The individual collector and the individual singer is almost always involved. For a long period I could hardly exist because of young people knocking at my door, looking for words and tunes, when the folk song revival was taking place. Similarly, almost all people connected with this would want to involve themselves with those bodies. All that we need to do is to help those wishing to sing or learn such material to associate with one of the bodies.

The final point I should like to make—unless the Minister is now ready to reply before I come back to withdraw my amendment——

Mr. Butcher: The position on private collections is that we cannot legislate retrospectively to make those collections legal if they are not legal at the time the recordings were made. However, in many cases, copyright owners will give permission for their music to be dealt with in that way. For the future, private individuals will be able to make recordings without seeking permission in order to put the recordings in an archive. I hope that that answer is helpful to the House.

I heard what the hon. Gentleman said about future negotiations and about seeking clarification. However, I hope that for the time being the House will be satisfied if I repeat that I am perfectly happy to endorse and support new clause 20 and amendment No. 252. Unfortunately, for the reasons I have given, I cannot support new clause 21. I believe that the House has found a more or less agreeable modus vivendi.

Mr. Buchan: I will, of course, withdraw new clause 21 partly because I would lose it in any case, but partly because it is imperfect. I hope that, when thanking me for withdrawing it, the Minister will say that he would find it useful if we discussed it with the copyright bodies, and that he might go so far as to say that he hopes that the copyright bodies will have equally open minds when we discuss the kind of modus vivendi. It would help me if the Minister would say so.

Mr. Butcher: Yes, that would be perfectly feasible. I hope that I have recorded the thanks of the House and my Department for the hon. Gentleman's work. A major constituency has an interest in these issues and if my earlier remarks were not interpreted as an appropriate acknowledgment of the hon. Gentleman's work I apologise to him because it is most certainly acknowledged.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause read a Second time, and added to the Bill.

Clause 6

BROADCASTS

Amendments made: No. 33, in page 3, line 31, leave out 'generally'.

No. 34, in page 3, line 32, at end insert

'or the person providing the contents of the transmission'.

—[Mr. Butler.]

Clause 7

CABLE PROGRAMMES

9 pm

Miss Emma Nicholson (Torridge and Devon, West): I beg to move amendment No. 321, in page 4, leave out lines 19 to 26.

The purpose of my amendment is to ask the Government why they do not intend to provide adequate protection for the part of computer software that is known as interactive or expert or knowledge-based systems. In Committee the Minister said that these were excluded from the protection provided by the clause because such communications were private. I challenge that thinking on three counts and ask the Minister how else he intends to protect this valuable and fast-growing area of computer software work.

First I shall deal with the question of privacy. If it is accepted that such communications are private—and I do not accept that premise—why should privacy and protection be seen as incompatible? It could be said that correspondence on paper between two people is private, but such letters are protected. The author of a letter holds the copyright and the recipient cannot publish without the author's consent. Where a computer system encodes, transmits and displays a letter, why is that letter excluded from copyright protection when one manually scripted or typewritten on to paper, transported by the Post Office and opened on arrival at its destination has copyright protection?

Electronic mail cannot be considered to be private because one may walk into any office and see the recipient's mail or messages on screen for all to see. We do not wish to see the exclusion of expert systems. What is an expert system and why does it need protection under this law? An expert system is one in which the system, or rather the database making up the system, is self-modifying in response to external interrogation and data input. This adaptive feature explains another system name—knowledge-based—although of course it is not the system that is knowledgeable but the team of software designers and programmers that has created it.

What are the practical applications of expert systems and how will those applications be threatened by exclusion from the clause? An easy example is the airline reservation system. Without my amendments, clause 7 would ensure that computer hackers—the catchphrase for unwanted electronic breaking and entering—are not prosecutable under copyright law. If the hacker were a bucket shop operator he could obtain valuable information on the availability of airline seats to be used commercially without investment in the reservation system.

A medical diagnostic database is available to doctors on-line. That means it is open all the time to communication. It is altered by the data put into the network and those data affect the response to the next interrogation. Such a network is at present excluded by clause 7(2)(a) from being a cabled programme service and thus excludes the information being conveyed on the network from the protection given to information conveyed on a licensed cable programme service. Why should it be protected through copyright? The European Green Paper on copyright and the World Intellectual Property Organisation, which is known by the comfortable name of WIPO, although I am not sure whether it means wipe it on or wipe it off, suggest that copyright is the most suitable law to protect against copying for computer programs. I suggest that as this is recognised by nearly all our trading partners, and as our industry has to operate in the real world, this is the way forward.

I cannot resist commenting on a powerful article in last Thursday's *Financial Times*. It suggested that a special legal framework should be created for computer software. However, the European Green Paper published on 1 June says that author's rights and neighbouring rights are the primary means of protecting computer programs, both at the level of Community member states and at international level, and that copyright is the best way of ensuring adequate protection programs against unauthorised reproduction.

In 1983 the World Intellectual Property Organisation said at a discussion meeting that the special treaty giving sui generis protection, which the organisation had identified in 1979 as the way forward, should no longer be pursued. It said that instead, WIPO and UNESCO, the two bodies responsible for the main international copyright conventions, should study further software copyright protection. The result was that in 1985 its committee of Government experts showed that, by that time, copyright protection for computer software existed in the most industrialised countries and in nearly all the European Community member states. We have now advanced to the possible European Community draft convention which will be at least partially, if not wholly, based on the Bill.

Perhaps it is because of all these things that through the amendment I ask the Minister to explain the exclusion of expert systems and reassure the computer software industry that the totality of its work is within copyright protection through the Bill.

Mr. Butcher: I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Torridge and Devon, West (Miss Nicholson) for providing the opportunity for me to make a clarifying statement. I understand that the amendment is intended to ensure that interactive cable services are not excluded from copyright protection. We have put considerable effort into devising a definition of cable programme service in the Bill that will cover the elements of an interactive service, in which sounds, images or other information are conveyed to the user without any modification by him, but which will exclude the elements that are genuinely interactive, in the sense that input from the user modifies what is contained in or sent through the system.

The reason for that approach is that, while we obviously want the definition to cover all the elements of a database, for example, that are capable of purely passive reception—even though the system may be capable of being used interactively—it would not be right to bring within copyright control those elements that are essentially private communications between a single user of the service and the provider of it.

[Mr. Butcher]

Thus, with teleshopping through Prestel, we want to cover the display of catalogue pages, but not the placing of orders. With a medical diagnostic service, we want to cover the sending of information to the user, but not the act of inputting data by the user. I am confident that the definition that we now have in the Bill, which we dealt with at some length in Committee on 12 May, provides the best answer that we can hope for at this stage.

My hon. Friend is admirably persistent in these matters, so may I say that if I am wrong and the definition, when tested in the real world, turns out to be deficient, we have the possibility of putting matters right through an order under subsection (3). However, to remove subsection (2)(a) from the Bill altogether would bring within the controls of copyright a variety of private communications that should remain free of them. I must therefore ask my hon. Friend to withdraw the amendment in the knowledge that she will at least have an insurance policy.

Miss Emma Nicholson: With that assurance from the Minister, I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave withdrawn.

Amendments made: No. 35, in page 4, line 23, leave out 'material' and insert 'information".

No 36, in page 4, line 32, leave out from 'for' to 'and' in line 33 and insert

'purposes internal to the running of the business and not by way of rendering a service or providing amenities for others,'. —*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Mr. Page: I beg to move amendment No 265, in page 5, line 4 leave out

'premises run as a business' and insert 'any premises'.

I am moving the amendment in the unavoidable absence of my hon. Friend the Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Smith), and I do so for the purposes of clarity. The amendment makes it clear that cable services operated as part of the amenities provided for the residents or inmates of any premises are not exempt from the Bill, regardless of whether the premises are run as a business—for example, a private apartment block—or are publicly funded—for example, prisons or hospitals. No distinction should be made between the different premises that use cable services. The amendment is self-explanatory, and I look forward to the Minister's reply.

Mr. Butcher: The amendment would bring within the definition of "cable programme service" a closed-circuit cable system operated as part of the amenities for residents and inmates of the premises that are not run as a business. My hon. Friend gave the obvious example of a cable system in a public sector hospital or a prison.

I am sorry to have to disappoint my hon. Friend, but I have to say that the amendment is not acceptable to the Government. We do not consider that a cable system in the special circumstances of a hospital or a prison, to take the examples to which I referred, can be put on the same footing as a cable programme service offered to the public in general.

The inmates of both hospitals and prisons have one thing in common: they are not there by choice. If they watch videos on an internal cable system, it is for the most part a straightforward substitute for watching a video recording or television broadcast at home, which circumstances have deprived them of the opportunity to do. In prisons, particularly, there are security reasons for preferring to show videos on a closed-circuit system rather than by the traditional use of television sets and video recorders.

We accept that in premises run for profit, a closed-circuit cable system may exploit copyright material in a way which will result in financial benefit to the operator. For that reason it is right that such systems should be subject to the controls of copyright, and that goes as much for a hospital run for profit as for any other kind of premises.

In non-commercial premises, cable systems will generally, as I have said, be a substitute for domestic television or cable reception. It is therefore right that they should be no more caught by copyright law than is watching a television at home. If, in the future, it can be shown that this exception is being abused and the interests of copyright owners unfairly damaged, the exception could, if necessary, be amended by an order under clause 7(3).

In common with my hon. Friend the Member for Torridge and Devon, West (Miss Nicholson), my hon. Friend the Member for Hertfordshire, South-West (Mr. Page) also has a fall-back position and insurance policy. In the light of what I have said, I hope that he will be willing to withdraw his amendment.

Mr. Page: I was unaware that prisoners in Her Majesty's prisons were forced to watch videos and various programmes that come through cable services. In view of my hon. Friend's startling revelations, I am forced to withdraw my amendment.

I am happy to note that under subsection (3) there is opportunity for an order to be introduced if it is discovered that prison inmates can watch various programmes voluntarily.

I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 11

First ownership of copyright

Mr. Austin Mitchell (Great Grimsby): I beg to move amendment No. 3, in page 6, line 22, at end insert

'except that where a literary, dramatic or artistic work is made by the author in the course of his employment by the proprietor of a newspaper, magazine, or similar periodical under a contract of employment, or apprenticeship, and is so made for the purpose of publication in a newspaper, magazine or similar periodical, the said proprietor shall be entitled to the copyright in the work in so far as the copyright relates to publication of the work in any newspaper, magazine or similar periodical, or to reproduction of the work for the purpose of its being so published; but in all other respects the author shall be entitled to any copyright subsisting in the work.'.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss amendment No. 4, in page 6, leave out lines 20 to 22 and insert—

'(2) Where a literary, dramatic, or artistic work is made by an employee in the course of his employment, his employer is the first owner of any copyright in the work, subject to:—

(a) any agreement between the parties or their representatives

(b) the application of sections 76 to 88 inclusive (Moral Rights).'.

Mr. Mitchell: I declare an interest as a member of the National Union of Journalists and also as a journalist. Sometimes that word is put in inverted commas when I am so described.

The amendment is about the balance of power between working journalists and the proprietors of newspapers. We believe that with the unamended clause 11 the Government are shifting that balance of power unjustifiably towards the proprietors. Why the Government are acting thus escapes us, but it must be connected in some way with their general generosity to newspaper proprietors—a generosity which is, in the main, applied to get a press amenable to the Government. We have a press whose only concession to balance is to use slightly less glowing adjectives in their panegyrics about the Prime Minister.

The press has been larded with honours by this Government—usually in inverse ratio to the quality of the papers. We have had Sir Loin of Lamb, Sir David English, Lord Matthew of Whelks and Lord Stevens. It must be rather frustrating to the Government that they cannot confer a title on Lord Murdoch of Wapping Breasts, Lies and Sex Scandals, simply because he is an Australian.

The Government want to keep the press sweet and favourable to them. That is the only motive that we can see for shifting the balance of power towards the proprietors and against working journalists. Before clause 11 was introduced, the law was set out in clause 4 of the Copyright Act 1956. That law referred to

"Where a literary, dramatic or artistic work is made by the author"—

or photographers, who are also concerned about clause 11—

"in the course of his employment by the proprietor of a newspaper, magazine or similar periodical under a contract of service or apprenticeship, and is so made for the purpose of publication in a newspaper, magazine or similar periodical"

In all other respects, copyright was retained by the author.

The NUJ wanted that original law tightened to restrict the proprietor's rights to staff journalists and to periodicals under his ownership. That tightening of the law would have brought us into line with the legal position as it prevails in most of Europe. However, the Government went the other way and they amended their proposals in the House of Lords to make the proprietor the first owner and to give him unfettered right of exploitation everywhere, including databases, which are becoming increasingly important.

The journalist's work is creative and should be the intellectual property of the creator. It should not be liable to wholesale exploitation without reward for or acknowledgment of the journalist who created it in the first place. In the act of creation, he brings his skills and abilities to bear and his name is used, all to enhance the sales and revenues for the proprietor. To take away from such people their rights over what they have created robs them of their reputation, skills and efforts and dedicates them all to the greater glory and income of the proprietors. In other words, it creates much the same relationship between journalists and proprietors as existed between serfs and their masters in 19th century Russia. Journalists get slightly higher expenses than were paid to serfs in 19th century Russia, but if their rights over their intellectual property are taken away in this fashion they will operate in the same sort of relationship.

9.15 pm

In Committee, the Government rejected all our efforts to enlarge journalists' rights. These amendments seek to retain the dignity accorded them by the Copyright Act 1956. We can see no justifiable reason why the Government should take away the rights conferred in that Act and change them in the way in which they appear in clause 11. Unless we return to the position under the 1956 legislation, journalists will effectively be robbed of all their rights when their intellectual property is used in books, broadcasts and databases. It is essential to allow them to retain their rights over all those uses.

The Opposition are adopting an essentially conservative role. We are advocating the preservation of the status quo. What is the Government's case for this monstrous, inexplicable and so far unexplained usurpation of journalists' rights? We know that the usurpation is subject to any agreement to the contrary, but surely no group of employed journalists is in a position to negotiate an agreement to the contrary. We propose to redress the balance in a relationship that is inevitably dependent to give journalists a platform on which to stand, by having rights within that relationship over their intellectual property.

Mr. Foot: Like my hon. Friend the Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell), I must declare an interest as a member of the National Union of Journalists, although, like him, I cannot exactly calculate how much my income would be affected if the clause were passed. My hon. Friend put the case so strongly that I believe that it is possible to make this debate a short one.

The Government and the Minister should be aware of how strong is the feeling of outrage among journalists throughout the country at the Government's proposal. Even at this hour we hope the Government will be prepared to change their mind. I have listened to the Minister for most of the day, although I did not have the special opportunity of hearing him in Committee. He has sought to present himself as being in an appeasing mood. He has accepted opposition amendments and tried to create a perfectly emollient atmosphere. That is the best course for the Government to take, from their point of view, especially as they are trying to get through a Bill of this nature in this time.

It is quite improper that the Government should have introduced such a major Bill with so many ramifications that affect free speech and the rights of journalists and others in this way. It was wrong to introduce it in another place. Now, in the last week of Parliament, we are landed with a great disability. The possibilities of getting through sensible amendments are greatly diminished by the way in which the Government have done things. They have crammed in a long list of amendments at this stage. Some of them, admittedly, are formal, but it is quite improper for such a vast range of amendments to be pushed through like this. Only last week, on a similar measure—although it was not introduced in the House of Lords—many amendments, new material and major changes had to be forced through the House under a guillotine. We are under great pressure to do the same on this Bill.

It is wrong for the Government to deal with such matters in that way. As my hon. Friend the Member for Great Grimsby said, why do they not stick to the provisions that have worked already? The 1956 Act has been operating reasonably and people understand it. The

[Mr. Foot]

application of this part of the law of copyright goes back for about 70 years. The Minister said that we have a Copyright Bill about every 20 years and that they arrive with the comet. Perhaps his scientific knowledge is better than his legal knowledge.

The Government had plenty of time for preparation, negotiations and discussions before the legislation was introduced, yet at the very last moment before Royal Assent we are confronted with a proposal to remove from journalists rights that they have had for at least 20 years and probably a good deal longer. It removes those rights without any effort having been made to discuss the matter with the National Union of Journalists.

No doubt the Minister will tell us about the negotiations that they had with the Members of the House of Lords. The place is so stuffed with peers who own newspapers that I suppose they did not need to set up a special Committee to examine the Bill. How did those negotiations manage to produce a proposal that is of financial advantage to some peers? What will be the financial advantage—collectively or severally—to those peers? How did they bring pressure on the Government? Did the meetings take place in the same hole in the corner where they cooked up the plan to introduce an entirely new method of ensuring the teaching of religious education in our schools? It is an example of bad government.

I do not wish to spoil the Minister's temper, especially as he is moving along the stepping stones to higher things or lower things—at any rate, sideways—because he has kept it well during our proceedings. But he should not have allowed such major legislation, altering the rights of journalists and many others, to be introduced in the House of Lords, and he should not have been a party to the House being confronted with such a measure at the fag end of the Session. As a last generous gesture to the House on the Bill, which he has piloted through with such skill, I hope that he will say that he has changed his mind and will accept in its entirety the amendment so ably moved by my hon. Friend the Member for Great Grimsby.

Mr. Brian Wilson (Cunninghame, North): This is a press baron's clause. Appropriately, it was introduced in the place to which press barons are sent by Tory Governments. It is an appalling example of special pleading and lobbying by an interest group that the clause should have left the House of Lords thus altered, and that the privilege of sitting in that place should have been used by press barons to improve their position in relation to journalists, who are not by and large Members of the House of Lords.

Like previous Opposition speakers, I must declare an interest as a member of the National Union of Journalists.

Mr. Buchan: My hon. Friend is a press baron, too.

Mr. Wilson: My hon. Friends have pointed out that I have a vested interest as a press baron, but that is in only a fairly minor way.

Mr. Buchan: Not at all in a minor way. If the incidence of the *Daily Mirror* was as heavy as that of the *West Highland Free Press* in its own area, it would sell about 15 million.

Mr. Wilson: It is decent of my hon. Friend to point that out. Copies are available on subscription. I assure the House that the journalists whom I employ are more than welcome to their intellectual property, and the last thing that I would want to do would be to profit from their efforts. Hon. Members will gather that I am a philanthropic press baron, in a minor way.

This is a serious point. The rights of journalists to their intellectual property should be expanded rather than contracted. Increasingly, we live in an age not just of press barons in the old style but of multi-media barons—the same people who own the press increasingly own every other means of communication. They do so in rapidly diminishing numbers. We see the media world being carved up among very few people.

My hon. Friend the Member for Grimsay—I mean Grimsby——

Mr. Malcom Bruce: Another Hebridean island.

Mr. Wilson: I am sorry. Grimsay is in North Uist. My hon. Friend the Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) was wrong when he said that Mr. Murdoch is an Australian. I think that this week he is an American. Doubtless when he gets into satellite, if it suits his purpose, he will become a Martian, which might be more appropriate——

Mr. Austin Mitchell: An improvement.

Mr. Wilson: Indeed, it might be an improvement.

Those are powerful people in our society. It is intolerable that journalists, the people who work for them, should be put at a further disadvantage.

I do not want to pre-empt what the Minister says because the reply from any self-respecting Opposition Member would be, "Up to a point, Lord Copper!" but in Committee the Minister explained his thinking and said:

"To retain the provision would be anomalous and would keep newspaper proprietors at a disadvantage compared with other employers".

To seasoned members of the journalistic profession such as my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot), and anyone who has worked in that industry, the idea that legislation should be formulated on the basis that newspaper proprietors are a disadvantaged class in society who have to have special little clauses inserted in the Bill to protect their interests, has a ring of improbability to it.

We are dealing with a greedy set of interests, like most vested interests who sit along the corridor in the other place, and who can never get enough. They can make special pleading work and having discovered that they can lobby on their own behalf, they do so ruthlessly and interminably. This will not be the end of their demands.

The National Union of Journalists and others are concerned about the works of the big journalists, the guy with the big name whose work can be paid for by one newspaper, by Murdoch or Maxwell, and so on, which can then be flogged relentlessly around the world on every conceivable means of communication. I should also like to put in a bit of pleading for the small guy, the person who does not receive large amounts of remuneration, who works for a local or provincial paper and who might happen upon the once-in-a-lifetime story. That story would go around the world. If it were a photographer, his pictures would go around the world. But that will not be a break for the journalist or the photographer. For years

to come it will be yet another source of revenue for the proprietor—the disadvantaged creature whom the Minister is so concerned to protect.

There is a myth that everybody in journalism is earning a huge salary and raking in large expenses. There is a parallel with professional footballers. Everybody forgets those who are playing in the second, third or fourth divisions. The vast majority of journalists are in that category. To take away the limited rights that journalists enjoy under the 1956 Act and to replace them by the amendment in the Bill, which serves no function other than to extend the tentacles of proprietors and turn journalists into the vassals of proprietors with no independent rights of their own, is intolerable.

The press needs to be more independent. The rights of journalists must be defended. There is no need for the amendment. To use the Bill as a stick with which to beat journalists is wrong. I hope that the Minister will be able to defend what he is doing on rather better grounds than "newspaper proprietors are at a disadvantage compared with other employers".—[*Official Report, Standing Committee E*, 12 May 1988; c. 82.] That is an injustice with which most of us could live.

9.30 pm

Mr. Malcolm Bruce (Gordon): I have to declare an interest as a member of the National Union of Journalists, but I am speaking entirely on my own account.

The amendment twists the relationship between a journalist and his employer to a wholly unjustifiable extent. The hon. Member for Cunninghame, North (Mr. Wilson) referred to a local reporter hitting on a major story. When the Bill becomes an Act, there will be many such instances. In the past, journalists thought that they would fall foul of their proprietor or employer, so they fought to find out which side he was on. The result was that, rather like the chap in "Local Hero", they spent a large part of their time in telephone boxes making reverse charge telephone calls to the United States and having money put into numbered post office accounts so that their employers would not find out that they were making money. In many cases that was totally legitimate; money was being made out of news and information that the journalists had unearthed, much of it in their own time. Nevetheless, they thought that they would be intimidated, got at or even dismissed if they chose to reveal that fact to their employers, because they would be unable to defend their copyright.

It might be argued that that is what happens under the law as it stands and the Government are seeking to regularise it, but journalists should be entitled to the copyright of the information that they have procured by means of their own creative ability or talent.

The Minister will no doubt tell us that if there is a real market for his work, a journalist can write his own contract. That is all very well for a Terry Wogan or a star with an established reputation, but it is not so easy for either an aspiring young reporter or an established reporter who has ability but not star quality. The amendment moved by the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) is, in a sense, speaking up for middle range and aspiring young journalists against the press barons. I look forward with interest to the Minister's justification of a newspaper owner being given extra rights to defend himself against the vicious assaults of middle-ranking reporters and journalists on his staff.

Many hon. Members will be aware that, with the particularly severe competition that exists in journalism at the moment, many journalists in employment are forced to sign contracts that reduce their working conditions and pay in their existing posts, and forgo the opportunity to freelance or to sell to interested third parties the benefits of their own work. That is happening under the present law, and it would appear that the Government are anxious to repress still further aspiring young and middle-ranking journalists and prevent them from developing their talents in a constructive and effective way.

I was not a member of the Committee, and I have not followed the passage of the Bill, but what I have heard makes it sound as if the Government, hiding behind the press barons in the Lords, are trying to ensure that those people have a dominant position over the livelihood of people who, as the hon. Member for Cunninghame, North said, can often find it very difficult to find employment that is not controlled by those press barons.

If the Minister is anxious to break open a closed shop, it is the owners' and proprietors' closed shop that should be broken open, not that of aspiring and successful middle-ranking journalists. Therefore I am very happy to support the amendments and look forward with interest to hearing how the Minister can possibly justify resisting them.

Mr. Wigley: I hesitate to follow the eminent litterateur the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) and th press baron of the Western Isles, the hon. Member for Cunninghame, North (Mr. Wilson). I do not have an interest to declare and I am not a member of an appropriate union, so it is appropriate to add my support to the amendment.

I find it difficult to accept that a Government that believe in greater freedom, as they claim, should be putting forward such a proposition, and that they should be using people in a way that they should never be used. The argument is absolutely overwhelming, that if a proprietor has paid a journalist to undertake a job and the journalist has done that job, the proprietor should get the first nibble at the work that has been done, and having had the opportunity of publishing the story, the journalist should have the benefit thereafter. The publication can reflect in the glory that the journalist had written the story for that paper in the first place. That should apply to any creative work, not just to the written word.

It applies particularly to photographs. If one thinks back to perhaps a happier time in the saga of *The Times* newspaper, when it used to publish excellent photographs, some of those photographs were worthy objects of art in their own right and the fact that they appeared in *The Times* first was to the credit of that newspaper, but thereafter they should have stood in the names of the photographers who had the vision and creativity to produce them.

In Committee, the Minister was decidedly unhappy about four or five parts of the Bill. He never admitted which four or five parts they were, but we know that he was not entirely comfortable with some of the measures that he had to advocate from time to time. I should like to think that this was one of the parts of the Bill about which he was decidedly uncomfortable. Having heard the argument put forward tonight, he should be so much more uncomfortable that he should feel in his heart that, even if he cannot accept the amendments now, the Bill must go

[Mr. Wigley]

back to another place with the amendments from this place. If any straightening out can be done, for goodness' sake, in this day and age let us not go back to the time when somebody working in an honest job is treated as a serf by his employer. That will happen under the provisions of the Bill.

Mr. Butcher: Having heard the arguments of a Scot and of two Welshmen, a south Walean and a north Walean, it is always very hard to resist that combination of Celtic elegance. Unfortunately, this is one occasion on which the word "but" is followed by a word of what Opposition Members would interpret as negativity. Much as I am persuaded of the logic of the earlier part of their arguments listed in the first amendment, I cannot go along with much of what I have heard of the substance of the second amendment. What appears to be happening is that Opposition Members have come to see the wisdom of vesting in the employer the ownership of copyright in a work made by an employee. Therefore, I have no trouble in accepting the principle underlying amendment No. 4. However, I must resist the amendment because it is unnecessary. The Bill as drafted provides all that Opposition Members want.

Clause 11(2) provides that, when a work is made by an employee in the course of his employment, his employer is the first owner of copyright. That meets the wish of Opposition Members as expressed in the first part of the amendment. The provisions of subsection (2) are subject to agreement to the contrary. That already provides what paragraph (a) of the amendment seeks. Amendment No. 4 requires that clause 11 be subject to clauses 76 to 88. That does not need to be said. Moral rights are distinct from copyright and the application of those rights is determined by the clauses in question. In particular, clauses 76 and 79 set out cases where the rights apply and clauses 78 and 80 give the circumstances where they do not. Therefore, although I applaud the sentiments expressed in amendment No. 4, I cannot accept it. With the assurance that the Bill as drafted delivers what is required by the amendment, I trust that it will be withdrawn.

Amendment No. 3 would introduce, with one or two drafting changes, the provisions of section 4(2) of the Copyright Act 1956. That provides for a split ownership of copyright in the case of a work produced by an employee of a newspaper, magazine or similar periodical. The employer is to own copyright for the purposes of publication in newspapers, magazines and periodicals and the author is to own copyright for all other purposes.

Mr. Doran: The Minister said that we accept the principle that copyright should lie with the employer. As I understand it, that is the present position. The point of amendment No. 4 is that clauses dealing with moral rights are also excluded from employees. Under subsection (2)(b) that would not apply. Therefore, there are significant differences between what we want and what the Minister wants.

Mr. Butcher: We are consistent in terms of remuneration rights and moral rights. We had an exhaustive debate on that, and obviously I was unable to convince the hon. Gentleman. I should say, en passant, that there have been assertions about special pleading in each of the contributions made. I have not noticed a scale of lobbying from the National Union of Journalists that is anything like the scale of lobbying that has occurred on virtually every issue of substance in the Bill. Opposition Members say that we should not indulge in special pleading, and they are not indulging in special pleading for their own purposes. They are saying that journalists, compared with other creative employees, should be set apart and be given rights that are not given to creative people in other industries.

Before we proceed further, I should make it clear that we are dealing only with journalists, photographers and others who are employed by newspapers. Under the Bill as it stands, the first copyright in a work made by a freelance or commissioned author is vested in the author. He may assign all or part of the copyright to the newspaper or merely license the newspaper to print the work in question. I do not think that anyone seriously objects to that principle. A newspaper wanting to publish an author's work must have his consent, and can acquire as much or as little of the copyright as it needs for those purposes. The freelance author who depends on his work for his livelihood is the owner of copyright in his work, and can use that copyright to negotiate payment.

The debate on amendment No. 3 is concerned only with employees of newspapers, magazines and similar periodicals. The question before us is, what should be the position of works created by an employee during the course of the employment? The general principle under the 1956 Act, set out in section 4(4), is that the employer is entitled to the copyright, and that principle is re-enacted in clause 11(2).

That it is right that an employer should own the fruits of his employee's labour seems to me to be a self-evident truth. If I employ a man to use his skills to make a product and provide all the resources that he needs to do it, it is only right that I should own what he has made in my time and at my expense. Opposition Members who tabled the amendment fully accept that basic principle, as is evidenced by amendment No. 4, which vests copyright in the employer.

9.45 pm

Had Opposition Members proposed the deletion of subsection (2) and argued that an employer could acquire his employee's copyright contractually, I would have resisted, but I would have recognised that such an amendment would be consistent with their professed concern for the employee's side of the employee-employer relationship. I understand that they have seen the light and have recognised the sense and justice of the principle enshrined in clause 11(2).

One question remains: why single out employed journalists for special treatment? Why should an employee of a newspaper be better placed than, say, the employee of an advertising agency, a software house or a book publisher? There are numerous industries in which people are employed for the purpose of creating copyright works for their employees, yet it is not suggested that the employee should own copyright. The anomaly is most starkly presented in the case of an employed journalist. If he is employed by a newspaper, he is to own a part of the copyright in his work. If he is employed by a television company, his employer owns all the copyright.

The most ardent supporter of amendment No. 3 could not deny that it is anomalous, but it must be admitted that the anomaly has been around for 70 years or more. Why

do away with it now? The answer is that it is not an innocuous anomaly. First, it seems to be wrong in principle to say to newspapers, "You, and you alone of all the many employers of the authors of copyright works, are not to receive the full benefit of your investment in your work force."

Secondly, there are practical effects that harm newspapers. Hon. Members should consider the case of a television company that sends a crew to some trouble spot —say, the Gulf. The pictures and reports sent back by the staff can be sold by the company to a newspaper to help to recoup some of its investment. But if a newspaper sends a journalist and photographer to the Gulf, it cannot sell the story and pictures to a television company. For those purposes, copyright would be vested in the employees, even though the story had been obtained at the not inconsiderable expense of the employer. That means that different branches of the media are not competing on a equal footage, and that is wrong.

The anomalous treatment of newspapers also hinders the development and exploitation of databases—another point that was raised by Opposition Members. Under this agreement, a newspaper would have to obtain copyright clearance from its own employees to put the works that they have produced on to a database. Back issues of a newspaper cannot be transferred to microfiche or other more convenient forms of storage, as that involves the consent of the employee. It may be that the employee would consent, but he could seek a high price. Why should the employer pay again for work that he has already paid for?

The general principle should be that, subject to contrary agreement, the employer owns the copyright in his employee's works. Any exception to that general rule has to be fully justified. An exception to favour newspaper employees may have been justifiable 30 years ago, but it is not so today, in an age when the boundaries between sectors of the media are not clear cut and special treatment can act as an obstacle to the dissemination of information. I must ask the House to reject the amendments.

The hon. Member for Cunninghame, North (Mr. Wilson) called the clause a piece of special pleading. I must say again that it is for the hon. Gentleman to plead why newspaper employees should be set apart from other categories of creative people.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: The Minister's speech will not feature among the highlights of his collected Department of Trade and Industry speeches as he moves on. It is as though he made it in *Times*-speak—that is to say, I could not understand a word of it—rather than *Sun*-speak, when he could have said, "Rearrange the following words to form a well-known English phrase or expression: Off bludge."—which is essentially what he said. It is inconceivable to suggest that all that we are doing in reality is just to return the legislation to what it has been since 1956.

The Minister can show no examples of any problems, anomalies or disputes arising from the existing legislation that he is changing. He has produced no argument for the change and had no consultations with the National Union of Journalists—only apparently, with the press barons. He has not even told us what peculiar quality of intelligence, integrity or dignity in British press barons, as shown in their newspapers, justifies giving them so much greater power over their journalists than the press barons of most other countries, who do not have the rights that the Bill provides and which our amendments seek to reduce.

Our conclusion must be that the Government are on their knees before the press barons. Certainly we intend to bring them to their knees by opposing the clause and voting for our amendments. We want to see the headline in *The Sun* tomorrow, "Journos Butchered by Soaraway Supermin Before Being Jerked Off".

Amendment negatived.

Amendment proposed: No. 3 in page 6, line 22, at end insert

'except that where a literary, dramatic or artistic work is made by the author in the course of his employment by the proprietor of a newspaper, magazine or similar periodical under a contract of employment, or apprenticeship, and is so made for the purpose of publication in a newspaper, magazine or similar periodical, the said prioprietor shall be entitled to the copyright in the work in so far as the copyright relates to publication of the work in any newspaper, magazine or similar periodical, or to reproduction of the work for the purpose of its being so published; but in all other respects the author shall be entitled to any copyright subsisting in the work.'—*[Mr. Austin Mitchell]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 117, Noes 221.

Division No. 443] **[9.50 pm**

AYES

Allen, Graham	George, Bruce
Anderson, Donald	Godman, Dr Norman A.
Ashdown, Paddy	Golding, Mrs Llin
Ashton, Joe	Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*	Grocott, Bruce
Beckett, Margaret	Hinchliffe, David
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*	Hoyle, Doug
Bermingham, Gerald	Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Bidwell, Sydney	Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Blair, Tony	Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Boateng, Paul	Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Boyes, Roland	Illsley, Eric
Bradley, Keith	Janner, Greville
Bray, Dr Jeremy	Kirkwood, Archy
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*	Lamond, James
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*	Leighton, Ron
Buchan, Norman	Litherland, Robert
Buckley, George J.	Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Caborn, Richard	Loyden, Eddie
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*	McAllion, John
Campbell-Savours, D. N.	McAvoy, Thomas
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*	McKelvey, William
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*	McLeish, Henry
Clay, Bob	McWilliam, John
Clwyd, Mrs Ann	Madden, Max
Cousins, Jim	Mahon, Mrs Alice
Crowther, Stan	Marek, Dr John
Cryer, Bob	Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Cummings, John	Martlew, Eric
Cunliffe, Lawrence	Meale, Alan
Darling, Alistair	Michael, Alun
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*	Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Dewar, Donald	Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Dixon, Don	Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Doran, Frank	Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth	Morgan, Rhodri
Eadie, Alexander	Morley, Elliott
Eastham, Ken	Mowlam, Marjorie
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*	Mullin, Chris
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*	Murphy, Paul
Faulds, Andrew	Nellist, Dave
Fisher, Mark	O'Brien, William
Flynn, Paul	Patchett, Terry
Foot, Rt Hon Michael	Pike, Peter L.
Foster, Derek	Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Fraser, John	Prescott, John
Galloway, George	Quin, Ms Joyce
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*	Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*

Rogers, Allan
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Spearing, Nigel
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Allen McKay and
Mr. Frank Haynes.

NOES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Durant, Tony
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Fishburn, Dudley
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forth, Eric
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Sir Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Sir Charles
Moss, Malcolm
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rost, Peter
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Sumberg, David
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. David Maclean and
Mr. Kenneth Carlisle.

Amendment accordingly negatived.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Ordered,

That, at this day's sitting, the Copyright, Designs and Patents Bill *[Lords]*, may be proceeded with, though opposed, until any hour.—*[Mr. David Hunt.]*

Clause 12

DURATION OF COPYRIGHT IN LITERARY, DRAMATIC, MUSICAL OR ARTISTIC WORKS

Amendment made: No. 253, in page 7, line 22, leave out 'and 161' and insert

'(Copyright in Acts and Measures), 161 and (Copyright in Parliamentary Bills)'.—[Mr. Butcher.]

Clause 16

THE ACTS RESTRICTED BY COPYRIGHT IN A WORK

Amendment made: No. 37, in page 8, line 35, leave out from 'VII' to end of line 36 and insert

'(provisions with respect to copyright licensing).'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 17

INFRINGEMENT OF COPYRIGHT BY COPYING

Amendment made: No. 38, in page 8, line 41, at end insert—

'This includes storing the work in any medium by electronic means.'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 18

INFRINGEMENT BY ISSUE OF COPIES TO THE PUBLIC

Amendment made: No. 39, in page 9, line 16, leave out 'their importation' and insert

'any subsequent importation of those copies'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Amendment proposed, No. 40, in page 9, line 18, leave out 'hiring' and insert 'rental'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Mr. Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take Government amendments Nos. 41, 53, 55 to 57, 59 to 62, 68, 69, 82, 86, 87, 96, 97 and 134.

Mr. Blair: These amendments deal with the new rental provisions and, in effect, are all based on the deletion of the word "hiring" and the insertion of the word "rental". We had a full debate in Committee when the Government moved a long way towards the position that was being urged on them by hon. Members of all parties. However, it is not right to let the amendment pass without obtaining for the record the Government's explanation of why they are changing the word "hiring" to the word "rental". I shall be grateful if the Minister will reply.

Mr. Maude: The answer to the hon. Gentleman's query lies someway through this group of amendments, in amendment No. 96, which sets out the new definition of "rental" and states:

"'rental' means any arrangement under which a copy of a work is made available—

(a) for payment (in money or money's worth), or

(b) in the course of a business, as part of services or amenities for which payment is made,

on terms that it will or may be returned;"

Put simply, that will cover the sort of circumstances as those obtaining in a hotel which keeps a library of videos for the use of its guests. If no additional charge were made for that service, it would fall outside the Bill as it stands and the copyright owner would have no claim for remuneration. The reality is, however, that the hotel is paid for that service in its basic room charge. We do not think that businesses should be able to make copies available to the public and thus avoid copyright liability by including the cost of quasi-rental operation in the charge for the amenities or services that they provide. This group of amendments remedies that.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment made: No. 41, in page 9, leave out lines 20 to 22.—*[Mr. Maude.]*

Clause 24

SECONDARY INFRINGEMENT: MAKING, IMPORTING, POSSESSING OR DEALING WITH ARTICLE FOR MAKING INFRINGING COPIES

Mr. Butcher: I beg to move, amendment No. 42, in page 11, line 9, at end insert—

'(2) Copyright in a work is infringed by a person who without the licence of the copyright owner transmits the work by means of a telecommunications system (otherwise than by broadcasting or inclusion in a cable programme service), knowing or having reason to believe that infringing copies of the work will be made by means of the reception of the transmission in the United Kingdom or elsewhere.'.

We have now been persuaded that there is a lacuna in the secondary infringement provisions, which this amendment is to fill. The transmission of a work in electronic form by a telecommunications system, which is not a broadcast or cable programme service, will be a secondary infringement if the person transmitting the work knows, or has reason to believe, an infringing copy will be made at the other end.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 29

RESEARCH AND PRIVATE STUDY

Mr. Blair: I beg to move amendment No. 310, in page 13, line 10, leave out from 'the' to end of line 15 and insert—

'purpose of—

(a) private study, and

(b) research other than commercial research,

does not infringe any copyright in the work or, in the case of a published edition, in the typographical arrangement'.

Mr. Speaker: With this it will be convenient to consider the following amendments: No. 304, in page 13, line 22, at end insert—

'(4) This section does not apply in terms of fair dealing to copies made for commercial research if or to the extent that there is a licensing scheme certified for the purposes of this section under section 137 providing for the grant of licences.'.

No. 43, in clause 38, page 16, line 43, leave out 'research or private study' and insert

'private study, or research other than commercial research'.

No. 305, in page 17, line 5, at end insert—

'(d) This section does not apply to the supply of copies by a librarian to persons requesting them for commercial research if or to the extent that there is a licensing scheme certified for the purposes of this section under section 137 providing for the grant of licences.'.

No. 313, in clause 39, page 17, line 13, leave out 'research or private study' and insert

'private study, or research other than commercial research'.

No. 306, in page 17, line 21, at end insert—

'(3) This section does not apply to the supply of copies by a librarian to person requesting them for commercial research if or to the extent that there is a licensing scheme certified for the purposes of this section under section 137 providing for the grant of licences.'.

Mr. Blair: This group deals with the fair dealing provisions of the Bill. We had a full debate in Committee and I shall be brief in moving what are substantially the same amendments. The Bill provides for copyright protection but it also provides for what is known as a fair dealing exception. Where it is considered that the use of a work, even though in breach of copyright, is none the less fair dealing, the copyright rules do not apply if any infringement is made.

The question that arises, especially in relation to photocopying, is how wide the fair dealing exceptions will be. The difficulty for the publishing industry arises because, although many people photocopy documents for use in research or private study—and that is plainly fair dealing—most of our large business and commercial establishments have their own research departments where

[Mr. Blair]

photocopying is extensively used and where the circulation of the photocopy will be to several hundreds if not several thousands of people.

Throughout the passage of the Bill, industry has been saying that, in order to have a proper incentive to invest and to protect its legitimate rights, there must be copyright protection against infringing copying. The problem faced by the publishing industry in relation to photocopying is that where photocopying is done—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. Hon. Members behind the Bar should come into the Chamber or go outside.

Mr. Blair: The commercial research establishment of an organisation copies very generally and, effectively, the copyright in a work will be breached. That is what worries the publishing industry. It is difficult to see how the breach of a copyright in such a case lies at all adequately with the fair dealing exception. That summarises the case that has been made in favour of the amendments.

When this matter was debated in Committee the Minister used a rather curious phrase when forced to the point. I quote from memory but I think I quote him accurately. He said that he was obliged to come down on the side of those who exploit information, and had decided to come down on their side rather on the side of those who had the original copyright in a work. Since our deliberations in Committee, the Government have moved some way towards accepting some of the things that the Opposition have said. For example, in the next group of amendments they have provided for a much tighter definition of what constitutes multiple copying so that such copying will not fit the fair dealing exception.

If the Government accept—as is implicit in some of their later amendments—that one does not have to choose between those who exploit information and its original authors, they are driven to justify why they are not even becoming more precise and excluding commercial research from the ambit of fair dealing. If they do not, large-scale photocopying for commercial purposes by commercial establishments will continue.

The trend of developments abroad is much in favour of the type of licensing scheme that the Publishers Association has been mooting. There is a scheme in existence in the United States but there are arguments about how successful it has been. Whatever the situation, it is clear that it has had a significant effect on making people pay attention to the rights of publishers against those who are abusing copyright. We see these amendments as being necessary to do for our publishing industry what other industries are anxious to see in the Bill —proper protection for original creative work. In the light of the amendments that the Government will move, why are they unwilling to include commerical research when it was never the true purpose of the fair dealing exception and when the arguments in favour of our amendments are so strong?

10.15 pm

Mr. Gerrard Neale (Cornwall, North): I also wish to be brief, in view of the remarks of the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair), particularly as the matter was debated extensively in Committee. If the Minister is unable to accept amendment No. 310, he may consider that my amendments are a little less heavy on the Bill. In his charitable feeling towards those who are interested in copyright, the Minister may, as he moves deservedly on to other things, consider the amendments not so much as probing amendments as an invitation to treat.

As the hon. Member for Sedgefield said, there is a strong feeling in the publishing industry and among those representing copyright interests that those interests have been subordinated to the interests of other industries and commerce. It is felt that it is in the interests of commerce and industry outside the publishing world to have material produced on which they can call for research purposes, so they should be required to pay for it. If they do not pay something for the copying of research material, there is a severe risk that there will be less and less incentive for those who produce and publish research material. I hope that, even at this late stage, the Minister will consider the strong misgivings in parts of the publishing industry and that he may be able to change his mind even now.

Mr. Eric Martlew (Carlisle): I was pleased when we discussed commercial research and fair dealing in Committee because it was the only part of the legislation that I understood. I learned two things from being in Committee: first, never to volunteer, and secondly, not to be surprised by Government actions. I was surprised that the Government did not take the opportunity to get the Bill right or to clarify the position on commercial research and fair dealing.

My experience has been in industry. In Committee, the hon. Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Smith) said that when he worked in commerce he would flick through the journals on his desk, find the one that interested him, make a photocopy of it and pass the journal on. I had a better system. When the journal came to my desk, I passed it on to someone else's desk without looking at it.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) said, the reason why I could do that is that I worked for a large organisation. I knew that somebody in headquarters went through the journals and that if anything appertained to my speciality, it would be photocopied and sent to me. I was a personnel manager and if anything on personnel or training appeared in the journals, the chap at headquarters made 15 copies and sent them off to all the personnel managers in the group. That was how the company "stole" research information. I worked for a good company and I am sure that it would be happy to come to a licensing arrangement, if it were available, to buy particular research. It is a wealthy company and could afford it. Many of the technical journals are not as well off. They are on the borderline and it would be a disaster if they went to the wall.

I must emphasise my disgust for the lobbying that has been done by some of the major companies. I understand that Shell, BP and ICI have all made representations to the Government and are twisting the Government's arm to change the legislation. That was reported in the *Official Report* of the Committee proceedings. I also understand that the CBI has made representations. It is a pity that the hon. Member for Beverley (Mr. Cran) is not in the Chamber. He used to be the northern director of the CBI and I used to be a regular attender at his meetings. [HON. MEMBERS: "He is here."] He is beyond the Bar, so he cannot intervene. The CBI was a short-sighted, narrow-minded organisation then and it does not surprise me that it is against giving the publishers their dues.

Why have the Government changed their mind? The Whitford inquiry recommended that an amendment to the law should be accepted by the Government. The Government accepted that in their Green and White Papers. It was only after an amendment in the other place that the Government decided to change their mind. I have studied what the Minister said in Committee. My hon. Friend the Member for Sedgefield drew the right conclusion about that speech when he said that the Government were on the side of the exploiter—or words to that effect. The Government appear to be prepared to exploit publishers. That does not come as a surprise to me because when I was a young lad an old Socialist told me that the Tories always sided with the exploiter. What does surprise me is the candour with which the Minister expressed that. I would much prefer the Minister to be on the side of the angels and to accept the amendment, which will help small publishing companies against the big organisations. However, the amendment will not hurt those big organisations.

One scheme to help small companies has already been accepted by the Government and it relates to education and university services. Those institutions are under licence to the Copyright Licensing Agency and pay money to it. I understand that, last year, the Government paid £900,000 to that authority on behalf of those institutions. It appears that we have dual standards. Either the Government should make an amendment to get rid of that payment or they should make private companies pay the same. It is all right to pay public money to the Copyright Licensing Agency, but it does not appear all right to pay private money to that authority. That smells of duplicity and I hope that the Minister will explain that position. I am sure that fair-minded people will wonder why those educational institutions are give such a fair deal.

My wife is a chartered librarian and is involved in issuing information. I told her that I was intending to speak on a clause that intended to exclude her from giving information to commercial organisations. She was not too pleased about that. It was only after I explained to her that she would not go to prison if caught doing so that she allowed me to come here.

I do not believe there will be any objection if the Government return to the stance they took before they were got at by big business. In the sense of fairness I hope that the Government will accept the amendment.

Mr. Rowlands: I underline what my hon. Friend the Member for Carlisle (Mr. Martlew) said. He illustrated the strength of the case for the amendment with his references to educational establishments and the money they pay to the Copyright Licensing Agency.

We have been lobbied for and against the Government's proposal, formally and informally. For me it is a question whether I lose my British Library friends or my publishing friends. When two sets of friends are recommending contradictory opinions, one must look for a set of principles. Occasionally I try to publish some research material in obscure academic journals. If people wish to have their research work published they can place it in the public domain. That way more and more people read it and the photocopying of that material is a compliment to their research.

My original instinct was that one should be on the side of the extensive dissemination of information. However, when one realises the way in which some of that research is grossly exploited on a commercial scale by vast photocopying of key articles, often published in marginal obscure journals, one realises that there is another side to the argument. That case has been made by the publishers of some of the most marginal journals. Much research would not see the light of day were it not for these technical journals—including the historical ones in which I am interested. Many people who have done research find an outlet and make their reputations through these journals, which are often scientific and technological. Their work would not reach the larger commercial concerns without these organs.

The Government should think twice about the impact of their proposals on marginal research journals. If no compensation is paid for the mass exploitation of the research in them, their numbers will diminish and the opportunities for young researchers in, say, Welsh history or technology will decline. We have a perfectly reasonable way of handling this problem of large-scale photocopying of commercial research, so I cannot understand the Government shrugging their shoulders and saying they can do nothing about it.

Much of the Bill is devoted to establishing a copyright licensing system which is designed to deal with the large-scale photocopying of work of potential commercial value. My hon. Friend the Member for Carlisle effectively posed the question of who will be expected to obey the new licensing regulations. The answer is the public sector: libraries and education authorities will be expected to come to licensing arrangements for large-scale photocopying with the publishers and will have to pay under an agreed system.

Why should not such photocopying by commercial research organisations be put on the same footing as the operation of public libraries and education authorities? Why should not these organisations come to a deal with the publishers through a copyright licensing arrangement, the rules of which are established in many clauses of the Bill? The Minister must justify why a poor education authority such as Mid Glamorgan has to come to a deal and make a contribution to the £1 million for the publishers whereas large-scale organisations that exploit research work published in marginal journals get off scot-free. If the Minister does not answer that, we shall have a case for forcing the amendment to a vote.

Mr. Butcher: The hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands) reminded us again that the Bill is not about which lobbyists press us the hardest but about coming down in favour of particular arguments. This debate has been especially excruciating because all the arguments have been finely balanced. As the hon. Gentleman reminded us, too, it comes down in the end to principle and the points that give us basic guidance.

The amendments fall into two groups. Those in the names of Opposition Members would mean that the fair dealing and library exceptions in clauses 38 and 39 would not be available for commercial research. The amendments in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for Cornwall, North (Mr. Neale) do not go quite as far. They would allow copying for commercial research under the exceptions if no certified licensing scheme was in place.

It is self-evident that a large amount of photocopying takes place in British commerce and industry. Whether it

[Mr. Butcher]

is as much as the 1·7 billion copies that have been suggested is neither here nor there; but much copying goes on with no return to the copyright owner.

The Opposition amendments suggest that the answer is to deprive commercial research of the exceptions to copyright in clauses 29, 38 and 39. I shall not go over the arguments that were made in the Committee, but I maintain that the effect would be suddenly to shut off access to much of the information contained in journals and scientific publications. That would bring our research effort grinding to a halt. The House would find that completely unacceptable, and I do not believe that copyright owners would want us to go that far.

10.30 pm

Mr. Blair: That statement is an absurd exaggeration of the position. The amendment would not mean that industry could not copy things. It would simply mean that it could copy them only with the permission of the copyright owner, which is the same position as obtains in copyright throughout the Bill.

Mr. Butcher: I was trying not to repeat the arguments that we had in Committee. If the exceptions do not apply to commercial research, it means that industry must obtain the consent of the copyright owner for any copying that it may wish to do, however minimal it might be. To seek out the copyright owner for every piece of copying would place an intolerable burden on industry, and if the search was unsuccessful, copying could not take place.

The amendments of my hon. Friend the Member for Cornwall, North recognise the impracticality of taking commercial research out of the exceptions completely. Amendments Nos. 304 to 306 would mean that the exceptions would continue to apply unless a licensing scheme certified by the Secretary of State were established. That approach has the merit that industry would not be prevented from making copies. Industry could make copies either freely or, if the copyright owners got together to form a licensing scheme, on payment to the copyright owners.

The central question is whether researchers of whatever sort should be prevented from, or required to pay for, fair dealing in copyright works. If we accept the basic principle underlying the fair dealing exception, I cannot see the justification for denying a researcher the benefit of the exception just because his research is directed to commercial ends. We do not want to discourage any research, least of all that which will benefit the economy. We wish to encourage research.

But that does not mean that because copying is for research purposes, it should be permitted without constraint. That is not the case now, nor will it be under clause 29. Copying beyond the limits of fair dealing is infringement if done without the licence of the copyright owner. That is true for private research, for pure academic research and for commercial research.

Copying for commercial research is either fair dealing or it is not. Copying that is not fair dealing must be paid for under the present law, and the Bill preserves that. The amendments in the next group will help to define more clearly what is, and what is not, permissible.

For similar reasons, I am not persuaded that industry should be deprived, either wholly or in part, of the exceptions in clauses 38 and 39. It is accepted that libraries should be able to copy within defined limits. The amendments to clauses 38 and 39 raise again the practical problems that librarians saw about how they could distinguish between different types of research. In this context the efficiency or otherwise of licensing schemes is relevant. Even the most streamlined scheme will add burdens to the already stretched resources of libraries.

I cannot accept the amendments, for the same reasons as I rejected them in Committee. They would hamper the country's research effort. Amendments Nos. 310, 312 and 313 would make illegal what is now permitted and could mean that either industry stopped using photocopiers or was placed on the wrong side of the law. Amendments Nos. 304 to 306 would require industry to pay for something to which it is presently entitled—hardly an encouragement for research. Industry would have to pay the licence fee and carry the cost of administration of schemes which, even on a sampling basis, would involve record-keeping, staff training and so on. There would also be a burden on the library system which is best avoided.

As I said in Committee, whether the copyright interests wish to offer industry licensing schemes in respect of copying that is not fair dealing is up to them. Industry has no legitimate grounds for complaint about having to pay for copying that is not fair dealing. Although industry should not be singled out for special adverse treatment, it should not expect any sympathy for special privileges which would weaken the position of copyright owners.

I hope that hon. Members feel able not to press their amendments.

Mr. Blair: I apologise to the Minister for the fact that in my desire to keep up with what is happening to the Bill I omitted to congratulate him on his new appointment. He has handled the Bill with considerable sensitivity in many areas. We are sorry to lose him from the Department of Trade and Industry, but I am sure that his successor will try to live up to the high standard that he has set.

The fallacy of the Minister's line of argument is that the whole purpose of fair dealing is what the term implies—to allow dealings with copyright, though strictly in breach of copyright, where it is fair to do so. To treat photocopying for commercial ends in a different way from photocopying for private research or study is wrong in principle. Commercial companies claim the privilege of copyright for themselves in many other cases.

The problem is made all the more acute by the fact that educational establishments will be subjected to a licensing scheme. They will pay about £1 million a year to use copyright material. The Minister resisted our amendments, but a licensing scheme is already in existence for educational establishments. It is bizarre that large companies such as BP, ICI and Shell should be able to use commercial research and pay no money for photocopying when schools have to do so. The Minister has not answered that point.

I do not intend to press the amendment to a Division, but the Minister will have to keep a careful watch. In principle, the practice is wrong. Many of industry's arguments against our amendments are the ones that

they have used strenuously on other parts of the Bill. It is not right that publishers should be subjected to punishment for breach of copyright when that punishment does not apply to anybody else. There are clear anomalies. The Minister has not addressed them adequately.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. Butcher: I beg to move amendment No. 238, in page 13, line 16, leave out subsections (3) and (4) and insert—

'(3) Copying by a person other than the researcher or student himself is not fair dealing if—

(a) in the case of a librarian, or a person acting on behalf of a librarian, he does anything which regulations under section 40 would not permit to be done under section 38 or 39 (articles or parts of published works: restrictions on multiple copies of same material), or

(b) in any other case, the person doing the copying knows or has reason to believe that it will result in copies of substantially the same material being provided to more than one person.'.

Mr. Speaker: With this, it will be convenient to consider the following: Amendment (a) to amendment No. 238, in line 9, at end insert

'at substantially the same time and for substantially the same purpose.'

No. 311, in page 13, line 18, at end insert—

'(3A) Subsection (3) shall not permit any person to make at substantially the same time or for substantially the same purpose more than one copy of or from substantially the same work, or to provide systematic services for the making of copies of or from copyright works, for another person.'.

Mr. Butcher: A similar amendment was moved in Committee. We were asked to define cases of multiple copying that are not regarded as fair dealing. We have tried to reflect the view then expressed that we should table an amendment that provides an appropriate definition.

I should also mention that the Government are happy with the amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for Battersea (Mr. Bowis).

Mr. Blair: When we are given what appears to be a gift it would be strange to be churlish about it, and I do not intend to be churlish. However, we need to be told what the Government's amendment implies. Any form of multiple copying would, I understand, be excluded from fair dealing. The amendment ensures that nobody will be allowed to take more than one copy for distribution to others, which is what happens in the case of commercial research. If that is right, will the Minister tell us exactly where that leaves commercial research?

When we were discussing earlier amendments, he was asking why on earth commercial research should not be allowed without any hindrance, without the payment of any money and without it being a breach of copyright. I find the amendment slightly curious, and I have to pause before accepting it, because it appears to be saying that multiple copying is a breach of copyright and is not fair dealing. I find it difficult to put together the amendment and the position the Minister was adopting in the previous clause. That is why it is right to ask at least for an explanation.

Mr. Butcher: In the interests of making progress, I may have glossed over a point on which the hon. Gentleman wished to have clarification. I shall set his mind at rest. The amendment reflects a mutual concern. It seeks to define cases of multiple copying which are not regarded as fair dealing.

Clause 29 provides that fair dealing for purposes of research or private study does not constitute an infringement of copyright. Subsection (3) was included in the Bill to make it explicit that a student could avail himself of the fair dealing exception even if he did not do the copying personally. We believe that to be the existing law but this statement on the face of the Bill caused some alarm, particularly among publishers. They were concerned that this could lead to systematic multiple copying—that is the key phrase—where a class of students could ask a librarian to make 30 copies of, say, a learned article and each would then rely on his own individual fair dealing exception.

As far as library copying is concerned, clause 40 already imposes restrictions on multiple copies of the same material, and subsection (4) was added to clause 29 so that those restrictions are read over to fair dealing. But, of course, librarians are not the only ones to copy on behalf of others. Copy shops do so. Industry does much in-house copying. Amendment No. 238 therefore extends the principle of clause 29(4) to the general case.

Since tabling amendment No. 238, we have had the benefit of seeing my hon. Friend's amendment (a), and in the light of this we have concluded that our original wording is rather too broad. There will be many occasions where someone copying a particular item will have reason to believe that someone else will also want a copy of it some time in the future. However, it should be possible to make a copy under this clause if there is no immediate prospect of further copying taking place. For that reason I am happy to accept my hon. Friend's amendment to my amendment.

This brings my amendment closely into line with the existing provisions in clause 40 governing multiple copying in libraries, and with the first part of amendment No. 311 in the names of hon. Gentlemen opposite. I cannot, however, accept the remainder of the wording of that amendment since the concept of systematic services for the making of copies is extremely broad and vague. It could well be that this provision would make the systematic supply of photocopiers an infringement of copyright and this would clearly be absurd.

Mr. Blair: I take the Minister's point about drafting, but it is not the drafting that concerns me. Perhaps if I put a specific case to him it may help elucidate the matter. If someone within a company's research department decided to photocopy a particular article and circulate it among 50, 100 or 1,000 people, would that be fair dealing or would that be excluded from fair dealing under the provisions?

Mr. Butcher: That is an example of the systematic and multiple copying which is not fair dealing.

In conclusion, I believe that my amendment, as amended by my hon. Friend, provides what is needed in this area. As a result of it, the hand of the copyright interests will be strengthened in negotiations for licences for copying which is not fair dealing. I hope that Opposition Members will not move their amendment 311 in the light of my remarks.

Mr. John Bowis (Battersea): I beg to move amendment (a) to the proposed amendment, at end insert

'at substantially the same time and for substantially the same purpose.'

I am grateful for the opportunity to move amendment (a) and I am grateful to my hon. Friend for accepting it. It is slightly unusual to wait so long to speak in the debate and then to have one's amendment accepted. I am doubly grateful to my hon. Friend.

I have been seeking to strike a sensible balance between the interests of education and the interests of copyright ownership and to stop some of the abuses that appear to be possible. Multiple copying and systematic single copying have been referred to in that context. I had in mind to bring the academic world into line with librarians so that academic books that are not readily available from libraries could be copied for students. Without further debate or discussion I commend my amendment to the House.

10.45 pm

Mr. Rowlands: We are a little unclear as to what the Government are doing in the amendments. We were somewhat relieved when the Minister promptly replied to my hon. Friend the Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) saying that multiple copying inside a commercial concern is not fair dealing. That was a clear statement that we will happily bag and take away.

Amendment No. 238 refers to

"A librarian, or a person acting on behalf of a librarian".

It then refers us to clauses 38 to 40. What is the Minister trying to do? Is he saying that if a librarian or a person acting on behalf of a librarian does multiple copying, he or she is breaching the fair dealing provision? I hope that we can obtain that clear statement from the Minister.

I want to know how this provision will be enforced. We went through all the problems when education authorities were involved. Eventually a court case arose and we moved to a licensing arrangement. The logic of much of what the Government amendments do would to be have some sort of licensing system sooner or later so that everybody knows exactly where they stand. We would like to know where we stand at the moment.

Mr. Butcher: The answer to the question asked by the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands) is that librarians will infringe if they make multiple copies.

Mr. Blair: In the light of what the Minister has said, I am content not to move amendment No. 311. I am grateful to the Minister for the clear reply he gave in that in a commercial establishment, making multiple copies of a particular article or piece of material is not fair dealing and is an infringment of copyright.

Amendment (a) agreed to.

Amendment No 238, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 30

CRITICISM, REVIEW AND NEWS REPORTING

Amendment proposed: No. 43, in page 13, line 25, leave out 'or' and insert

'does not infringe any copyright in the work provided that it is accompanied by a sufficient acknowledgement.

(1A) Fair dealing with a work (other than a photograph)'.

—[Mr. Butcher.]

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): With this it will be convenient to consider amendment No. 8 in, page 13, line 26, after '(b)', insert

'with the exception of articistic works, for the purpose of reporting current events.'.

Mr. Blair: As I understand it—I wish to be clear about this—the Government amendment gives us exactly what we asked for in Committee. Members of the Committee will recall that there was great concern that the fair dealing provisions as drafted meant that photographers lost copyright protection in circumstances where, for example, news and current events were reported. That was of tremendous concern to them. It was a right that they had held and they had always been in a particular position in relation to the use of photographs.

As I read Government amendment No. 43, photographs are specifically and expressly excluded from fair dealing. If I am right, there is no need for me to move amendment No. 8.

Mr. Butcher: The hon. Gentleman will remember the Committee exchanges on this matter. I prayed in aid the learned Lord Denning. The line of argument that I then deployed would have satisfied such distinguished lawyers as the aforesaid Lord when the matter was discussed in another place. I regret to say that it has not eased photographers' worries. They make the point that, even if we are right in our interpretation of clause 30, they should not be put to the trouble of having to argue the fairness of copying in court.

Given that we find it difficult to find examples of cases in which the exception could apply, we have concluded that we should not provide a current affairs exception for photographs. To retain clause 30 as it stands would be perfectly proper, but we are prepared to remove the widespread alarm that it has caused in the photographic community. I hope that Opposition Members do not consider it necessary to press their amendment, given amendment No. 43 standing in the name of my right hon. and learned Friend the Minister of Trade and Industry, which gives them what they and the photographers want.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 32

THINGS DONE FOR PURPOSES OF INSTRUCTION OR EXAMINATION

Mr. Butcher: I beg to move amendment No. 44, in page 14, line 22, after ',hire', insert 'or'.

Madam Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take the following amendments: Government amendments Nos. 45 to 49.

No. 332, in clause 62, page 24, line 45, after 'hire', insert 'or'.

No. 333, in page 24, line 46, leave out 'or distributed'.

Government amendments Nos. 204, 205, and 137 to 140.

Mr. Butcher: Clauses 32, 35 and 36, and an order under clause 139, permit copies to be made within clearly defined limits for educational purposes to prevent abuse of the exceptions. Such copies are regarded as infringing copies when they are subsequently dealt with by being sold, for example. The definition of "subsequent dealing" includes distribution. That is not right, as it could prevent a teacher distributing copies to his pupils or an education authority distributing material to its schools. What is needed is to prevent subsequent sale or hire, and that is what our amendments will achieve.

Mr. Blair: We understand what the Government are doing. Having looked at the amendment, we consider that it is in accordance with what we wish.

Mr. Bowis: Amendments Nos. 332 and 333 are my amendments. Why do we not consider the whole series of amendments? When I raised the matter in Committee, my hon. Friend the Minister kindly said that he would examine the problem. In a subsequent letter, he said that he did not intend that

"distribution by the teachers to pupils should be excluded."

He promised to table amendments, and here are the amendments. I am grateful to my hon. Friend.

Clause 62 omits the omission of the word distribution. I should be grateful if my hon. Friend would elaborate on that point. I appreciate that the matter in this clause may seem a little remote from education, but there are occasions when galleries, museums and so on have links with universities and the academic world. There could be a case for suggesting that such a provision should apply here. Am I right in thinking that a gallery, for example, that has works of art for sale could put on its door a poster, which is a copy of the prime work in the collection, but could not send prints in postcard form to sell the prime object to other people?

Mr. Butcher: My hon. Friend the Member for Battersea (Mr. Bowis) raised in Committee the matter of subsequent distribution of copies made under the various education exceptions in clauses 32 to 36. He was right to do so. He will have noted the amendments that we are making. However, I do not think that it would be right to make the same amendments to clause 62. If he wishes to tease the arguments from us on this occasion, I shall be happy to discharge an obligation to provide a rationale.

The purpose of clause 62 is to allow those selling an artistic work to copy it and to issue copies to the public for the purpose of advertising the sale without infringing copyright. Auctioneers, art dealers and others engaged in selling works of art want to be in a positon to include a reproduction of a work in catalogues advertising an auction or sale. That is a long-standing practice, but it may be an infringement of copyright under existing law.

Subsection (1) allows the production and distribution of catalogues and so on for the purposes of advertising a sale, but subsection (2) ensures that subsequent dealing in copies made for such a purpose is an infringement. This is to protect the interests of the artists involved. Thus, a work may be included in a catalogue to advertise a sale but such catalogues cannot subsequently be sold as art books unless the copyright owner has consented. Nor should they be distributed for any purpose other than that for which clause 62 is intended, which is advertising the sale of artistic works. Any exception to copyright should not be wider than needed to achieve its purpose, which in this instance is sale of artistic works, and the amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for Battersea would have that effect. Accordingly, I hope that he will be sympathetic to my request that he does not press it further.

Mr. Bowis: I wished only to test the water. I happily accept my hon. Friend's reassurances.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment made: No. 45, in page 14, line 23, leave out 'or distributed'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 35

RECORDING BY EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS OF BROADCASTS AND CABLE PROGRAMMES

Amendments made: No. 46, in page 15, line 29, after ', hire', insert 'or'.

No. 47, in page 15, line 30, leave out 'or distributed'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 36

REPROGRAPHIC COPYING BY EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS OF PASSAGES FROM PUBLISHED WORKS

Amendments made: No. 48, in page 16, line 5, after ', hire' insert 'or'.

No. 49, in page 16, line 6, leave out 'or distributed'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 50

ACTS DONE UNDER STATUTORY AUTHORITY

Mr. Butcher: I beg to move amendment No. 50, in page 20, line 43, at end insert—

'(3) Nothing in this section shall be construed as excluding any defence of statutory authority otherwise available under or by virtue of any enactment.'.

Madam Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss Government amendment No. 141.

Mr. Butcher: The amendment will ensure that a defendant is not debarred from pleading a statutory authority for an act which infringes copyright merely because there is no specific provision in an Act of Parliament. It will be, as under the present law, a matter of construction of the statutory provision in question.

On about half of the occasions when I have moved an amendment formally, my purpose has been to comply with a request from the Opposition.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 54

USE OF TYPEFACE IN ORDINARY COURSE OF PRINTING

Amendments made: No. 164, in page 22, line 27, leave out from '99' to end of line and insert '(order for delivery up and right of seizure)'.

No. 165, in page 22, line 29, leave out 'forfeiture of such an article' and insert 'order for delivery up'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 56

INCIDENTAL COPYING IN COURSE OF USE OF WORK IN ELECTRONIC FORM

Amendment made: No. 163, in page 23, line 2, leave out Clause 56.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 59

PUBLIC READING OR RECITATION

Mr. Butcher: I beg to move amendment No. 51, in page 24, line 13, leave out subsection (2) and insert—

'(2) Copyright in a work is not infringed by the making of a sound recording, or the broadcasting or inclusion in a cable programme service, of a reading or recitation which by virtue

of subsection (1) does not infringe copyright in the work, provided that the recording, broadcast or cable programme consists mainly of material in relation to which it is necessary to rely on that subsection.'.

The amendment is our response to the arguments of the hon. Member for Caenarfon (Mr. Wigley) in Committee. It ensures that those who record or broadcast live events, such as eisteddfodau, will not find themselves infringing copyright when unforeseeably—it is often unforeseeably—a speaker recites an extract from a literary or dramatic work without the consent of the copyright owner, placing reliance on clause 59. I am happy to give the hon. Gentleman credit for the amendment, which he richly deserves.

Mr. Wigley: I thank the Minister for responding to the arguments that I advanced in Committee. I am not sure whether the broadcasting authorities in Wales, the governors of the three channels and those involved in the organisation of eisteddfodau fully understood the implications of the Bill when it first appeared in print. When they read the report of our proceedings in Committee, there was apoplexy.

The House will know—the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands) will certainly be aware of this—that BBC Wales, S4C and HTV are much dependent on their capability to broadcast on radio and television the Eisteddfod Genwedlaethol Cymru—the National Eisteddfod of Wales—which will be held next week at Newport. Were they not able to broadcast without being in danger of breaching copyright, they would be extremely concerned. The same applies with Eisteddfod Genwedlaethol Urdd Gobaith Cymru—the Welsh League of Youth eisteddfod—which took place in Merthyr Tydfil last year. The hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney and his wife Janice, worked extremely hard for its success. That, too, would have been in trouble had it not been for the amendment. The same goes for the international eisteddfod. For all these reasons, I welcome the amendment. I congratulate the Minister on his change of post and say that, following the amendment, there will still be a welcome for him at Aberdaron this summer.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 60

Abstracts of scientific or technical articles

11 pm

Mr. Fisher: I beg to move amendment No. 318, in page 24, line 16, leave out clause 60.

Madam Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss amendment No. 331, in page 24, line 18, after 'abstract', insert 'or its typographical arrangement'.

Mr. Fisher: The purpose of amendment No. 318 is to delete clause 60, in particular its provision for the republication of abstracts by, in effect, a form of compulsory licensing, which is referred to in clause 141(1)(b).

The amendment raises a point that is different from those that we have been making about copying, but none the less it is important. Abstracts are copyright works of much value, especially to academics and researchers. As we understand it, clause 60 will allow not only copying of abstracts but their republication. That would be in contravention of the Berne convention. Surely authors should at least have the right to preserve their copyrights without the arm-twisting that clause 60 appears to impose on them. Some publishers of abstracts will not wish to have such valuable material republished or copied by others, but clause 60(2) may force them to comply under the certifiable schemes referred to in clause 141(1)(b).

Clause 60 is an undesirable provision, and throws the problems of copying far too wide. We hope that the Government will withdraw the clause.

Mr. Bowis: I should like my hon. Friend the Minister to elucidate a couple of points regarding facsimile copies of abstracts.

Although abstracts of articles in the humanities are less common than in the sciences, will my hon. Friend explain why the humanities have been excluded? Should not reference have been made to academic as well as scientific work?

The fastest way to publish abstracts is reprographically, but under clause 8(1) that would seem to be a breach of the copyright of the typographical arrangement. Clause 8(2) relates to reproduction of the same work. I doubt whether that is what was intended, but I should be grateful for my hon. Friend's elucidation.

Mr. Butcher: Clause 60, which amendment No. 318 seeks to remove from the Bill, is an exception to the rights of copyright owners, which I moved in Committee. I did so because, after full investigation of the matter, the Government believe that it provides a valuable safeguard for the continued operation of abstracting services, which play an essential role in the dissemination of scientific and technical information.

As I explained in Committee, the scientific and technical communities are served by a number of abstracting services. Some of them are purely commercial, such as Derwent Publications, and others are offshoots of learned societies, such as the Institution of Electrical Engineers. They scan periodicals from around the world and write or reproduce abstracts of articles of scientific or technical interest. They will normally apply a classification system to the abstracts, so that their clients can readily find those of particular interest to them.

All that is carried out under the present law, which, in our view, does not allow the republication of abstracts in the absence of authorisation by the copyright owner. We understand that, where authorisation is sought from publishers, it is normally given—usually without any request for payment. However, we also understand that in many cases consent is not sought, for practical or other reasons. In that event, the republication is an infringement of copyright.

Clearly, abstracting services are highly valued by the scientific and technical communities, and it is unsatisfactory that they should be carrying out their activities on a legally uncertain footing. The easy way of meeting their worries would have been simply to provide an exception to copyright, allowing republication of this kind. We resisted an amendment to this effect in another place, but said that we would consider alternative ways of meeting the problem, in consultation with publishing interests.

This clause is the outcome. I acknowledge that it has caused some concern to the Publishers Association and the Periodical Publishers Association Ltd. We have, however, taken account of the commercial interests of publishers by providing that the exception in subsection (1), allowing

[Mr. Butcher]

republication of abstracts, will be overridden if there is a licensing scheme. Consequently, authors and publishers will have the opportunity to obtain remuneration from this secondary use of abstracts if they wish. Conversely, they will be relieved of the burden of having to respond to individual requests for permission to republish abstracts.

I should add that we have consulted the Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers, whose journals and periodicals are among those most likely to be affected, and it is content to see an exception of this sort.

Amendment No. 331 would extend the exception even further. It would allow the abstracting service not merely to copy the original abstract word for word, but also to copy the original publisher's typography, which would be going too far. Abstracting services are themselves publishers and should be prepared to do their own typesetting. The scientific community needs the information, but it does not need to have it presented in a particular typeface or layout. There is no need to reduce the original publisher's rights any further.

For the reasons I have given, I must resist both these amendments and I hope that they will not be pressed.

Mr. Fisher: The Minister said that these abstracts are valued. Will he also confirm that they are valuable and that there is considerable commercial advantage and potential in these abstracts? If he does accept that, and that is the case, is it not bizarre that this uniquely should be ignored in a clause contained in a Bill which seeks to protect people's economic copyright?

Mr. Butcher: We have debated this at some length, and I have not found an argument to considerably change our view on this. The hon. Gentleman has asked me to come back on a point, so I shall use the opportunity to reply to the question of my hon. Friend the Member for Battersea (Mr. Bowis). He asked why the humanities were excluded, and the answer lies in the remark that I made earlier—that the exceptions should be no wider than necessary. The only case put to us that needed action related to science and technology.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 61

REPRESENTATIONS OF CERTAIN ARTISTIC WORKS ON PUBLIC DISPLAY

Amendment proposed: No. 52, in page 24, line 34, leave out 'showing,'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Mr. Martlew: The Committee was replete with my pedantic legal interventions, but tonight we have been free of them until now. The amendment deletes the word "showing", and it appears from clause 61, as it now stands, that it is not an infringement of copyright to make a graphic work. Does the deletion of the word "showing" not suggest that it may be an infringement to show the results of that graphic work or photograph? Will the Minister explain why that word requires to be deleted?

Mr. Butcher: The exhibition of an artistic work is not a restricted act either under existing law or under the Bill. That means that the showing of a film, including an artistic work, cannot infringe the copyright in the artistic work. The word "showing" is therefore not needed in clause 61(3).

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 65

HIRING OR COPYING OF SOUND RECORDINGS, FILMS AND COMPUTER PROGRAMS

Amendments made: No. 53, in page 25, line 12, leave out 'hiring' and insert 'rental'.

No. 54, in page 25, line 14, after 'royalty', insert 'or other payment'.—*[Mr. Maude.]*

Mr. Fisher: I beg to move amendment No. 315, in page 25, line 14, at end insert—

"to the copyright owner and to owners of the copyright in works included in such recordings, films or computer programs".

This is a simply addition to the Bill. It would protect the copyright of works included in copyright works in hire arrangements. We are not certain whether the Government have inadvertently omitted to mention the copyright of works in existing copyright works or whether they have been omitted deliberately. We believe that they should be included.

Mr. Maude: They are certainly not omitted by inadvertence. We debated this matter at some length in Committee. The recollection of that debate may be warmer with some of us than with others.

The amendment is an attempt to ensure that authors and composers are remunerated when records, films and computer programs are rented out under a statutory licence. We do not believe that the amendment, with which we have some sympathy, as the hon. Gentleman will probably remember from our debate in Committee, will be workable, so I ask the House to resist it.

Amendment negatived.

Amendments made: No. 55, in page 25, line 22, leave out 'hired' and insert 'rented'.

No. 56, in page 25, line 22, leave out 'hirer' and insert 'renter'.

No. 57, in page 25, line 22, leave out 'hiring' and insert 'rental'.—*[Mr. Maude.]*

Mr. Maude: I beg to move amendment No. 58, in page 25, line 26, leave out subsections (5) to (7).

Madam Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take the following amendments: No. 230, in page 25, line 28, after 'works', insert 'or films'.

No. 231, in page 25, line 35, after 'works', insert 'or films'.

No. 232, in page 25, line 38, at end insert 'or films'.

Mr. Maude: When I spoke in the Committee debate on the blank tape levy, it was at about this time of night. The difference is that that was the closing speech in the debate; the slightly depressing thing is that this is the opening speech in this debate. In deference to the hour and the great familiarity of hon. Members in the Chamber with the arguments, I shall be brisk in describing the Government's stance.

The perceived problem is that thousands of people make copies of music from records and the radio in infringement of copyright. Since these infringements take place in the privacy of the home, the copyright owner

cannot enforce his copyright. He cannot get remuneration for the use of his works and so, it is said, the answer is to put a levy on recording tape and/or recording equipment.

Mr. Page: My hon. Friend said that thousands of people make copies. Will he amend that to "millions of people", and get it accurate?

Mr. Maude: I am prepared to admit almost anything. I am prepared to make that trifling correction.

The money from such a levy would be distributed to copyright owners and, in return, the public would be licensed to make recordings for their private and domestic use. As will no doubt be said during the debate, the Government's view has gone first one way and then the other, but we have had to reach final conclusions and tonight the House must do the same. The Government's conclusion is that a levy should not be introduced, and I ask the House to endorse that conclusion.

Amendment No. 58 would remove three subsections which were added in Committee. The intention behind them was, as I understand it, not to require the introduction of a levy but to leave the door open for the Secretary of State to introduce a levy if he saw fit.

Mr. Jeremy Hanley (Richmond and Barnes): I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his candour in admitting that the Government have moved one way and then the other. However, it is difficult for someone such as myself who is so keen on this issue that I spoke in the House on it at half-past seven in the morning of 18 December 1985, and on three subsequent occasions. Each time I was assured that the levy on blank tapes was being carefully considered and then I was told that it had been accepted through the White Paper.

Therefore, perhaps my hon. Friend can tell us what thought processes occurred to force the Government to change their mind and what consultations were carried out between the general election, when every Tory candidate fought in support of this issue, and when the Secretary of State made his decision. Did the Government consult the British phonographic industry or the music industry before changing their mind?

11.15 pm

Mr. Maude: If I may proceed a little with my speech, the thought processes may become a little clearer. It is clear that the Government did not suddenly wake up one morning and decide to change their mind. If ever any Bill was consulted upon, this is it. The Bill has been subjected to the most enormous consultation and there have been enormous lobbies on both sides. I do not think that anyone could seriously suggest that the blank tape levy is not a matter on which there has been a great deal of consultation because there certainly has been throughout the history of the debate.

Mr. Hanley: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for giving way again. I asked him what consultations with the music industry had taken place between the general election and the announcement of the change of policy.

Mr. Maude: I cannot give my hon. Friend a specific answer on that matter at the moment. However, the Department was well aware of the views of all those concerned. We have been consulting all those concerned with this matter over a long period and, as I said at the outset, the arguments are clear and are well understood by all concerned.

The amendments which are grouped with Government amendment No. 58 are, I presume, intended to open up the possibility of a levy on videos as well as one on audio tape. Subsections (5) to (7), which were added in Committee, are technically defective in several respects, not least in that they do not allow the introduction of a licensing scheme in respect of literary works forming the lyrics of songs. If my hon. Friend's amendments were accepted, any video levy would license only the recording of silent movies.

As I said in Committee, we have not the slightest intention of seeking to use the powers with which the Committee endowed us. If, in the distant future, a Secretary of State were minded to use those provisions, he would find them unusable for their intended purpose. The only consequence of failure to accept my amendment No. 58 would be to leave an unwanted and unworkable power in the Bill.

In terms of strict law, it was unnecessary for us to table this amendment. We could have accepted the amendments made in Committee, content in the knowledge that they make no difference, but that would have been disingenuous. We do not want a levy, nor, I believe, do the majority of hon. Members. In the circumstance, we should remove from the Bill any suggestion that this House favours the levy solution.

I have no new arguments to advance tonight. They have all been aired before. It is wrong in principle for the private rights of a few to be enforced by means of a general tax, which hits innocent and guilty alike. That is especially so when the beneficiaries of such a levy would be the relatively well-to-do record companies and pop stars; and those who would pay include the visually handicapped, those with impaired hearing the churches, younger consumers—not a cast list of the rich and famous. It may be that there are poor composers—I hear it said many earn less than £5,000 per year from performances of their work—but let us not delude ourselves. A copyright levy would not benefit them; the money would go to swell the coffers of the composers who already make large sums. It is successful and popular music which is copied most and which would receive the lion's share of any levy. Much would flow overseas, especially to the United States of America, without any corresponding return to United Kingdom composers.

Mr. Wilson: Does the hon. Gentleman agree that his list of categories containing people that he says would be unfairly penalised under a levy coincides remarkably with groups of people who will lose under the poll tax? It is disingenuous in the extreme to come to the House this week to plead for a few pennies for the blind and disabled when only a week ago the Government bludgeoned out of existence every amendment that favoured the disabled and involved infinitely greater sums of money than this.

Mr. Maude: That is not the best point that the hon. Gentleman could have raised. It was a fairly poor one. The list that I read to the House contained people who are particularly heavy users of blank tape. It seems wrong that they should be asked to pay a special levy on something that they use for perfectly innocent purposes, in order to provide extra money for an industry that is already doing rather well.

[Mr. Maude]

All hon. Members who spoke in Committee in favour of a levy said quite properly that their support for this proposal depended on acceptable arrangements being found for innocent users, especially blind people. An acceptable relief scheme for blind people is a pipe dream. After we published the White Paper in 1986, we explored every possibility and could not find a way to satisfy the Royal National Institute for the Blind. Hon. Members cannot say that they favour a levy but that, of course, the blind must be looked after. Those are mutually exclusive propositions. Those who favour a levy must do so in the full recognition that blind people will be prejudiced. I do not want to spend a long time going through all the arguments again.

Mr. Toby Jessel (Twickenham): My hon. Friend is speaking at some length about the blind. Of course everybody cares about blind people and wants to support them. One person in 300 is registered as visually handicapped and on average, people buy eight blank tapes per year. A levy of 10p per tape would come to 80p a year. If a blind person bought twice as many it would come to £1·60 a year. That is 3p a week. Does my hon. Friend seriously believe that blind people who derive a great deal of enjoyment from listening would resent paying 3p a week to musicians, composers and actors who entertain them? Is my hon. Friend not employing a rather small argument to try to defeat the proposal?

Mr. Maude: The argument is put in perfectly good faith by many organisations that represent blind people. I do not think that the RNIB is filled with any sort of animus against copyright owners. It is an organisation of good will doing charitable work for the good of the blind people that it represents. For my hon. Friend to write this off as a trifling argument and to say that people can perfectly well afford such a levy will not do.

Members of the Committee who advanced the argument for a blank tape levy were perfectly straightforward about it. They said that no scheme should be introduced unless a relief scheme for blind people could be introduced. In good faith the Government have explored all the possibilities for devising such a scheme. It cannot be done.

Miss Emma Nicholson: Does my hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham (Mr. Jessel) know that only one in three of all people with visual handicaps are registered, and a smaller percentage of those people with aural handicaps are registered? The Minister has, perhaps, not spoken about those with handicaps quite as forcefully as he has spoken about the blind. I have here a letter from the chief executive of the Royal National Institute for the Deaf and it clearly makes the point on behalf of both problem areas. It says:

"The RNID fully recognises the rights of copyright owners to protect their interests, but does not believe that a workable levy system including exemptions and rebates for deaf people has been found. Accordingly we are most concerned that should the power in the Bill be used it would penalise deaf people for using a most valuable resource."

My hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham (Mr. Jessel) said that blind people bought only eight tapes a year. He completely omitted to mention the talking newspapers, from which many hon. Members have had letters; I have copies of all those letters, of which there were 400 or 500 in the last three weeks. Even the small talking newspapers regularly use about 400 tapes a week.

Mr. Maude: My hon. Friend makes a vivid point. I know that the House will accept the argument that she advances on behalf of aurally handicapped people, and I am grateful to her for making her point so powerfully.

The arguments have been fully exposed. The fashion for a levy solution has now passed. It is worth noting that in its recent Green Paper the European Commission did not build on the levies in France and West Germany to propose a Communitywide system, as some had expected it to; it did quite the reverse.

People are beginning to realise that levies are not the solution. We should perhaps even begin to question whether there is a problem that needs a solution. The countries with the most buoyant music and record industries—the United States, the United Kingdom and Japan—have survived private copying without a levy, and it now seems that Europe, too, is to turn away from a levy. I invite the House to do the same.

Mr. Page: Amendments Nos. 230, 231 and 232, standing in my name and that of my hon. Friend the Member for Battersea (Mr. Bowis), provide a simple solution to the Government's difficulty. The Government have introduced the Bill for a variety of reasons, but one of the major reasons must be related to the advances that have been made in new technology. Without those advances, the Bill would be a considerably slimmer volume than it is and we should almost certainly not be discussing a blank tape levy, as it would be quite difficult to reproduce plastic or bakelite discs.

New technologies have brought advances principally in the handling and dissemination of information—from computers through new printing and reproduction techniques to laser discs, satellites and cables. Those new methods of storing, accessing and spreading information increase its value, but the same technology has made illicit copying that much easier. To take a classic example, educational software never got off the ground because of the ease of making illicit copies. Illicit copies have destroyed the very investment that makes progress possible.

I say that in reply to those who argue, "Home taping does no harm; the record companies are wealthy enough anyway and can afford to forgo whatever revenue might come their way because of the levy." My hon. Friend the Minister made virtually the same point. I have never believed that one strengthens the weak by weakening the strong, and I do not believe that we shall help the music industry by asking it to forgo what rightfully belongs to it.

Our debate tonight is not just about money; it is about principles of right and wrong. The loss of sales to British products through illicit copying and breaches of copyright runs into hundreds of millions of pounds. It is impossible to estimate the exact sum but there are figures to suggest that it is in excess of £500 million. No economy in the world would happily forgo that amount of revenue.

Not only is the overall loss of sales through illicit reproductions virtually incalculable; the creators of original work see their ideas being lost through copying. They also see the sheer difficulties of enforcement. I hope

that it is those difficulties that lie at the heart of the levy argument. I hope that that, rather than the question of legalising home taping, is at the front of our minds.

Mr. Tim Devlin (Stockton, South): Surely the Government's best argument relates to the proportion of a levy that would go to the artist or the original producer of the work. Can my hon. Friend tell us how much of the levy would go to the artist? My experience of the record industry tells me that the bulk of the levy would go to a record company that had bought the copyright from the artist at a knockdown price when he was a young man.

11.30 pm

Mr. Page: My hon. Friend the Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Devlin) did not have the privilege or the opportunity of attending the Committee, but that matter was fully debated then. Whether we like it or not, copyright is invested in whoever has purchased it and in the particular case cited by my hon. Friend it lies with the record company. The strength of the contract between the artist or composer and the record company is another matter. If they become famous enough they may write into their contracts that they should get an advantage from the revenue derived from the levy, but it is up to them.

I do not apologise for my preamble. Tonight the Government have failed to solve the question of copyright on time shift, and they will shortly make exactly the same mistake with audio taping. For some reason the Government, or rather one or two Ministers, have tied themselves to the rails as the express is thundering towards them—just like the "Boys' Own" stories. There is an alternative, but even after the Green and White Papers and the manifestoes, the Government refuse to take that alternative course of action.

I accept what the Minister said about the amendment passed in Committee. I accept that it was not up to strength and that it would not have stood up to scrutiny and the test of operation. In Committee we made that same point. We said that the amendment was being used as an example to test the strength of opinion for blank taping. We accepted that it was not pure milk as regards the introduction of a blank tape levy. However, if the amendment had been cleaned up a little, it would have given enabling power to the Minister, had that power been required at a later date. The Government can still untie themselves from the rails, but I do not believe that the will is there.

Some people may wonder at all the fuss about a "little private copying". One instance of private copying may not be much, but regular home taping is widespread and hits the record, film and video industries. The Minister said that thousands of people are involved, but as he knows from my earlier intervention, we are dealing not with thousands but with millions of people. The problem will get worse as new forms of recording equipment become available.

I know that great store is set by the introduction of spoilers and that it is believed that they will block the reproduction of digital audio tapes when those tapes become more generally available and attractively priced. I have some experience in the security industry, and I know that for every lock there is a key. For spoilers that key is already available: it is called an enhancer. There may be a proposal to make such enhancers illegal, but making things illegal has never stopped them being used. To anyone connected with the production of pre-recorded tapes, the most fair and workable solution is a royalty or levy system. Although such a system would mean revenue to the companies involved, I also believe that it would signify a return to moral standards.

The Government have done a magnificent job in pioneering a return to a revived economy. Most of the economic indicators show that things are on the way up and the economy is looking more promising than it has done for years. Although that economic success is still too short-lived to be taken for granted, it needs to be reinforced by a social and cultural revolution.

I shall resist talking about family values and the reinforcement of traditional values, but I believe that it is wrong for the Government to walk away from introducing and supporting the principle of copyright. Technological changes will constantly require control and the guidance of law. That has happened in medicine, and the law will be changed with regard to embryo experimentation. In the same way, by rejecting the amendment, the Government are abandoning the principle of copyright. I do not want to labour the obvious——

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: If the hon. Gentleman is so concerned about what is morally right, will he tell us what is morally right about imposing a levy on people who use blank tapes in a perfectly legal way and never copy material that they should not copy? Surely it is wholly unfair to penalise people who obey the law, as opposed to those who break it?

Mr. Page: The hon. Gentleman has a point. A degree of rough justice is involved in this. I accept that some will be caught in the trap that he has described. With the exception made for people who are visually handicapped and with the proviso that tapes of under 35 minutes length would be exempt, I suggest that very few—perhaps no—users would be thus caught. If they want to avoid this levy —incidentally, it has been absorbed by every tape producer in the countries in which it has been introduced —all they have to do is make sure that they buy tapes less than 35 minutes long——

Mr. Bennett: Does the hon. Gentleman accept that an oral historian, for instance, would use a large amount of tape? Often such historians are not well funded and the cost of buying tapes of their work is high. They do not want to keep changing tapes for less than 35 minutes length when interviewing people for oral history projects. They want tapes that are as long as possible.

Mr. Page: As I said, there is an element of rough justice. If a vast number of tapes are being bought for educational purposes, I see no difficulty about arranging some sort of exemption for genuine use.

We come back to blank tapes and the principle of copyright. The whole purpose of the Bill is to enshrine in legislation a protection for ingenuity and creativity, which constitute two of the great advantages of this nation. Turning a blind eye to the issue shows a lack of moral leadership.

Mr. Devlin: Would my hon. Friend be in favour of imposing a levy on blank paper for photocopying machines? The principle is the same.

Mr. Page: When my hon. Friend reflects on that intervention, he may wish he had never made it.

[Mr. Page]

The House will not be surprised to hear that I do not accept the permissive argument that home taping should be allowed free, gratis and for nothing. A certain body of opinion advocates that line of action, but it breaches the principle of copyright. It becomes almost impossible to know where to draw the line. Will a home owner be allowed an extra copy for his car? Will the standard family with 2·4 children have one or two more copies for the Walkman? If a relative drops in and likes the music that is on, will he be allowed a copy, too? The only safe position is to adhere to the principle of copyright.

The debate about the legality of home taping in Committee was instructive, if nothing else. My hon. Friend the Minister tackled the matter by saying:

"If the Committee decide . . . that it should remain a criminal act to copy copyright audio works, stringent action by the industry could have a salutary effect."

He went on to say:

"there are private rights which are enforceable in the courts. They are not enforced at present, and there is scope for that practice to be enhanced."—[*Official Report, Standing Committee E,* 24 May 1988; c. 336.]

That was interesting. How did my hon. Friend envisage enforcing the time shift proposal on the 28-day limit?

The Government's decision to alter that proposal because it was unenforceable provides the answer to my hon. Friend's question. He almost admitted it later in Committee, when he prayed in aid the judgment of Lord Templeman in the Amstrad case—a judgment which most Committee members quoted at one time or another in support of their arguments. The judgment said:

"A law which is treated with such contempt should be amended or repealed."

That point was also made in the 1986 White Paper.

My hon. Friend the Minister tried to justify the Government's changed stance on the levy, at which point the debate became interesting. He said:

"We have seriously considered such a scheme. I did not simply study it for a few minutes before I began my speech or talked to a couple of people."—[*Official Report, Standing Committee E;* 24 May 1988, c. 340.]

That was a Freudian slip, because I reckon that a couple of people spoke to him, and those two people had decided that it would not work.

The blank tape levy has created more confusion than any other subject. The Conservative manifesto stated:

"As part of a major reform in the law of copyright home taping will be legalised in exchange for a 10 per cent. levy on blank audio tapes. Organisations and their members who use tapes without breaching copyright, ie blind people, will be able to claim a full rebate."

Is my hon. Friend saying, as he seems to be implying tonight, that the Government went into the election knowing that they did not have a proper agreed rebate system for blind people? The briefing notes sent out by Conservative Central Office said that special provision would be made for the blind, as well as organisations and individuals who do not infringe copyright. Perhaps that answers the question asked by the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett). I was asked two similar questions, one at the public meeting. Safe with the manifesto and the speaking notes in front of me, I replied, "Yes, we shall introduce a blank tape levy."

I can only assume that, until election day, the blank tape levy was policy—with the provisos to help the visually handicapped, and exemptions for tapes with a short running time. But within a few weeks of the election, in a puff of smoke and a flash of light, the proposal disappeared. I want to know from my hon. Friend what happened. I echo the words of my hon. Friend the Member for Richmond and Barnes (Mr. Hanley), who asked what had happened since the election to reverse the policy contained in the Green Paper, the White Paper and the manifesto.

The temptation to run through the history of the matter and to list all the committees that have been formed is almost irresistable, but in deference to those who wish to speak I shall resist it. It is a few years since I felt moved enough to vote against the Government. The previous occasion was in 1980, when I voted against them on the employment legislation, and the next year, under a three-line whip, the Government exhorted me to vote for the very proposal that they had tried to block the year before.

The amendment in the names of my hon. Friends the Members for Battersea (Mr. Bowis) and for Beaconsfield (Mr. Smith) provides a solution to the video and audio tape problem. It reinforces copyright. I do not understand why the Government do not embrace the ideas in the Green Paper, the White Paper and the manifesto. Even at this last moment, I urge my hon. Friend to think again.

11.45 pm

Mr. Blair: The blank tape levy, or royalty, was discussed fully in Committee. I do not pretend, and I have never pretended, that this is an easy judgment to make. It is not. But in an imperfect world we should adopt not the perfect solution, because there is rarely one, but the best solution that can be found.

No hon. Member has suggested either on Second Reading, or in Committee or today that home taping is not practised on a considerable scale and that in the main it is illegal. At the very least, the House has a duty either to make it legal or to provide a proper means of enforcing the remedies against illegality.

The hon. Member for Hertfordshire, South-West (Mr. Page) referred to the Amstrad judgment. What was remarkable about that judgment was its unanimity about the desirability of removing an unenforceable law. In his speech Lord Templeman said:

"From the point of view of society the present position is lamentable. Millions of breaches of the law must be committed by home copiers every year."

He ended the paragraph by saying:

"A law which is treated with such contempt should be amended or repealed."

The Government have introduced proposals not to amend or repeal the law but to leave it in an inherently unsatisfactory state.

The solution to home taping in other countries is a royalty on blank tapes. That solution has been adopted all over Europe, most recently in Spain. It is being operated in West Germany and France. While the Bill was being debated in Committee the Australian Government announced that they intended to introduce a blank tape levy. It could not therefore be said that it would be odd for this country to adopt such a solution. A royalty on blank tapes has been introduced elsewhere, even though the record industries in those countries are far less important than our own.

Mr. Devlin: How much of the levy in West Germany goes to the composers?

Mr. Blair: About 60 per cent. I shall turn in a moment to the question of how much of the levy goes to the rich composers and how much of it goes to poorer composers.

The rest of Europe is moving sensibly towards the introduction of a blank tape levy while the scale of the problem in this country is growing. Many more blank tapes are sold every year than pre-recorded cassettes. Probably two thirds of those tapes, or even more, are used to make illicit copies. Unlawfulness on that scale puts into the context the arguments against the blank tape levy.

Another argument is that all the money will go to the very rich, to the Michael Jacksons of this world, not to poorer composrs and song writers. The best judges of the interests of poorer composers and song writers are the bodies that represent those people. Their view is unanimous: that the poorer composers and song writers will secure a significant part of that levy. A limit is placed in West Germany on the amount that any song writer can receive. That is a means of distributing the money raised by the levy. It would be bizarre if we were to say that poorer composers and song writers in this country are in a different position.

The second objection that is made to the blank tape levy concerns the blind, the disabled and other groups. All hon. Members quite rightly take seriously any representations made on behalf of blind, deaf or otherwise disabled people. However, my view is that for the Government, this has become something of a shroud behind which they hide what has been essentially a political and tactical decision, taken for other reasons. I say that because we have made it absolutely clear throughout that we believe that proper exemption schemes should and could be found for such groups. That is why the amendment we tabled in Committee gave the Government a power to introduce the levy scheme. It did not even go as far as some wanted, and impose an immediate obligation on them to do so. That is because the problems of the blind, the disabled, and indeed the oral historians to whom my hon. Friend the Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) referred, require proper schemes to be found.

At present, a scheme to the satisfaction of the blind, the deaf and the disabled has not yet been found. However, copyright Bills come before the House once every 30 years. Surely it is not unreasonable, given the trend of events elsewhere, to say that at least a power should be on the statute book so that negotiations can be held, hopefully leading to a satisfactory conclusion.

Miss Emma Nicholson: I am most grateful to the hon. Gentleman for giving way. Perhaps he can explain why two years of solid negotiations with the blind and deaf organisations, with the Government heavily committed in print to a blank tape levy, have wholly failed to come up with anything that will satisfy those organisations. Will he also explain how on earth he expects a blind person to become other than more dependent, given that any exemption scheme will rely on paperwork, and a blind person will have to find a sighted person to help fill in the form?

Mr. Blair: I do not think that all exemptions schemes necessarily depend on that. Indeed, West Germany provides an interesting analogy. In West Germany, the royalty has been subsumed into the cost of the tape so the price of a blank tape has not risen at all. In any event, paperwork is not the only way of providing an exemption scheme. It could be provided through the allowances paid to blind and disabled people.

I appreciate that the blind, the disabled and the lobbies associated with those groups will oppose any notion of a blank tape royalty or levy, but ultimately, we have to weigh that objection and consider how serious it is—given the commitment to finding a decent exemption scheme —against the interests of those who are having their copyright transgressed and who, if we leave the law as it is, will continue to have it transgressed without any comeback whatsoever. I find that wholly unsatisfactory.

Miss Emma Nicholson: I am most grateful to the hon. Gentleman and I shall not ask him to give way again. I recognise his genuine concern and commitment to making a blank tape levy work for the blind and the deaf, as well as for composers. But can I not get it over to him and to other hon. Members that the majority of those who are blind or deaf are not known as such to society? They are not registered, and they are not members of voluntary organisations. They are invisible because they prefer to be treated as normal and we shall not be able to find them.

Mr. Blair: Those problems are exactly the problems that have been addressed by other legal systems and other Administrations in other countries and they have been overcome.

It is also important to stress that we must be careful not to exaggerate just how much difference the levy or royalty will make. Listening to some of the comments made outside, it seems as if blind people will be prevented from buying tapes following the passage of a royalty levy. That is simply not the case.

It is important to retain a sense of perspective. I do not believe that we could not find a workable exemption that would be acceptable to all parties. If a proper exemption scheme cannot be found, a levy should not be introduced. We have made that clear throughout. That is why we have said that a power should be given to the Government rather than an obligation.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: Does my hon. Friend agree that there should be an exemption, not just for the blind and disabled, but for at least all educational users so that the oral historian I mentioned earlier as well as anthropologists, folklorists and others who use tapes in large quantities should not have to pay the levy? Will my hon. Friend also look at the problems for schools? In the new GCSE examination a large amount of work from pupils has to be recorded for moderation purposes. Those are all cases for exemption. However, if there are exemptions will there not be two prices for tapes? If one is not careful, there will be as many infringements by people moving from a legitimate exemption to an illegitimate exemption.

Mr. Blair: Obviously we have to be careful. It would be absurd to have two different prices for tapes. The Australian Government, who a few weeks ago introduced their own proposals for a blank tape royalty, included specific exemptions for educational institutions.

If one put all the exemptions together, they would make up a fraction of the problem of illicit home taping. About 50 million to 60 million blank tapes every year are used for illicit home taping. Therefore, it is important to retain a sense of perspective when talking about the necessary exemptions.

[Mr. Blair]

We believe that the rights of copyright owners are important and it is virtually beyond doubt that they are being infringed on a large scale. We do not say that the levy solution is a perfect one but we do say that it is the best one available. If workable exemptions can be found to take account of the needs of those who deserve exemption, we shall be in a much better position than we are now. Legalising home taping, plus the introduction of a levy system to compensate, must be preferable to the present position. That is the real choice we have to make and we are sure that our judgment is correct.

Mr. Wigley: The Government have got themselves into an almighty tangle. That became clear in Committee and has become clear again tonight. Day after day we hear from the television advertisements that we are moving towards 1992. Surely we should be taking account of what has been happening in continental countries in recent years and we should be arranging our affairs in a way that gives fair play to the composers and musicians in the countries of Britain.

The Government are guilty of bad faith on this issue. That has been pointed out to Ministers by Conservative Back Benchers. The Conservatives fought an election only a little over 12 months ago on a policy of introducing charges on blank tapes and then did an immediate somersault. Government Back Benchers and voters outside the House, let alone Opposition Members, are entitled to some explanation of why the change was made. We have not had an explanation. It would seem that some of the big battalions, possibly geared to Japanese interests and so on, have been lobbying hard and that the Government have succumbed to the lobbying. The way in which blind people and other disabled people have been used as part of that lobby is distasteful. I am not willing to accept, from either side of the House, any accusation that we are not interested in the rights and well-being of disabled people.

Only last week in the debate on the poll tax we heard that there are other ways of looking after disabled people, who will suffer considerably greater increases in the costs imposed on them from the poll tax than from the few pence involved in this issue. We were told that they could be helped through income support and other methods. That argument appealed to Conservative Members at that time. If the argument was valid then, it is valid now.

The argument put by the Royal National Institute for the Blind to those who have been campaigning on behalf of musicians about why it has not come forward with a scheme is that it is not run in a way that facilitiates the drawing up of a scheme. It is a fragmented organisation, and that makes it difficult. If those who campaign on behalf of blind people were to perceive a real difficulty, they would find a way around it, as has been done in other countries.

12 midnight

Doing a wrong to one group does not justify not finding a formula for another group. Pitting one deserving group against another is not a reasonable way forward. Hon. Members from the Opposition parties, at least, are aware of the interests of music unions. Many composers and others have to do on a small income. There could be a scheme similar to that in Germany, where there is a mechanism for spreading out the benefits that come from a charge on blank tapes. Goodness only knows that such groups deserve it. There are mechanisms for safeguarding the interests of disabled and blind people. I am convinced of that. People who are involved with disablement believe that that can be done.

It is not a lucid argument to say that, because of an effect on another group, we shall do an injustice and that we shall not apply the laws of copyright to musicians and composers. There is a way round it. It may be by exemption, it may be by passing over a fund en bloc to the RNIB or other organisations, or it may be by other schemes. I am convinced that it can be achieved.

We are doing the arts in general a disservice by not moving in the direction in which other groups have been moving on the issue. I do not know whether the Government really believe in what they are doing. We have heard from the Under-Secretary of State for Industry and Consumer Affairs, in his last few hours in his present post. I do not know whether he really believes in the change of course that the Government are taking. I do not know whether the Under-Secretary, the hon. Member for Coventry, South-West (Mr. Butcher), who has done such a great job for the Government on the Bill, really believes, as a Minister with a considerable interest in music and composition, in what the Goverment are doing as he moves on to a post in the Department of Education and Science.

The arguments of justice are on the side of making sure that there is a mechanism for recompensing composers, musicians and others. There are other mechanisms for making sure that, in doing so, we shall not do down groups such as disabled people. I should have thought that the Government, with the abilities that they have in other directions, could surely find a way around the problem, even at this late stage.

Mr. Bowis: A little earlier, with great grace and panache, my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Corporate Affairs stepped down from a previous policy held during the consideration of the Bill. He reminded us of Oscar Wilde's cry that what the world needs is more geniuses with humility; there are so few of us. My hon. Friend was a genius. He showed great humility, and down he stepped with the 28-day shift, and quite rightly, too. Otherwise, we would have condemned our fellow citizens, every month for the rest of their lives, to going back to the tape machine to put on another video to fulfil the terms of the law. We have come up with another solution. He acknowledged that he had left the matter open and had left copyright rather bare and undefended. He suggested that our amendments might cover silent movies only. At least it is a way forward that he can pick up, take away and run with.

I have some sympathy with the Government. I understand their dilemma. They support the principle of copyright and acknowledge that the present law is unenforceable. They accept the principle of finding an alternative, but they do not think that a viable alternative is the tape levy scheme. I am not one who thinks that the levy is the perfect solution for all problems. The best solution is to find a way of enforcing copyright. The trouble is that copyright is difficult to enforce, yet the House was the authority that decided that performers, composers and producers of music and films should have copyright.

The purpose of such a decision was, and can only have been, to provide a right to income for one's work and the right not to have one's work tampered with. But Parliament did not provide the realistic means or the method for the performers, composers and producers to enforce that right. In theory, little Johnny, who takes a cassette to his room and records the tape that his friend has lent him, could be taken to court by the record producer. That is clearly absurd. Such a case would not stand up in court and the public would not accept the "catch-you-out" society that sent tape-detector vans out to establish whether little Johnny was recording in his back bedroom. The tape-copying detector van is not with us yet, and I suspect that it never will be.

We have a law that is unenforceable, and unenforceable laws are bad laws. I do not say that we should abandon copyright law and remove it from the statute book. I say that an alternative form of compensation must be found for those whom we sought to protect originally. The Government have rightly rejected the first option as unfair to the music and films industries, and to composers and performers especially. They rightly proposed a modest tape levy in the past. That was the policy of the Conservative party at the general election and that was the policy on which the Government were elected.

During the general election, my hon. Friend the Minister talked about not wanting to have a tax, but there was a campaign to portray the levy as a tax. The Conservative party explained that none of the revenue would go to the Government. It was said that the funds raised would go to the performers and copyright owners as a royalty payment by the consumer for recording copyright material. Although composers, lyricists and artists assigned their rights to the recording companies, they would be entitled to a proportion of the levy revenue in their own right. That was the policy on which we were elected, and it was a policy which made sense.

Everyone was agreed on the principle and the question was how to implement the scheme. Since then, the Government have said that the scheme cannot be implemented. The industry has said that it could and that it would implement it. France has said that it has been implementing such a scheme since 1985. Germany says that it has been doing it for the past 20 years. Portugal, Spain, Belgium and Italy are saying, "We are about to do it." When the Bill was being considered in Committee, Australia said, "We shall do it too."

The issue was debated in Committee, and it is right that it should be discussed again this evening. We are conscious of the needs of the visually and aurally handicapped and we understand their concern. We insist that any levy should not impose hardship on such people. In other countries, such levies are absorbed by the industry. That means that no cost is passed on to the consumer. The British industry went further than that. The music industry offered a special deal for the blind and the deaf, with free tapes to be provided for such people until and unless it was clear that there would be no increase in price. Instead of having an imposition on such people, a new deal is on offer for those who suffer from sight or hearing problems.

The Government have said that it would be difficult to work out a scheme. In Committee, they said, "It will be difficult to work it out and we do not like the sound of what is being proposed." Surely we had a right to expect that between Committee and Report the Government would be consulting—"You, the industry, say that you could do it. How would you do it? You, the members of the Committee, said that it could be done. How could it be done?" I, as a member of the Committee, have not been asked for my views. I think that, similarly, my colleagues in Committee have not been asked. I do not know whether Opposition Members have been asked for their views, but I doubt it. The industry has not been asked to come forward with a scheme. The Music Copyright Reform Group has not been asked. The same goes for British Phonographic Industry Ltd. the Composers Guild of Great Britain and the British Copyright Council. Since the Committee reported, these bodies have not been asked by the Government how they would put the will of the Committee into practice.

It seems that a decision has been taken behind closed doors to oppose enabling legislation that would enable a scheme to be implemented of the sort that the members of the Committee had in mind.

The Government and hon. Members must remember that we are talking about 100 million blank tapes being imported and sold every year in this country. If we deduct 10 per cent. for those who use tapes for oral history studies —I think that was the phrase used by the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett)—for little Johnny or for recording little Joanna's first squeaks on the recorder, we are still talking about 90 million tapes. Not one penny of the proceeds of those tapes is given to those whose music is being recorded. That is what we are trying to put right. The Government's first thoughts were right. The election policy on which we stood and were elected was right, and I tell those composers, performers and companies to whom I gave my word at the election, "This is not the moment to let you down."

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: I found the Minister's explanation puzzling. Part of the argument is that if it is difficult to enforce copyright, we should not legislate to protect it. Having not been a member of the Committee, I am left wondering why large tracts of the Bill have been enacted if that is the Government's sentiment.

We are discussing a disabling amendment. The Committee included in the Bill—the legislation will be in force for 20 or 30 years—the power to consider a scheme. The Government have said, "We do not want even to consider the possibility of introducing the scheme for the foreseeable future." That is an inexplicable stance for the Government to take, especially as they fought the election on precisely this issue. We are being asked to remove something from the Bill which does not require the Government to do anything; it simply allows them to consider a possibility in the future.

The arguments that have been advanced about the problems of disabled people are out of proportion and perspective. I have not heard any pleas or squeals from those who are opposed to the levy about the VAT that disabled people must pay on blank tapes, which is a far more substantial burden than any levy. I would be in favour of a scheme that reduced or eliminated the impact of the levy on disabled people, but that does not justify removing from the Bill the possibility of considering a scheme in the future without primary legislation.

None of the arguments that have been advanced as special pleading from disabled people are convincing. From certain quarters, that pleading is only crocodile tears. Disabled people could do with many more radical

[Mr. Malcolm Bruce]

reforms and more assistance from the Government than they have received. To hear Ministers pleading the cause of disabled people is, in some cases, a little distasteful.

There are many ingenious ways in which a levy could be introduced so that the concerns of interested groups could be accommodated. We heard the arguments about distribution and who would receive the money, but we are talking only about the principle of setting up a scheme and discussing in detail how that could be done. Limits could be set, and part of the levy could be specifically earmarked for promotional purposes. It would be possible to allocate some of the money to the Royal National Institute for the Blind and the Royal National Institute for the Deaf and make them agencies for the distribution and sale of exempt tapes.

The arguments that have been advanced are not convincing; they are cosmetic and are designed to cover up the nakedness of the Government, who have done a volte-face that has embarrassed their supporters, many of whom have gone out on a limb to support the party line only to be asked to deny what they said after such a short period. It is not often that I speak on behalf of the Government's supporters, but many of them have been given a shabby deal.

I have been involved in one or two meetings where I have heard the vigorous and enthusiastic support of Conservative Members of Parliament for the principle of the levy, and I have seen their satisfaction when they have presented that as the Government's official policy. It is somewhat embarrassing from their point of view that they should be left to defend a volte-face for which they have had no adequate explanation.—*[Interruption.]* The protests suggest that they are deserving of sympathy.

12.15 am

We have failed to receive any explanation for this change, and I believe that the Minister will do himself a great disservice if he does not come up with a more convincing explanation at the end of this debate than he did at the outset. The issue has been thoroughly discussed, had all-party support and had the majority of the House behind it, but has reached the stage where we are now being asked to reverse that policy.

The Minister should explain to us why he cannot leave in the Bill enabling clauses, why the prospect of ever having a levy should be excluded from the legislation and why we will have to come back to the House and introduce new legislation if there is to be such a levy. We should resist the Government amendment. I hope that the Conservative Members, who have made clear how strongly they feel about it will stay behind and join us in the Lobby. I believe that they should defend their manifesto in a way that the Government are incapable of doing.

Mr. Chris Butler (Warrington, South): On 24 May, my hon. Friend the Minister said:

"I will look again to see whether we can find a way to meet the mischief that we have identified."—[*Official Report, Standing Committee E;* 24 May 1988, c. 343-4.]

I listened carefully to my hon. Friend's speech, but I did not hear any new way to meet the mischief that he admitted. There was no remedy for the injustice that the White Paper recognised in 1986, when it said:

"the law should be amended to ensure that the owners of rights are able to derive benefit from them."

My hon. Friend has dismissed the blank tape levy as rough justice. That is so, but the present situation that the Government support trades rough justice for no justice. At the moment, the record industry is getting the rough end of the Government's judgment.

Large amounts of money are involved. It is estimated that two and a half times as much music is privately copied as is bought in the shops. The record industry has not been greedy. It said that it would settle for the tape levy, which would raise £6 million or £7 million a year. I believe that that is remarkedly reserved. The record industry is healthy, but many composers and song writers earn less than £5,000 a year from performing royalties—in fact, some 94 per cent. fall into that category. Their loss would be proportionately more significant, and it is they who will suffer most if this illegality is not clamped down.

I wonder whether there is a parallel with the public lending right, which gives compensation to authors for loss of sales because their books are being lent from public libraries. I wonder whether a similar scheme could be devised for records, perhaps costing £3 million to £4 million. I am sure that that would cost less to administer and be easier to collect than the blank tape levy.

If the majority of adults now tape illegally, if they are not to be penalised in any way, and if no payment is to be collected by this admittedly cumbersome levy, at least I believe that we, the collectivity of taxpayers, can right the most glaring injustices caused by those infringements. After all, the formula or any public listening right could be weighted in favour of the song writers and composers, which may be a way to meet the mischief that the Minister has admitted.

Mr. Buchan: I shall be brief, but I thought it right that a voice which was not heard in Committee should be heard on this issue, especially as my only other contribution was to release certain aspects of copyright in relation to music.

I am impressed by the power, force, scale and nature of the people who have been advocating in Britain the need for such a levy to secure not rough justice, but an element of justice. The Musicians Union is one. I remember a campaign with which I have been associated with the Musicians Union over the years—the campaign for live music. It is interesting that even at this late stage the Musicians Union has again reminded us of the importance and value to it of such a levy.

The problems facing professional musicians in this country are exacerbated by the increasing access to recording and broadcasting, which has meant that live music is under threat because we have been getting a kind of diminution of the base from which our leading musicians come. At one time, when music was heard live, there was a broader base of practising musicians from which the top players emerged. As soon as there is mass recording and broadcasting, as we have now, the base begins to wither because the concentration is on those at the top of the apex who are heard and broadcast. We see that not only in pop and rock, but in classical music.

I was recently reading some of Bernard Shaw's music critiques and realised that the majority of people in this country could hear any of the Beethoven quartets far more frequently than Bernard Shaw could have heard them in his lifetime. If he heard one of the quartets three or four times, he was lucky, yet any of us can hear any of them any

number of times. That makes me all the more aware of the perception of his criticism. We never take such facts on board.

I believe that we should have such a levy precisely because I believe that we could feed it back into the music world in general. One problem is that because of the absence of a levy—however small—the concentration is on only a few elite musicians. I mean elite in the sense of the best known because although I do not think that some of them, are good musicians, they are at the top of the pop scale, for a period. Music then becomes specialised, and advanced recording of that elite militates against the advanced recording and sales of cassettes of others who are not quite at the level of Michael Jackson in terms of the public's boosted and and hyped eye.

Therefore, the second, middle or young stage of musicians are militated against. When other music is bought, there is a limitation on the recording of that which those groups want to record. All that helps to militate against what we are seeking to do, which is to extend the base and productivity of the live musicians from whom we will get growth for the apex and the top players of the future.

It is for that reason—among many others—that there is a musical argument about the blank tape levy. Hon. Members have referred to the difficulties that will arise from such a levy and have asked how it will be applied and dealt with, and whether we will put it back into the industry in the form of lending rights as we do with libraries, which was mentioned by the hon. Member for Warrington, South (Mr. Butler).

I think that we can go one better than that. The problem of library lending rights is that those who are already well paid also receive the best royalties from the libraries. The single serious writer may end up with virtually nothing. Jeffrey Archer, for example, would receive more than, say, G. M. Trevelyan at present. G. M. Trevelyan said that it was a disaster for him when his "History of England" became a best-seller, because he had all his taxation problems in one period. If it had been spread over 10 years, as he had expected of an academic work, he would have been a good deal better off.

The problem of lending rights is that those who have, get again. I do not know what Jeffrey Archer pays—but come to think of it, never mind what he pays. As I have said, there is a problem. There is a better solution which was advocated in Labour's "Charter for the Arts", which I fear has suffered a sad demise. We argued that the levy should be used to develop the industry. I have argued for a public domain copyright for traditional music, and I think that we should seriously consider a dead writer copyright to assist theatres and to encourage new writers for the theatre. Such a levy could be an encouragement for new musicians and composers.

I believe that the Musicians Union is saying the same as me, except that it cannot say it so directly. We should invest in the base, for the musical development and education of new musicians, new compositions and their inspiration. The modern classical composer has great difficulties. They are not all Maxwell-Davies. A serious composer has difficulty making any money. They teach or perform. Edward McGuire is one of our leading Scottish composers but he lives by, among other things, teaching and playing in a folk group.

We could assist the levy to help new composers. All political parties have been pledged to a levy. The Conservative party has not made a convincing case for reneging on its pledge. The Government have talked about difficulties. Every Government, including the one I was in, talked about difficulties when they were afraid to face up to a principle. Difficulties become a substitute for tackling the principle.

Of course there are problems with various organisations, but we should involve them more, saying, "Here is money. How can you best use it?" I do not accept that there is a basic problem. It is a matter of will. The new clause does not say how we should proceed. It says that it will be 30 or 40 years before we consider the matter again, so we should at least write in the power to act. It does not suggest that we should act. Such a provision will sharpen thinking enormously.

I hope that Conservative Members will stick to their pledges. Whatever may be their cowardice in the face of pressures such as we have witnessed, they should say to those who say, "Think of the deaf, the poor, the blind, the lame and the halt": "You did not give a damn for the deaf, the poor, the blind, the lame and the halt when the poll tax was being passed." Such an argument will not wash. Conservative Members who want to stick by their policies had better stick by their courage, their convictions and their party programme, and vote with us.

Mr. Jim Lester (Broxtowe): My role in life in this Parliament seems to be speaking late and briefly about matters on which we feel strongly.

I support my hon. Friends the Members for Hertfordshire, South-West (Mr. Page) and for Battersea (Mr. Bowis), who toiled long on the Committee, as have all who have spoken in this debate. I declare an interest in that I am concerned about intellectual property and have been since I came to the House. I welcome this, the first Bill to begin to deal with that issue.

It is not possible to divide the concept of intellectual property between deserving authors, computer programmers and designers and the undeserving performers of music, and expect to carry any weight in international circles. We have a Bill with 294 clauses, and we are leaving a damned great loophole in it. Some 90 million tapes are bought each year. They exceed the number of tapes of original works. If the Bill is left as it is, it will contain a massive loophole on the most essential element of intellectual property. I have listened to all the arguments. I have rehearsed all the arguments with every Secretary of State in the Department of Trade and Industry since 1982. At the beginning many of them were reluctant to listen to the arguments but in the end everyone accepted the justice of a blank tape levy.

12.30 am

As has been said, we have been through the procedures of a Green Paper, a White Paper, the Queen's Speech and the Bill. The only two Ministers I got my hands on were the two who arbitrarily reversed the decision without consulting anybody. If the Government think that they can gain respect in the House by passing such legislation, they should think again. There is the matter of rough justice. I have taken part in phone-in programmes. Young people have phoned in and when they understand that they are being asked to pay 10p for the privilege of legally copying anything that they wish, they have said that that

[Mr. Jim Lester]

is nothing. They say that compact discs cost £9 or £12 and that they would welcome being put on the right side of the law.

Many hon. Members do not understand what young people do. I invite those hon. Members to go into record shops and have a look around them. On the same side of the shop as the compact discs and tapes they will find blank tapes. Most young people that I know, and certainly my nephews, rush home with a new record and copy it for all their friends and dish it out generally. Of course they do not necessarily charge, but such recording is common practice using the equipment that is now available. They might even copy records for my hon. Friend the Minister so that he can play it in his car when he drives down from his constituency. Perhaps he does not realise that he is breaking the law when he puts such a tape in his machine.

Mr. John Butterfill (Bournemouth, West): Does my hon. Friend agree that the people he is seeking to protect, small composers and people who are struggling, would not benefit from the levy? The large record producers who do not seem to be in financial difficulties would benefit.

Mr. Lester: Does my hon. Friend seek to defend the interests of successful authors such as Jeffrey Archer? I see no point in protecting his rights because he sells many books and makes much money from copyright. Under this levy contracts would change dramatically. With the levy in place new contracts in the music industry would contain clauses that would be different from those that were in place before the levy.

People who would not use blank tape to copy copyright are a tiny minority. The argument of rough justice is turned on its head. It is rough justice that satisfies 90 per cent. of the people who use tape to break copyright as opposed to the tiny percentage who do not. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry defended his decision in the Lords. The only argument that he could think to advance was about the blank tape in his answerphone. He perhaps did not realise that that tape was excluded from the legislation because it would be very unlikely to run for more than 35 minutes. Even if it was not excluded, how many times does one buy a blank tape for an answerphone? I suggest that it comes free with the kit and probably lasts 10 years. On that basis it probably costs a penny a year and I hardly think that that would cause hardship to my right hon. Friend.

This is a shabby move and we will regret it. It makes the legislation that we seek to pass very arbitrary. It will be difficult for my hon. Friends to defend in the courts of Europe and in Singapore and Taiwan, where we choose to reinforce the principle of the copyright of intellectual property. I hope that, even at this stage, the Government will consider thinking again.

Mr. Simon Coombs: There is no more intractable problem in the whole Bill than that which exercises us in this clause. Deliberations by many Governments and, most recently, by the European Commission, have failed to find a good solution to the problem of home taping. Where the rights of the owners of copyright are enshrined in law, as in the United Kingdom, Eire, Belgium, Greece, Luxembourg and Italy—all countries within the European Community—copying is simply theft.

Normally and naturally, society's response to theft is to condemn it and to demand action to stop it. But what happens when the theft is perpetrated by a substantial proportion of the population? It has been estimated that more than 50 per cent. of the population indulges in home taping. When my hon. Friend the Minister said that we were talking about thousands of people, he was rightly corrected by my hon. Friend the Member for Hertfordshire, South-West (Mr. Page). We could be talking about 28 million people or more; it is certainly not thousands.

It is the development of the technology involving a major improvement in the quality of copying equipment and a reduction in its price which has made this practice possible, and the steady reduction in the cost of the equipment has made it increasingly widespread.

The members of the Standing Committee were annoyed that they had been unable to obtain a copy of the European Commission's Green Paper. That document has now become more widely available, and it would be worth while for the House to consider what happens in a number of other European countries. In six countries of the European Community—the United Kingdom, Eire, Greece, Luxembourg, Belgium and Italy—copying is not permitted. In one country, the Netherlands, it is permitted, and in the remainder—Denmark, Germany, Spain, France and Portugal—it is permitted but with the understanding that there should be recompense for the owners of the copyright.

In other words, nearly half the countries of Europe allow for a levy or royalty on blank tapes and the trend in Europe and elsewhere in the world is in that direction, yet in this country the Government choose to buck the trend and deny copyright owners what is rightfully theirs.

The 1986 White Paper "Intellectual Property and Innovation" put forward proposals for a blank tape levy in considerable detail. The Government concluded that copyright owners and performers should be remunerated for the use of their material. The White Paper said:

"there is no realistic alternative to a compulsory levy on blank recording tape as a means of providing such remuneration".

The Government were right.

It was proposed that the royalty should be payable by manufacturers and importers who were the first traders in the United Kingdom and that the Secretary of State should specify by order the categories and performers entitled to benefit from the royalty proceeds. At that stage it was suggested that the rate of the royalty should be fixed at 10 per cent. of the manufacturer's price for the blank tape.

The Government said that in reaching their conclusions they had had particular regard to

"the need to put the law on a sensible and—as far as possible—enforceable basis, as well as the need to balance the interests of copyright owners and performers with those of the public at large."

I make no apology for putting those words on record once again. They represent the views of the Government in 1986 and even in 1987 at the general election. Those of us who fought the election on that clear understanding of the Government's intention feel aggrieved. We feel let down by what happened subsequently. A new Government took office and new Ministers were appointed to the Department of Trade and Industry. Suddenly, and without any warning, the weathercock swung and the policy changed. None of the facts had changed and none

of the background arguments had changed—only the Ministers. It could go down on record as the fastest U-turn of all time.

What are the arguments that the Government now advance in support of their rejection of the levy, given that they argued comprehensively and satisfactorily for such a levy prior to the election? The Minister has said that there is no acceptable scheme for organisations representing the blind. That is not a great surprise to me. If those organisations were asked, "Is there a scheme that you would accept?", the answer would naturally be no. If the Government had said, "We intend to introduce the levy; will you tell us how you would like to see your members helped?", the answer would have been yes. If one asks the wrong question, one gets the wrong answer.

Many blind people do not want to be treated differently from the rest of the community. Many are keen to have their disability set aside and to be treated as ordinary people, as they are in every other respect. Therefore, why should the Government lean over backwards to help a small proportion of the population who do not want to be treated differently? That would be unsatisfactory, especially as the vast majority of the population would be allowed to abuse copyright and break the law.

Perfectly adequate proposals have been put forward for exempting tapes of less than 35 minutes as well as proposals to make other exemptions that would have satisfied blind organisations had they been put on the spot and asked to discuss them seriously.

The idea that the levy is a tax is constantly raised as a reason for its rejection. My hon. Friend the Member for Battersea (Mr. Bowis) has already quoted what the Government, prior to 1987, said about that. It is not a tax but a royalty or a levy. A tax can only be an impost of Government on people for the benefit of raising funds for that Government. The levy does not fall into that category and every time a Minister uses the word "tax", he is wrong and it is right that we should correct him.

We have been told that the bureaucracy involved is too complicated. The collecting societies already exist and have already said that they are prepared to take on that extra responsibility; after all, what is the responsibility? It means collecting one cheque per annum from each importer of blank tapes, most of which come from the far east. There would not be a great deal of bureaucracy. The cost would lie in the distribution of the revenue from the levy to those who are entitled to receive it. It is up to those receiving it to reach a solution as quickly as possible about how to distribute the levy proceeds to reduce their loss of income. West Germany and France have embraced the levy and it seems to work well for them. I find it impossible to understand the argument that it could not work well here.

Even at this late hour, a number of factors relating to the problem have not been discussed. Six times more music comes from taping than from the original records and tapes. That recording is made from the radio or from records borrowed from others. The basic product of composers, musicians and record companies—irrespective of which of them is the copyright owner—is exploited and the reward of that owner is drastically reduced. The Government would want us to believe that the amount involved is small, but more than 50 per cent. of the population copy music. Already 50 per cent. of the owners of compact disc players use them in conjunction with tapes to record improved quality music. Eighty per cent. of those between the ages of 8 and 14 are already copying music. More and more younger people are copying music and therefore, in the future, a higher proportion of the population will copy music.

Ninety million blank tapes were imported in 1986. The figure for 1987 will be nearer 100 million. Ninety per cent. of them are used for copying music. The only weapon that the Government offer the aggrieved owners of a copyright is a civil action for damages or compensation, which is virtually unsustainable in the courts. The Government are failing in their duty to these people.

12.45 am

In Committee my hon. Friends proposed that the Government should be enabled to introduce a licensing scheme. The Government do not want it. Why not? Are they particularly anxious to support the importers of Japanese tapes? Are they anxious to deny support to a highly successful indigenous industry, which brings in foreign earnings and is being robbed? Are they anxious to avoid following the lead of their partners in the European Community? Surely not. Are they anxious to resist the sensible arguments of my hon. Friends? Are they anxious to do a U-turn away from their policies of the previous Parliament? Surely not. I do not know why the Government persist with this crazy policy. They will not tell us why——

Mr. Butterfill: Does my hon. Friend agree that it might be something to do with the fact that the general public might conceivably not understand why we would be taking money from the blind to give to the Beastie Boys?

Mr. Coombs: My hon. Friend attempts to drag me back to the arguments about the blind. If he has been listening to my speech he must know the answer to his question. I shall deal with his point about the Beastie Boys, by which I assume he means the pop group and, perhaps, the record industry. It is not the job of the House or the Government to play Robin Hood and decide that the rich are rich enough. The law is the law, and the House should consider that. If, as a result of upholding the law, those who are wealthy become more wealthy, so be it. We cannot pick and choose and tell wealthy people to give up some of their wealth because someone else has found a way of stealing it from them. If we adopt that view, we are all wasting our time here. I do not want to do that.

In fairness, we should note the Government's willingness to take action on the rental right and on the protection of anti-spoiler devices. Both of those are potentially greater threats to the record industry than home taping. We thank the Government for the action that they propose to take. But it amounts to a policeman telling someone that he would take action to stop him being murdered but that he was too busy to stop him being robbed. I do not see the logic or justice of that. We are entitled to demand that the law be upheld. The idea that action on future problems obviates the need to deal with the present one is not tenable.

Finally, I declare my interest. I am a customer of the record industry. I want it to prosper. Without its success, there will be no money for the non-commercial classical music which I love, and no money for the experimental new groups of tomorrow. Had we adopted this policy 25 years ago, when there was little home taping because the technology was not available, we might not have enjoyed

[Mr. Coombs]

the music of groups such as the Beatles, because the money for contracts to record them would not have been forthcoming.

The Government have failed to deal with the problem of home taping. They have rejected a sensible solution that has been accepted by other Governments. I cannot be like the Vicar of Bray and agree with everything the Government say. If the Government want to stand on their heads from time to time, that is fine; but I shall not join them in what must, for all of us, be an uncomfortable and undignified attitude. If I must be disloyal, I choose to be disloyal to the current policy. Two years ago, I should have been loyal, because the policy then was the opposite of what it is today. I may prove to be loyal again in the future.

Miss Emma Nicholson: Perhaps I may make a point that has not been covered tonight or in Committee. There has been a change since the general election; indeed, there has been a change since the White Paper. If right hon. and hon. Members have a moment to listen—it is not late, but early—they may see the reasoning behind the Government's change in stance.

I speak about technological advance and about further consultation with the computer software industry. Since the White Paper was issued, there has been a shift in the way in which sound recordings are made. Traditionally, music has been recorded in analogue form and computer software has been recorded digitally. That is now changing, and music is being recorded digitally. That means that there is no difference between what one chooses to record and what one chooses to copy. Some of the machines that are coming over from Japan—far more worrying than the market being flooded by blank tapes from Japan—will have exactly the same effect on recording computer software as they will have on recording material produced by the Rolling Stones, if they still exist, or by J. S. Bach. It is the same equipment, and it will make the same recording.

The problem is that, if we legalise the home taping of sound recordings, which we would do by imposing a 10p levy on the price of a blank tape, we shall also legalise —perhaps without meaning to—the home taping of computer software. That represents a very different amount of money. The imposition of a 10p levy on a blank tape may lead one to believe that the composer has been properly recompensed. Perhaps the tape on which one is recording costs £1, so 10p is a nice sum. But computer software may have £2 million-worth of human intellectual endeavour within it. How could we price the levy on that blank tape? I suggest that £100,000 would not be too much.

The technology has shifted in the past 18 months or year. Perhaps that is why the Government have shifted their stance. The computer industry is a £2 billion industry and is growing at the rate of 25 per cent. a year. Of course, people who want home taping to be legalised will answer that the 10p is not meant to pay for computer software, and that people will be authorised to copy only sound recordings. But there will be a problem in that industry, because in today's world sound recordings also include video recordings. The general practice is that when a pop group makes a sound recording, it makes a video, too. The music is recorded not just for the ear, but for the eye. What fun we shall have if it becomes legal to re-record a video at home, but it is legal to record the audio tape only if one has paid the levy. Yet with an optical disk one uses the same machinery to record both. Perhaps we should leave the proponents of the 10p levy to sort out that red herring for themselves. My problem is how to explain to the House why it is impossible to go ahead with a blank tape levy, given the advances in modern technology.

The computer industry has adopted a completely different stance from that adopted by the sound recording industry. It has put its house in order. I have already referred to the fact that it is growing at the rate of 25 per cent. a year. In the last three years it has managed to contain the growth of theft. Theft has not increased by 25 per cent., in line with the growth of the computer industry. It has remained static.

The industry has saved itself £50 million a year in each of the last three years. It has done that by mounting prosecutions in the civil and criminal courts against those who illegally take computer software. I ask myself whether that might be a possible way forward for the sound recording industry. It has not mounted a single prosecution during the last 10 years against illegal theft. I wonder whether the sound recording industry has dragged its feet because it expected the Government to do its work for it.

Mr. Lester: Is there not a considerable difference in scale between copying computer software and those who are likely to do it for gain and prosecuting every young person between 16 and 18 who makes copies of compact discs? It is difficult to accept my hon. Friend's comparison, because of the gains that those who copy computer software make when they resell the item.

Miss Nicholson: My hon. Friend asks three questions in one. He may not realise the relevance of personal computers. Their sale has increased markedly in recent times. Young people often have in their bedroom a small machine, relatively modest in price, whose disks contain several million pounds-worth of research. Young people like to copy the hard disks of personal computers, thereby creating another floppy disk or hard disk, and to pass them on to brothers, sisters, cousins and school friends. That is why I referred not just to criminal prosecutions but also to civil prosecutions.

I failed to refer to the third leg of the computer software industry's tripod: the education campaign. It has been shaming people into not copying. It has conducted a good educational campaign, including the distribution of pamphlets. There has been education, as well as civil and criminal prosecutions.

My hon. Friend also referred to compact discs and, by implication, to the quality of the recordings. I believe that compact discs will be out of date fairly soon. They will be overtaken by digital recordings that produce excellent, perfect copies which will be sold all over the world. Digital recording has changed the picture. The quality of digital recording means that the copy is as perfect as the original recording.

Much has been made in the debate of the European Community's Green Paper. Chapter 3 deals with home taping. My hon. Friends have quoted selectively from it, but the Green Paper does not recommend the harmonisation by member countries of their approach to the levy. It proposes a multi-faceted approach. In other

words, it suggests that there are a number of ways in which member countries of the European Community can tackle the problem of home copying. The blank tape levy is only one solution, and because of its difficulties the Green Paper does not recommend that all member countries should be harmonised and should follow that route.

I am

The Green Paper recommends a hardware solution which it highlights as the method which would solve the problem completely. That is the solution whereby, burnt into the core of the recording machine, is material which stops home copying. Encoded on the tape machine and burnt into the hardware is a piece of equipment which will stop copying of that tape if the particular encoding is not present. That is the route which the European Green Paper overwhelmingly recommends to member states.

Finally, if I may look back for a moment, I extend to the Government thanks for their sensitivity in dealing with the practical problems of the disabled, and for listening to the concerns of the computer software industry about information technology. In this clause, as in new clause 5, clauses 17(2) and 24 in particular, the Government have reached conclusions which will provide the proper framework for the continuing creativity and growth of that immensely valuable industry. The Minister and his civil servants in the Department of Trade and Industry have all our thanks.

Mr. Maude: When I introduced the amendment I said that I had no new arguments to offer. This subject has been well aired over many years and the arguments are all familiar. I hope that my hon. Friends and Opposition Members who have spoken in the debate will not take it amiss when I say that no new arguments have been offered by them either. We are all very familiar with this well-worn ground and I hope that the House will agree that we now need to reach a decision.

The hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) said earlier that these were not matters on which any of us could be certain that we had a monopoly of the truth or of wisdom. He ended his speech with a ringing declaration that he was certain that his judgment was right. Nonetheless, clearly we are not dealing with the eternal verities, but with a practical matter on which a practical judgment has to be made. The practical judgment which the Government have made is that a scheme to introduce a blank tape levy cannot be formulated in such a way to do justice to the interests of disabled people.

I have to say to hon. Members who have blithely and glibly said that it can be done if people of good will put their heads together in a practical way and resolve it, that, at a time when the Government were fully committed to introducing such a scheme, we worked hour after hour with the relevant bodies to try to formulate such a scheme, and I have to say, in all honesty, that it cannot be done. It has been suggested that we keep the power on the statute book just in case it becomes possible later on. I honestly do not think that it would be an act of good faith to do that and to hold out the hope to those who set store by it that at some stage such a levy will be introduced. It cannot be done, so it would not be right to retain the power.

It has been pointed out that West Germany has had such a scheme for 20 years. However, that scheme makes no provision for exempting or providing relief for innocent users of blank tapes. To say that that provides a model for us is to ignore the remarks of those who have been propounding the scheme. As has been made clear tonight as well as in Committee, a precondition of having a levy was that a scheme for providing relief for innocent users should be incorporated. In view of the Government's practical conclusion that no such scheme can be formulated, I have no alternative but to invite the House to agree with my amendment.

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 134, Noes 37.

Division No. 444] **[1.5 am**

AYES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Boswell, Tim
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Chope, Christopher
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Dover, Den
Durant, Tony
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Fishburn, Dudley
Forman, Nigel
Forth, Eric
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gow, Ian
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayward, Robert
Heddle, John
Hind, Kenneth
Howard, Michael
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McLoughlin, Patrick
Major, Rt Hon John
Mans, Keith
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Miller, Sir Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Monro, Sir Hector
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Sumberg, David
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thurnham, Peter

Waddington, Rt Hon David
Watts, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Yeo, Tim

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Alan Howarth and
Mr. David Maclean.

NOES

Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Blair, Tony
Bowis, John
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Clay, Bob
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cousins, Jim
Cryer, Bob
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Doran, Frank
Fisher, Mark
Foster, Derek
Golding, Mrs Llin
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Haynes, Frank
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Kirkwood, Archy
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Loyden, Eddie
McAvoy, Thomas
Martlew, Eric
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Nellist, Dave
Page, Richard
Rowlands, Ted
Skinner, Dennis
Steel, Rt Hon David
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Wallace, James
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Wilson, Brian

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Allen McKay and
Mr. Alun Michael.

Amendment accordingly agreed to.

Amendments made: No. 59, in page 25, line 39, leave out 'hiring' and insert 'rental'.

No. 60, in page 25, line 41, at end insert 'in electronic form'.

No. 61, in page 25, line 42, leave out subsection (9).

No. 62, in page 26, line 2, leave out 'hiring' and insert 'rental'.—*[Mr. Maude.]*

1.15 am

Mr. Doran: I beg to move amendment No. 5, in page 26, line 2, at end insert—

'(11) No order made under this section shall apply to a public library and such libraries shall be treated as licensed by the copyright owner to hire to the public copies of sound recordings, films or computer programs without payment of royalty.'.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): With this it will be convenient to discuss Government amendments Nos. 156, 158 and 160.

Mr. Doran: As clause 65 stands, it provides for an automatic licence of right for the payment of royalties in certain instances. This applies to

"the hiring to the public of copies of sound recordings, films or computer programs".

The amendment seeks to exclude public libraries from the operation of the royalty clauses. Libraries are public bodies carrying out public duties. They tend to hire tapes and videos that are not in demand and thus are not easily obtainable from commercial lending sources.

Mr. Maude: Public libraries in the United Kingdom spend about £4 million a year on purchasing sound and video recordings for lending. The interests of copyright owners would be adversely affected if public libraries were exempt from the rental right.

Making public libraries subject to the right will not necessarily add to public expenditure. Library authorities have power, if they wish, to pass the rental fee on to the people who borrow sound and video recordings and computer programs from them.

The Bill as it stands would allow public libraries to avoid the rental right by lending sound and video recordings and computer software without charge.

It is Government policy to encourage public libraries to generate new income for growth by providing a wider range of charged services. The Government therefore intend to make public libraries subject to the rental right whether they lend free or for a charge. Amendments 156, 158 and 160 will achieve that.

Mr. Doran: I am not satisfied with the Minister's response, but I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 69

RECORDING FOR PURPOSES OF TIME-SHIFTING

Amendment made: No. 243, in page 27, line 31, leave out subsection (2).—*[Mr. Maude.]*

Clause 76

REQUIREMENT THAT RIGHT BE ASSERTED

Mr. Fisher: I beg to move amendment No. 9, in page 30, line 19, leave out from 'public' to end of line 21.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss amendment No. 10, in page 30, line 22, after 'public', insert

'otherwise than by broadcasting or including it in a cable programme service'.

Mr. Fisher: As Ministers know only too well, we are staunch supporters of the importance of moral rights. We shall be advancing that support when we come to support amendment No. 11. There are circumstances, however, where moral rights are impracticable, and we believe that the case that has been made by broadcasters—I understand that the Government are aware of it—is one such example. If clause 76(4)(a) stands, broadcasters filming a programme of pictures or sculptures for an arts programme would be obliged to identify at the end of the programme every artist and every work that has passed in front of the camera.

Mr. Butcher: I am rather surprised that the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher) tabled the amendment. Opposition Members devoted much time in Committee to trying to strengthen the moral rights of authors, but are now suggesting that we considerably weaken them. They are singling out one group of authors whose cause they have hitherto championed—photographers. Amendments Nos. 9 and 10 seek to deprive the authors of artistic works of the right to be identified when their works are broadcast or included in a cable programme service. I assume that the amendments have been tabled on behalf of broadcasters who are concerned about identifying photographers whose works are included in television and cable programmes.

In Committee, I explained our reluctance to introduce any further exceptions to moral rights. We feel that we have gone far enough to meet the concerns of users of copyright works who feared that their normal business practices would be turned upside down by the new moral rights. The Bill already provides that, first, the paternity right does not apply to employees. It would not even arise in the case of a photographer employed by a broadcaster. Secondly, clause 78(5) disapplies moral rights in respect of

any work made for the purpose of reporting current events. This would include a photograph taken to illustrate a news item.

For works made by freelance authors for non-current affairs programmes, there are further safeguards. The paternity right has to be asserted formally by the author concerned before it can be effective, and there is always the possibility of agreeing to a waiver of the right. These provisions offer plenty of scope for broadcasting organisations to reach satisfactory contractual arrangements with freelance photographers.

The amendments pick on one group of authors for rather unfair treatment. I cannot see why the author of a literary work—such as a poem recited on television—should enjoy the paternity right when the author of the photographs broadcast to illustrate the poetry should not. I believe that they should be treated in the same way. Television is a very important medium for authors, as it offers a unique opportunity to reach a wider audience. It would be unfair to take this opportunity away from photographers without very good reasons. I am not persuaded by the hon. Gentleman that there are difficulties for broadcasters in the Bill, and, regrettably, I must therefore resist the amendments.

Mr. Fisher: It is late, and I accept that it is confusing when there are so many amendments. The Minister's brief to resist the case of photographers was a good one, but I was not making a case on behalf of photographers.

Visual images are referred to in line 20 of clause 76, which amendment No. 9 seeks to delete. A broadcast for "Arena" or a similar arts programme, which showed in front of a camera a series of sculptures or paintings, would be a visual images broadcast. If the clause stands unamended, the moral rights of all artists involved would have to be recognised, and at the end of the programme there would have to be a long and tedious list of every artist represented in the documentary or programme. Surely that cannot be the Government's intention. I accept what the Minister has said about photographs, but could he deal with works of art that are broadcast during a television programme?

Mr. Butcher: I am grateful for the hon. Gentleman's indulgence, especially at this time in our proceedings. I do not know whether the particular category I was referring to was the one that he wished me to deal with, but I did mention the point about waivers. I said that alternative arrangements could be made. It is a question of presumptions in the Bill. I believe that the arguments that I have adduced for one category are pertinent for the category that he mentioned.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 78

EXCEPTIONS TO RIGHT

Mr. Fisher: I beg to move amendment No. 11, in page 32, leave out lines 8 and 9.

I believe that the Government have recognised, and the Minister has recognised in his remarks, that in Committee we had been staunch supporters of moral rights. Amendment No. 11 seeks to assert the moral rights for journalists. It is a pair with our amendments Nos. 4 and 3 that we discussed earlier, and, sadly, we were not able to persuade the Government to change their mind on that occasion. However, it is important that we should go on record as saying that the journalists, having lost their effective economic copyrights because the Government refused to accept amendment No. 3, should retain at least their moral rights. Sadly, clause 78(3)(a) removes even their moral rights. It is a black evening for journalists when the rights that they enjoyed under the 1956 Act are not only being taken away in economic copyright, but when, at last, other classes and sectors of copyright owners are being granted moral rights. We applaud the Government for granting those rights but do not agree that the journalists, as employed authors, should be excluded.

The Government have not had a good night in protecting the rights of journalists, but if they accepted amendment No. 11 it would be some sop to the journalists that their moral rights—their integrity tied up with their intellectual copyright—would be acknowledged. If the Minister does not accept this amendment, he will compound the felony of the Government's economic copyrights with the ending of their moral copyrights even before they have begun.

Mr. Rowlands: Subsection (3) is the most obnoxious part of the Bill. It says that anyone who is an employee does not have moral rights over what he writes. It is a simple point, but it is the reason why we seek to delete it.

I shall remind the House of what moral rights are. They are the rights of a person who writes or produces something to prevent distortion of his work by the owners—in this case by the owner of a newspaper or a magazine. Apparently, we give those rights to individuals who write on a freelance basis up to a point, but we do not give it to anyone who is employed. The notion that an employee has no moral rights over what he writes is one of the most obnoxious features of the clause.

On various occasions it has been said that moral rights could not be given, because a person is writing for a newspaper on a daily basis, events are moving and there is a need to edit copy, and therefore what was actually printed was often a collective work. In some ways, I can understand the practical arguments of daily journalism, but when the removal of those rights is considered with subsection (6)(b)—which actually removes the moral rights of anyone who writes for a newspaper, magazine or a similar periodical—one finds that if one wrote an in-depth article as an employee of a quarterly magazine, which would have nothing to do with the instant nature of daily journalism, one would still not have moral rights over that work. It would still be possible for the editor of a quarterly magazine to distort, edit and change the whole nature and character of that in-depth article. If one takes 3(a) and subsection (6) together, that is the effect of the provisions of the clause.

We should object strongly and press the Minister again to explain why all employees are not entitled to moral rights. Many newspapers, magazines and periodicals will carry reflective pieces which require the sort of research that should attract moral rights.

I did not find the Minister at all convincing in Committee about subsection 3(a) or subsection (6). He got in a terrible tangle about what a periodical and a magazine are. We believe that an employee of a newspaper, magazine or periodical is perfectly entitled to moral rights over what he writes.

1.30 am

Mr. Doran: The 1981 Green Paper introduced the idea of moral rights. It was fairly specific about what a moral right was to be. It emphasised that it was to be quite separate from the economic right which attaches to copyright.

There was no mention of any restriction of the moral right. The White Paper of 1986 used the same terms and said:

"the Government proposes to legislate for moral rights as follows:

(a) authors will be given the right to claim authorship and to object to distortion, but not to modification of a work to which they could not reasonably refuse consent;

(b) these moral rights will be independent of the economic rights, and will be exercisable only by the author."

It then explained what would happen after the death of the author. There is no restriction to the right there. A moral right seems to fill the gap left by the Government's removal of copyright from journalists. I wonder what the Government find so objectionable about the author of a work, regardless of whether he has any economic rights on the basis of being the author, having such a right.

We had a long debate in Committee about the impact of the law of defamation in this area. The Government are being disingenuous. I do not understand why such employees should be excluded from having a moral right. It is a concept I welcome.

Mr. Butcher: As the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands) said, the issue has been debated at length. I am sorry that he did not find what I said in Committee convincing. The situation with regard to the paternity right now is not too dissimiliar from that which is proposed in the Bill.

Local and national newspapers are not littered with bylines by right in the exercise of moral rights of authors over every piece that appears, and I have not heard Opposition Members argue that that should be the case. Their difficulty has been to find amendments that would not impose new conditions, not to say restrictions, on how newspapers have traditionally been put together.

The question before us is whether we should unravel one of the basic principles of the Bill—the distinction we have made between the rights of employed authors and those of freelance authors. We have tried to produce a formula which recognises the needs of the market place and which defers, as it should at the appropriate moments, to the Berne convention. That is the basis of our approach. I feel that I can ask the House to resist the amendment, but I shall come back to that point in a moment.

Mr. Fisher: Before the Minister leaves this point, will he widen his remarks? Once again, as in Committee, he has confined his examples to the newspaper industry, with some of the pressures of time and the difficulties that my hon. Friends have already referred to. We all acknowledge that there are genuine difficulties there, although we believe that they are not as great as the Government make out. Will the Minister accept that the way in which clause 76 is worded covers a range wider than just the newspaper industry?

The curator of an art museum or gallery, for instance, might write the foreword of the catalogue for an exhibition, which will be a work of great scholarship, perhaps distilling a lifetime's work and understanding of a particular artist or period of furniture. However, because that person would be an employed author, employed by the gallery, he or she would have absolutely no rights to be acknowledged at the beginning of the catalogue. Such work is as important as a PhD thesis, a doctorate or any other sort of learned treatise, but because the curator would be employed, he or she would not have any moral rights. Surely that cannot be what the Government intend. Will the Minister address the point that this issue goes far wider and has many more serious implications than for just the newspaper industry?

Mr. Butcher: I was going on to address that point, but the hon. Gentleman began his remarks with a statement of fairly fundamental belief to his side of the House; and I was simply responding in like manner.

To come to the point at issue and the broader implications, the Bill provides that where copyright vests in the employer of an author or a film director the paternity rights will not apply. Opposition Members appear to agree with us on film directors because their amendment leaves the position of directors unchanged, but not that of authors. I can see no justification for this distinction as I believe that exactly the same principles apply in each case.

The House has accepted the general rule that the employer should own the copyright in a work created by his employee—in other words, the employer should be able to obtain the financial reward from the work and use it in any way that he likes. However, although economic and moral rights are separate, it is clear that the requirement to identify authors might well interfere with the freedom of the employer to use the work in the way he thinks best. A company issuing its annual report is making a corporate statement and it would not be appropriate to identify the author of that work in the manner that is required by clause 76. It is probable that the report is an amalgam of works of many different contributors. Even if the separate works could be identified, it would not be appropriate to list all the individuals concerned.

In some situations, the provisions for assertion and waiver of paternity right could offer a way round the problem, but we do not think it would be appropriate to have to rely on these provisions in the employer-employee context. Apart from the matter of principle that I have mentioned, administering moral rights would create an extra burden on employers. Details of assertions and waivers would need to be kept up to date and associated with particular works. That in itself would be a complex task since the paternity right can be asserted or waived generally or in relation to any specified act or description of acts. Extra staff might be needed to cope with it.

Mr. Rowlands: The Minister is resting his case on principles and clear distinctions between what he described earlier as employed and freelance writers—at least, that is what I thought he said. Will he confirm that a freelance writer making a contribution to a periodical, encyclopaedia or any collective work also loses his moral rights?

Mr. Butcher: I shall be glad to deal with that and with the point about a curator. For the moment I shall continue my response to the hon. Gentleman, who is moving away from his amendment. Instead of using his paternity right to achieve greater public recognition, an employee might agree to waive his identification right only in return for extra money or improved conditions. This economic use of

the right would be no more justifiable than the exercise of copyright by employees. An employer should not have to buy the right to use a work for which he has already paid, nor should he be forced to choose between identifying the author or not using the work at all. That would happen if the employee refused to waive his paternity right.

The only common-sense approach to avoid such problems is to disapply the paternity right for employees. As Opposition Members will know, it is for that reason that I must resist the amendment just as I resisted their blandishments, no matter how elegantly argued, in Committee. The nub of the matter is that the principle goes right through the Bill and is absolute. If a curator is an employee, no matter how learned, he would be caught by the moral rights provision in the Bill. I cannot give the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher) the assurance that he seeks. The curator is an employee and as such has the advantages that I have listed in earlier debates. It is for him to deal with the matter when he accepts the normal conditions of employment.

Mr. Rowlands: The Minister said that he would answer my question but he has made the distinction between an employee and a freelance. Am I right in thinking that a freelance writer for any periodical, dictionary, encyclopaedia or collective book of reference would not have moral rights?

Mr. Butcher: The freelance writer has moral rights unless, as I said earlier, he decided in his contractual arrangements to waive them or if he enters into any other sort of waiver arrangement. We have made the distinction throughout the Bill between freelance and employed authors. With the exceptions that we discussed in Committee, moral rights apply to the freelance author. The hon. Gentleman will remember those exceptions, one of which was for the purposes of reporting current events. In general, we have not moved our position since Committee stage. The hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney asked about work written for a newspaper or other periodical or for a collective work of reference. That does not enjoy the moral rights provided in subsection (6) of the clause and in clause 80(4).

Mr. Fisher: The Minister has said several times that this is a matter of principle running throughout the Bill. Will he clarify that it is the intention of the Government, where possible, to stick by the Berne convention? Am I right in thinking that article 6 bis of that convention makes moral rights, the rights of paternity, absolute and does not make the exemptions that the Minister is making? Once we start breaking up the absolute integrity of moral rights, we lead ourselves into the difficulties with which the Minister is struggling.

Mr. Butcher: Of course we defer to the Berne convention to the extent that we need to sign it in order to get appropriate protection for our works and our intellectual and industrial property rights in other countries. A convention is a convention and it is for national Governments to decide how far they go in slavish adherence to its provisions and in observing its spirit and practicalities.

Earlier in the debate it became fairly clear that we have a duty to say to those who draft Berne convention provisions that our copyright reforms on matters such as music and time shifting and the levy are compatible with that which Berne seeks to achieve. The question of moral rights has first been raised in the Bill. We have brought that forward because Berne invites us to do so. However, I cannot say that we shall accept lock, stock and barrel the argument that the hon. Gentleman's interpretation of Berne should be applied universally. He will find that in different nation states there are different routes to achieving the protection of the Berne convention.

1.45 am

Mr. Fisher: We are deeply dissatisfied and unhappy with the debate and with the Minister's response. He will recall that we have gone to some lengths—with great sincerity—to pay tribute to his handling of the Bill in Committee, which was conducted with great sensitivity, tact and perseverance through the varied and difficult briefs with which he had to deal. Our compliments to him have been absolutely sincere. On this occasion, however, he has let his high standards slip considerably, and we are most unhappy with his response.

It is simply not good enough for the Government to say that although they stand by Berne they propose completely to disregard the spirit of article 6 bis, which is that moral rights are absolute rights for the author. We have acknowledged that there are difficulties in getting the right balance in economic copyright between the interests of industry, investors, consumers and users. We are all well aware that there are no right answers on that because the balance varies from industry to industry and from one set of circumstances to another.

Moral rights are a simpler matter. Both on Second Reading and in Committee we welcomed the fact that the Government were introducing the concept of moral rights. Now, however, they are undermining and undercutting their good intentions by removing a person's moral rights simply because he is employed, so that he does not have the right to have his work acknowledged as the work of his intellect and as his intellectual property. That cannot be a principled view for the Government to take, and it is not to the credit of the Government or the Minister.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. Michael Morris (Northampton, South): I beg to move amendment No. 276, in page 32, line 29, at end insert 'or to any work created for the purposes of advertising'.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take amendment No. 277, in clause 80, page 34, line 16, at end insert

'or to any work created for the purposes of advertising'.

Mr. Morris: The amendments deal with advertising. The first deals with the moral rights of the creator of an advertisement in relation to the identification in clause 76 and the exceptions to it in clause 78 and the second with the integrity of a piece of work, mentioned in clause 79, and the exceptions to it provided in clause 80, to which the amendment refers.

I think that the House knows of my deep involvement with the world of advertising, which has lasted in a general sense for some 25 years. As someone who has tried to keep track of the Bill's proceedings—a task made all the more difficult by the fact that I was chairing another Committee—I venture to suggest that the reality of the world of advertising is a factor on which Ministers have not really had time to reflect.

[Mr. Morris]

Some of us would maintain that the central issue of ownership of copyright on commercially produced material should rest with person paying the bill and not with the artist, photographer, copywriter, visualiser or anyone else. In industry there is absolutely no difference between the role of the creator of advertising and that of reseach chemists, market researchers, production engineers, packaging people or anyone involved in the marketing of a product.

The involvement of the creator of an advertisement is transitory, whereas a manufacture is far from transitory. Some of our great brands have been nurtured by generations of marketeers who have seen the gaps in a market, and identified opportunities arising from changes in taste or attitude—opportunities that have then been taken and backed by the resources of the company.

The issue before us is even more tightly drawn. Amendment No. 276 deals with identification of credit. Exemption has been given to newspapers on the grounds that one cannot have a whole newspaper full of by-lines. I ask the Minister how on earth one can have a list of credits for a piece of packaging. How on earth, on a 15-second commercial, is one to list the producer, director, film company, dubbing studio, visualiser, copywriter, creative group head, sound studio, agency and others—all of whom are in some respects authors of the advertisement? By definition they should all have credit, but, frankly, that is unworkable and unreasonable. The idea is also unrealistic as regards press advertisements, many of which are worked on and created within a short deadline.

In a previous incarnation I used to handle some of the Central Office of Information work, particularly in the role of standby agency. During the three-day week I remember that we produced layouts in the morning, got them approved by lunchtime and were running the advertisement the same night. On occasion I even used to write some of the copy out of sheer necessity. Who will get the credit in such a situation? In reality it should be absolutely no one.

My other amendment refers to integrity of work. I accept the importance of that to a creative person. The advertising world has, as near as possible, a perfect market —a willing seller and a willing buyer. The creation of an advertisement is dependent on a good brief from the client or the agent; it is they who determine the boundaries of the product proposition, the media in which it will appear and the message that is to be conveyed. The advertisements for Guinness, for example, have changed dramatically over the years from the Toucan of the early years to the situation advertisements and so on. A brand also undergoes subtle changes and I do not believe that any advertiser can afford a creative prima donna to prevent the development of a brand.

If the reporting of current events argument is to be accepted, it is clear that, on grounds of practicality, common sense and the need to ensure that our marketeers are unfettered, my amendment should be accepted.

Mr. Butcher: The amendments propose to add to the list of exceptions to the paternity and integrity rights found in clauses 78 and 80. They would disapply moral rights to all works made for the purpose of advertising, and my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, South (Mr. Morris) put his arguments well.

Moral rights are being introduced to give authors and film directors the means to protect their artistic reputation and integrity. That is particularly important if they have transferrred their economic rights, as is likely to be the case in works commissioned by an advertising agency. Careful consideration has been given to the provisions to try to give authors and directors a worthwhile level of protection while, at the same time, ensuring that moral rights do not create unnecessary burdens on users of copyright material.

As far as the advertising industry is concerned, we feel that the Bill already provides acceptable safeguards. To begin with, the rights do not arise in relation to works created by employees. Moral rights will therefore arise only where works are made by freelance authors and directors, and then the paternity right has to be asserted before it can be effective, and this must be done in writing by the individual concerned. Further, clause 86 provides for the waiver of the rights and I believe that there is sufficient scope for mutually acceptable arrangements to be agreed.

As we shall discuss shortly, special exceptions have been made for reporting current events and for newspapers and magazines. We felt that the need for news reporting to be unhampered by moral rights and the very tight deadlines that newspapers have to work within, merited specific exceptions. We do not believe that the same considerations apply in advertising. I accept that it will frequently be inappropriate for the advertisement itself to identify the authors concerned, but authors are just as aware of this as the agencies which commission them, and in the real world I do not believe that they would make life difficult for themselves by unreasonably asserting their rights. After all, they have a living to earn and could find that agencies will simply refuse to employ authors who make that kind of assertion.

On the other hand, however, there are other ways in which advertisements may come to public attention. For example, awards are made for advertising excellence and it would be entirely reasonable for an author to require that his contribution to a prize-winning advertisement should be acknowledged when the results are published in the trade press.

For these reasons, I do not accept that the Bill as drafted will cause difficulties. I hope that, in view of what I have said, my hon. Friend will feel able to withdraw the amendment. I have mentioned waivers, the need to assert and the issue of employees. Within that mix, and the workings of those who wish to continue to freelance into an agency, there is a formula that would protect my hon. Friend's colleagues and ex-colleagues in the advertising world from the sort of difficulties that they may fear.

Mr. Michael Morris: I am grateful to my hon. Friend, especially for the point about the waiver of rights.

There is a misunderstanding in the Department. The vast majority of work is put out. There is very little employee-related work. I still foresee difficulties, particularly with commercials, but I accept what my hon. Friend has said. We shall have to wait and see what happens; I think that at some later date there will be a need to amend this provision.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 79

RIGHT TO OBJECT TO DEROGATORY TREATMENT OF WORK

Mr. Bowis: I beg to move amendment No. 329, in page 33, line 13 after 'otherwise', insert 'unjustly'.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to consider amendment No. 330, in clause 103, page 43, line 37, at end insert—

'(3) Where in an action under subsection (1) above the court finds that the plaintiff's right under section 79 has been infringed but that the treatment complained of was not unjust in all the circumstances, it shall award to the defendant the costs of the action subject to taxation on the indemnity basis.'.

Mr. Bowis: In Committee I sought to protect the right to justified criticism. These amendments—they are either or; I do not seek to have them both accepted—try to take that one little stage further. I ask my hon. Friend to consider them.

I have in mind the problem of a hostile review which tries to show up inconsistencies of argument in an author's work and, to that end, juxtaposes extracts or quotations from it. Such extracts would, by definition, be incomplete. Equally, in a hostile review, they would necessarily be prejudicial to the reputation of an author.

However, I submit that no distortion or mutilation is involved. Under the Bill, such a review, it would seem, could be actionable. I have tried to compare the Berne convention and the Bill. The convention does not make distortion an alternative to prejudicing an author's reputation: it makes it a prerequisite. In Committee, my hon. Friend kindly said he would look further into this matter and wrote me a letter which he arranged to be placed in the Library. He said:

"In our view, it is difficult to conceive of a distortion or mutilation of a work which would not be prejudicial to honour or reputation."

I do not disagree with that. My point is the other way around: something can certainly be prejudicial to an author without involving distortion or mutilation. The wording of clause 79(2)(b) is:

"the treatment of a work is derogatory if it amounts to distortion or mutilation of the work or is otherwise prejudicial to the honour or reputation of the author or director."

In the Berne convention, that "or" is "and".

To overcome this problem, I have submitted two solutions. I hope my hon. Friend will consider at least one of them. Amendment 329 is the simpler of the two. It suggests inserting the word "unjustly" after "otherwise". Then there would be no doubt—if a review was unjustly prejudicial, it would be actionable. If it was not, it would not. Amendment No. 330 seeks to protect the position of people who are sued for derogatory treatment which the plaintiff may have deserved. That is a more complicated way of achieving what I propose. The word "unjustly" would, however, be simpler than legal retribution and indemnity. I hope my hon. Friend will consider such a simple amendment with favour.

Mr. Butcher: The issue is familiar, but my hon. Friend's amendments are fairly recent. In the time that we have had to consider the two amendments, we have concluded that they would limit the scope of the integrity right to an unacceptable extent and would undermine the principle on which it is based. Clause 79 confers the integrity right: it is the right of the author or film director not to have his or her work subjected to derogatory treatment. The treatment of a work is derogatory if it amounts to distortion or mutilation of the work or is otherwise prejudicial to the honour or reputation of the author or director.

Amendment No. 329 would limit this by providing that the treatment would have to be "unjustly" prejudicial to honour or reputation. Following on from this, amendment No. 330 provides that in an action for infringement where the court finds that the integrity right has been infringed, but that the treatment was not unjust, the defendant would have to pay the costs.

2 am

We are already introducing quite a complex provision, and it will not always be easy to tell whether the modification of a work amounts to derogatory treatment. It would be difficult, if not impossible, then to decide whether the treatment was justly or unjustly prejudicial to the author or film director's reputation.

The whole point of moral rights is to protect the author's artistic reputation, and if we allowed users, in modifying works, to prejudice the author's honour and reputation, there would be no point in having the integrity right. The amendment raises the question whether it is possible to have prejudice that is not unjust—surely all prejudice is unjust. Furthermore, the draconian measure suggested in amendment No. 330 would deter authors and film directors from suing for infringement, because, even if their integrity right was found to be infringed, they might end up having to pay the costs of the case.

We have already gone a long way towards meeting the legitimate concerns about moral rights of those who use copyright works. We have employee exceptions, and current events and newspaper exceptions. Those, together with the waiver provisions, give plenty of scope for mutually acceptable arrangements on moral rights to be reached. For those reasons, I must resist my hon. Friend's amendments.

My hon. Friend mentioned hostile reviews. The Bill prevents no one from expressing hostile opinions about a copyright work or from quoting extracts from it to support the argument. The work itself is not being distorted or mutilated in those circumstances. For that to be the case, the extracts chosen would have to be distorted so that they did not express what the author wrote.

Mr. Bowis: My hon. Friend's latter point was helpful in terms of establishing what is a distortion. In the light of his remarks, I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 97

UNDERTAKING TO TAKE LICENCE OF RIGHT IN INFRINGEMENT PROCEEDINGS

Amendment made: No. 166, in page 41, line 19, leave out from 'for' to 'shall' in line 20 and insert 'delivery up'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 98

RIGHT TO DELIVERY UP OF INFRINGING COPIES, &C.

Amendment made: No. 167, in page 41, line 26, leave out from 'work' to end of line 41 and insert

'may apply to the court for an order that the infringing copy or article be delivered up to him or to such other person as the court may direct.

(2) An application shall not be made after the end of the period specified in section *(Period after which remedy of delivery up not available under Part I)* (period after which remedy of delivery up not available); and no order shall be made unless the court also makes, or it appears to the court that there are grounds for making, an order under section *(Order as to disposal of infringing copy or other article)* (order as to disposal of infringing copy or other article).

(3) A person to whom an infringing copy or other article is delivered up in pursuance of an order under this section shall, if an order under section *(Order as to disposal of infringing copy or other article)* is not made, retain it pending the making of an order, or the decision not to make an order, under that section.

(4) Nothing in this section affects any other power of the court.'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 99

RIGHT TO SEIZE INFRINGING COPIES, &C.

Amendments made: No. 168, in page 41, line 42, leave out subsections (1) to (5) and insert—

'(1) An infringing copy of a work which is found exposed or otherwise immediately available for sale or hire, and in respect of which the copyright owner would be entitled to apply for an order under section 98, may be seized and detained by him or a person authorised by him.

The right to seize and detain is exercisable subject to the following conditions and is subject to any decision of the court under section (*Order as to disposal of infringing copy or other article*).

(2) Before anything is seized under this section notice of the time and place of the proposed seizure must be given to a local police station.

(3) A person may for the purpose of exercising the right conferred by this section enter premises to which the public have access but may not seize anything in the possession, custody or control of a person at a permanent or regular place of business of his, and may not use any force.

(4) At the time when anything is seized under this section there shall be left at the place where it was seized a notice in the prescribed form containing the prescribed particulars as to the person by whom or on whose authority the seizure is made and the grounds on which it is made.'.

No. 169, in page 42, line 25, leave out subsection (8) —*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 100

EXCLUSIVE LICENSEE TO HAVE SAME RIGHTS AND REMEDIES AS COPYRIGHT OWNER

Amendment made: No. 170, in page 42, line 31, leave out subsections (2) and (3) and insert—

'(2) His rights and remedies are concurrent with those of the copyright owner; and references in the relevant provisions of this Part to the copyright owner shall be construed accordingly.'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 101

COPYRIGHT OWNER AND EXCLUSIVE LICENSEE TO BE JOINED AS PARTIES TO INFRINGEMENT ACTION

Amendments made: No. 172, in page 43, line 10, leave out 'This section does' and insert 'The above provisions do'.

No. 171, in page 43, line 11, at end insert—

'(4) Where an action for infringement of copyright is bought which relates (wholly or partly) to an infringement in respect of which the copyright owner and an exclusive licensee have or had concurrent rights of action—

(a) the court shall in assessing damages take into account—

(i) the terms of the licence, and

(ii) any pecuniary remedy already awarded or available to either of them in respect of the infringement:

(b) no account of profits shall be directed if an award of damages has been made, or an account of profits has been directed, in favour of the other of them in respect of the infringement; and

(c) the court shall if an account of profits is directed apportion the profits between them as the court considers just, subject to any agreement between them;

and these provisions apply whether or not the copyright owner and the exclusive licensee are both parties to the action.

(5) The copyright owner shall notify any exclusive licensee having concurrent rights before applying for an order under section 98 (order for delivery up) or exercising the right conferred by section 99 (right of seizure); and the court may on the application of the licensee make such order under section 98 or, as the case may be, prohibiting or permitting the exercise by the copyright owner of the right conferred by section 99, as it thinks fit having regard to the terms of the licence.'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 102

PECUNIARY REMEDIES WHERE CONCURRENT RIGHTS OF ACTION

Amendment made: No. 173, in page 43, line 12, leave out clause 102.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 104

PRESUMPTIONS RELEVANT TO LITERARY, DRAMATIC, MUSICAL AND ARTISTIC WORKS

Amendment made: No. 63, in page 44, line 10, leave out from 'of' to ', and' in line 12 and insert 'section 153 (qualification by reference to country of first publication)'. —*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 105

PRESUMPTIONS RELEVANT TO SOUND RECORDINGS AND FILMS

Mr. Page: I beg to move amendment No. 269, in page 44, line 33, leave out 'to the public' and insert

'either to the public, or as issued for purposes of performance in public or being broadcast or included in a cable programme service,'.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss the following amendments: No. 270, in page 44, line 34, leave out 'author or director of' and insert 'owner of copyright in'.

Government amendment No. 280.

No. 271, in page 44, line 36, at end insert

', or

(c) that the film is protected by copyright in a specified country,'.

Government amendments Nos. 64 and 281.

No. 272, in page 44, line 41, at end insert

'or in the case of a film before the date on which the copies were issued for purposes of performance in public or being broadcast or included in a cable programme service.'.

Government amendment No. 282.

Mr. Page: The amendments in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Smith) are designed to strengthen the presumption of copyright ownership in relation to films. If I understand the Bill

correctly, it establishes certain presumptions with respect to sound recordings and films. The clause provides that a person named as the author or director on copies of a film issued to the public shall be presumed to be the author or director until the contrary is proved.

It also provides that, where copies bear the statement that the film was first published in a specified year or in a specified country, the statement shall be presumed to be correct until the contrary is proved. The statutory provisions go some way towards assisting copyright owners to bring film piracy cases to court by saving them the time and expense of proving the name of the author, the date of publication and the country of publication. Sometimes these three facts are not enough in themselves. Without proof, a piracy case will fail.

There are three gaps in the clause as it relates to films. The purpose of the amendments is to plug them, and thereby to ensure that the clause applies to every case of film piracy. The first gap is where the clause applies only when copies of films are issued to the public. That terminology includes the sale of video cassettes to the public, but it does not attach to copies of a film that are issued to cinemas for purposes of theatrical exhibition, which is how most feature films are first released. Nor does it attach to copies issued for showing on broadcast or cable television.

The second deficiency in the clause as it relates to films is that it establishes only a presumption of authorship at the date of issue. The second amendment overcomes that problem by substituting the term "owner of copyright", as used in the presumption relating to sound recording, in place of the phrase "author or director." The effect of the amendment is to place films in exactly the same position as sound recordings.

The third defect is that, while the presumption of publication in a specified year and country is usually sufficient to establish the subsistence of copyright in a published work, it is not sufficient in the case of an unpublished work. Therefore, the effect of the amendment will be to put unpublished films on precisely the same basis as published films. and sound recordings, both of which are entitled to a presumption of copyright subsistence under the clause as drafted, so long as they have been correctly issued.

The four amendments plug the three gaps. I shall be most interested to hear whether my hon. Friend the Minister is prepared to accept these amendments, which would make the prosecution of piracy cases very much easier.

Mr. Butcher: There has been much debate over the presumptions that should apply in civil proceedings for copyright infringement. We recognised that the Bill as introduced in another place went too far in providing that the court should presume generally that the plaintiff was the owner of copyright and that copyright subsisted in the work in question until evidence was produced to the contrary. We therefore dropped that clause from the Bill.

Those who have urged us to restore it have tended to brush aside the fact that the old clause tended to put the onus on the defendant to prove his absence of liability rather than on the plaintiff to establish his case. They have also tended to overlook the fact that clauses 104 and 105 make provision for evidence in copyright cases, which will greatly assist the copyright owner in establishing the critical questions of subsistence and ownership.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hertfordshire, South-West (Mr. Page) has spoken about the presumptions that apply. I readily concede that clause 105 needs to go further in order to assist in the fight against piracy. That is what motivated my amendments Nos. 280, 281 and 282. I believe there is common ground between us and I hope that he will feel able to withdraw his amendments in favour of those standing in the name of my right hon. and learned Friend.

The first deficiency in the existing presumptions is identified by my hon. Friend in amendment No. 269. In many cases, films remain unpublished, since copies are not issued to the public. Even in cases where copies are issued to the public in the form of videograms, this usually comes some time after cinema release and it is during the period before the issue of legitimate videos that the market for pirate videos is most bouyant. But if a pirate is caught, the existing presumption in clause 105 will not help. I believe the answer to this problem is as set out in amendment No. 282 rather than as in amendment No. 269.

I must also resist amendment No. 271. I do not think the courts should be asked to rely on a statement as to the subsistence or otherwise of copyright under a foreign law. We have rejected a presumption that United Kingdom copyright subsists in the film in question; it would be curious if we were to presume on the existence of foreign copyright, about which we can know little. In any event, such a presumption would rarely be relevant in a British court. Nevertheless, I believe my amendments will give my hon. Friend what he wants and I hope he can accept them.

As for amendment No. 64, we have come to recognise that the presumptions in clause 104 may not be ideally suited to computer programs. These are literary works, but their mode of exploitation is very different from books. The name of the author will normally appear on a book, but this is not normal practice in the case of a program. What is likely to appear is the name of the software house or company which owns copyright in the program and in this respect programs are more akin to sound recordings and films than they are to literary works.

Amendment No. 64 will provide the owners of copyright in computer programs with presumptions that are analogous to those which are applicable to records and videos. I believe that the various amendments we have tabled will be of considerable assistance, both to the rights owners in prosecution of cases against pirates and in reducing the burden on the courts.

Mr. Page: I thank my hon. Friend for his reply. As he correctly said, his amendments are fully superior to the ones that I have been advocating this evening, and go a long way to solving the problems that I have outlined. I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendments made: No. 280, in page 44, line 34 leave out 'or' and insert—

'(aa) that a named person was the owner of copyright in the film at the date of issue of the copies, or'.

No. 64, in page 44, line 38, at end insert—

'(2A) In proceedings brought by virtue of this Chapter with respect to a computer program, where copies of the program are issued to the public in electronic form bearing a statement—

(a) that a named person was the owner of copyright in the program at the date of issue of the copies, or

(b) that the program was first published in a specified country or that copies of it were first issued to the public in electronic form in a specified year.

[Mr. Page]

the statement shall be admissable as evidence of the facts stated and shall be presumed to be correct until the contrary is proved.'.

No. 281, in page 44, line 39, leave out 'These' and insert 'The above'.

No. 282, in page 44, line 41, at end insert—

'(4) In proceedings brought by virtue of this Chapter with respect to a film, where the film as shown in public, broadcast or included in a cable programme service bears a statement—

(a) that a named person was the author or director of the film, or

(b) that a named person was the owner of copyright in the film immediately after it was made.

the statement shall be admissible as evidence of the facts stated and shall be presumed to be correct until the contrary is proved.

This presumption applies equally in proceedings relating to an infringement alleged to have occurred before the date on which the film was shown in public, broadcast or included in a cable programme service.'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 108

FORFEITURE OF INFRINGING COPIES, &C.

Amendment made: No. 174, in page 46, line 1, leave out subsections (1) and (2) and insert—

'(1) The court before which proceedings are brought against a person for an offence under section 107 may, if satisfied that at the time of his arrest or charge—

(a) he had in his possession, custody or control in the course of a business an infringing copy of a copyright work, or

(b) he had in his possession, custody or control an article specifically designed or adapted for making copies of a particular copyright work, knowing or having reason to believe that it had been or was to be used to make infringing copies,

order that the infringing copy or article be delivered up to the copyright owner or to such other person as the court may direct.

(2) For this purpose a person shall be treated as charged with an offence—

(a) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, when he is orally charged or is served with a summons or indictment;

(b) in Scotland, when he is cautioned, charged or served with a complaint or indictment.

(3) An order may be made by the court of its own motion or on the application of the prosecutor (or, in Scotland, the Lord Advocate or procurator-fiscal), and may be made whether or not the person is convicted of the offence, but shall not be made—

(a) after the end of the period specified in section *(Period after which remedy of delivery up not available under Part I)* (period after which remedy of delivery up not available), or

(b) if it appears to the court unlikely that any order will be made under section *(Order as to disposal of infringing copy or other article)* (order as to disposal of infringing copy or other article).'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

No. 175, in page 46, line 19, leave out subsection (4) and insert

'; and in Scotland, where an order has been made under this section, the person from whose possession, custody or control the infringing copy or article has been removed may, without prejudice to any other form of appeal under any rule of law, appeal against that order in the same manner as against sentence.'.

No. 176, in page 46, line 21, leave out subsection (5) and insert—

'(5) A person to whom an infringing copy or other article is delivered up in pursuance of an order under this section shall retain it pending the making of an order, or the decision not to make an order, under section *(Order as to disposal of infringing copy or other article)*.

(6) Nothing in this section affects the powers of the court under section 43 of the Powers of Criminal Courts Act 1973, section 223 or 436 of the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1975 or Article 7 of the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 1980 (general provisions as to forfeiture in criminal proceedings).'.

No. 177, in page 48, line 14, leave out clause 113.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 114

LICENSING SCHEMES AND LICENSING BODIES

Amendments made: No. 65, in page 49, line 24, after 'only', insert

'—

(a) '.

No. 66, in page 49, line 25, at end insert

', or

(b) works made by, or by employees of, or commissioned by, a single individual, firm, company or group of companies.

For this purpose a group of companies means a holding company and its subsidiaries, within the meaning of section 736 of the Companies Act 1985.'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 115

SCOPE OF GENERAL CONTROL OF LICENSING SCHEMES

Amendment made: No. 67, in page 49, line 27, leave out 'general control' and insert 'references and applications with respect to'.

Amendments made: No. 68, in page 49, line 44, leave out 'hiring' and insert 'rental'.

No. 69, in page 50, line 1, leave out subsection (2).—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 116

REFERENCE OF PROPOSED LICENSING SCHEME TO TRIBUNAL

Mr. Lawrence Cunliffe (Leigh): I beg to move amendment No. 302, in page 50, line 17, at end insert—

'(5) In the event that a proposed licensing scheme relates to the grant of copyright licences in any class of case in respect of which copyright licences have not previously been granted, then the operator of the proposed licensing scheme shall refer the proposed licensing scheme to the Copyright Tribunal and shall not seek to apply or implement any such proposed licensing scheme until the proceedings on the reference thereof are concluded.

(6)(a) In the event that the provisions of a proposed licensing scheme would constitute a variation or replacement of an existing licensing scheme then the operator of the proposed licensing scheme shall refer the proposed licensing scheme to the Copyright Tribunal and shall not seek to apply or implement any such proceedings on the reference thereof are concluded.

(b) Until the proceedings on the reference of any such proposed licensing scheme to the Tribunal have been concluded any such existing licensing scheme which would be varied, replaced or otherwise affected by the proposed licensing scheme shall remain in force.'

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): With this it will be convenient to take amendment No. 303, in clause 117, page 50, line 18, after '(1)', insert

'Without prejudice to the provisions of section 116(5) and (6),'.

Mr. Cunliffe: I shall say only a few brief words on amendment No. 302 and reserve amendment No. 303 on commitment to the Minister. I understand that the Minister has some sympathy with this matter, and that he will lend support to this moderate measure which is clearly designed to assist political and charitable working men's clubs for ex-service men and others dedicated to non-profit-making principles.

I declare an interest in an association with some 6 million male and 4 million women members under the aegis of several associations. Obviously, we are concerned about various issues, including VAT on bingo and gaming machines, and the new Sunday licensing laws that discriminate against non-profit-making clubs. With great respect to the Government and the Minister, we hope that he will acknowledge that our interest is genuine and sincere and that, ultimately, there is a great deal of British social interest in the society that we cater for in the organisations that I have described. I commend to the Minister's discretion amendments Nos. 302 and 303.

Mr. Butcher: What I am about to say is not a symptom of being demob-happy, but a symptom of a late reading of the amendment tabled by the hon. Member for Leigh (Mr. Cunliffe). I thank him for the way in which he moved the amendment, with the support of my hon. Friends who have spoken to me about it.

We are in a rather unorthodox position, in that I am fairly sure that the first two thirds of the hon. Gentleman's amendment—subsections (5) and (6)—are probably defective. However, what he wishes to deliver—I believe on an all-party basis—is what is contained in subsection 6(b). On that basis we knowingly accept the defective amendment in the knowledge that we need to consult without commitment on paragraph (b) and what it implies. I can give the hon. Gentleman the undertaking that amendment No. 302 will be sent to another place, which will be charged with a drafting requirement, subject to prior consultations with the other interested parties.

I hope that *Hansard* will accurately convey what I am trying to say to the hon. Gentleman. I think that he understands the gist of it. I thank the clubs that have made representations on an all-party basis and I thank the hon. Gentleman for bringing this to our attention. It was rather late in the day and, on the consideration I have been able to give at this late stage, I hope that what I have suggested will satisfy him.

2.15 am

Mr. Greg Knight (Derby, North): I hope and believe that the non-profit-making clubs organisations will welcome wholeheartedly the undertaking that my hon. Friend the Minister has given to the House. I hope, in the same spirit, that Opposition Members will agree that the House can accept amendment No. 302 without a Division and that the hon. Member for Leigh (Mr. Cunliffe) will not press amendment No. 303.

Mr. Blair: We are grateful to the Minister for the indication he has given. We all recognise the tremendous importance of the clubs and the contribution they make to British society. We accept that there may be drafting difficulties, but I am sure that they can be ironed out at a later stage. The important thing is that the principle is accepted and I know that my hon. Friend the Member for Leigh (Mr. Cunliffe) will be grateful to the Minister for that.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 120

APPLICATION FOR REVIEW OF ORDER AS TO ENTITLEMENT TO LICENCE

Amendments made: No. 70, in page 51, line 47, leave out from 'scheme' to end of line 2 on page 52.

No. 71, in page 52, line 5, leave out subsection (2) and insert—

'(2) An application shall not be made, except with the special leave of the Tribunal—

(a) within twelve months from the date of the order or of the decision on a previous application under this section, or

(b) if the order was made so as to be in force for 15 months or less, or as a result of the decision on a previous application under this section is due to expire within 15 months of that decision, until the last three months before the expiry date.'.

No. 72, in page 52, line 10, leave out from 'review' to end of line 13 and insert

'confirm or vary its order as the Tribunal may determine to be reasonable having regard to the terms applicable in accordance with the licensing scheme or, as the case may be, the circumstances of the case.'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 121

EFFECT OF ORDER OF TRIBUNAL AS TO LICENSING SCHEME

Amendment made: No. 73, in page 53, line 1, leave out subsection (5).—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 122

SCOPE OF GENERAL CONTROL OF LICENCES GRANTED BY LICENSING BODIES

Amendment made: No. 74, in page 53, line 4, leave out 'general control of licences granted'

and insert

'references and applications with respect to licensing'.

No. 75, in page 53, line 14, leave out 'or'.

No. 76, in page 53, line 18, at end insert

'; and

(c) all licences in relation to the copyright in sound recordings, films or computer programs so far as they relate to the rental of copies to the public;'.

—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 124

REFERENCE TO TRIBUNAL OF TERMS OF EXISTING LICENCE

Amendments made: No. 77, in page 53, line 32, leave out subsections (1) and (2) and insert—

'(1) A licensee under a licence which is due to expire, by effluxion of time or as a result of notice given by the licensing body, may apply to the Copyright Tribunal on the ground that it is unreasonable in the circumstances that the licence should cease to be in force.

(2) Such an application may not be made until the last three months before the licence is due to expire.'.

No. 78, in page 53, line 39, at end insert—

'(3A) If the Tribunal finds the application well-founded, it shall make an order declaring that the licensee shall continue

to be entitled to the benefit of the licence on such terms as the Tribunal may determine to be reasonable in the circumstances.'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 125

FURTHER REFERENCE OF TERMS OF LICENCE

Amendment made: No. 79, in page 53, line 42, leave out Clause 125—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 126

EFFECT OF ORDER OF TRIBUNAL AS TO TERM OF LICENCE

Amendment made:

No. 80, in page 54, line 15, leave out Clause 126.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 127

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS: UNREASONABLE DISCRIMINATION

Amendment made: No. 81, in page 54, line 41, leave out 'those other persons' and insert

'licensees under other schemes operated by, or other licences granted by, the same person'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 131

LICENCES TO REFLECT PAYMENTS IN RESPECT OF UNDERLYING RIGHTS

Amendment made: No. 82, in page 55, line 38, leave out 'hiring to the public' and insert

'the rental to the public of'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 131

LICENCES TO REFLECT PAYMENTS IN RESPECT OF UNDERLYING RIGHTS

Amendment made: No. 334, in page 55, line 40, after 'royalty', insert 'or other sum payable'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 135

POWER TO EXTEND COVERAGE OF SCHEME OR LICENCE

Amendments made: No. 83, in page 57, line 32, leave out 'general control of licensing schemes'

and insert 'see section 115'.

No. 84, in page 57, line 35, leave out from 'apply' to end of line 36 and insert '(see section 122),'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 139

STATUTORY LICENCE WHERE RECOMMENDATION NOT IMPLEMENTED

Amendments made: No. 204, in page 61, line 7, after 'hire', insert ' or'.

No. 205, in page 61, line 7, leave out 'or distributed'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 140

ROYALTY FOR HIRING OF SOUND RECORDING, FILM OR COMPUTER PROGRAM

Amendments made: No. 85, in page 61, line 19, leave out 'rate of royalty' and insert 'royalty or other sum'.

No. 86, in page 61, line 20, leave out 'hiring' and insert 'rental'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 141

CERTIFICATION OF LICENSING SCHEMES

Amendments made: No. 87, in page 61, line 42, leave out 'hiring' and insert 'rental'.

No. 88, in page 62, line 5, leave out

'clearly identifies the works to which it relates'

and insert

'enables the works to which it relates to be identified with sufficient certainty by persons likely to require licences'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 142

POWERS EXERCISABLE IN CONSEQUENCE OF REPORT OF MONOPOLIES AND MERGERS COMMISSION

Mr. Fisher: I beg to move amendment No. 17, in page 62, line 39, at end insert

'but such powers shall in no case be exercisable where to do so would contravene Article 9(1) of the Berne Convention (Paris Revision 1971).'.

Madam Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take Government amendment No. 283.

Mr. Fisher: Amendment 17 would amend clause 142 to reconcile it with the Berne convention. At this late hour —or early hour—I shall not weary the House with a detailed submission. The Minister and his Department have received several opinions from the BBC. I have a substantial and fat opinion from Mr. Ian Brownlie QC, another from Mr. Hugh Laddie QC, and two more from Mr. E. P. Skone James. Together they present a formidable case that I understand that the Minister has already studied in great detail. He has taken all the finer points of those legal gentlemen's opinions.

In brief, they say that clauses 142 and 97 are in conflict with the Berne convention and that, if clause 142 is enacted, it will prevent the United Kingdom from adhering to the Paris revision of Berne. I understand that the Government's view is that there is a potential conflict between Berne and the public interest. We certainly believe that that may not be the case and that the Berne convention takes account of public interest.

We are convinced by the weighty documentation that has been given to us by the BBC and counsel's opinions, and believe that the only way to reconcile the matter is to amend clause 142 in the way that the amendment provides.

Mr. Butcher: Amendments Nos. 17 and 283 are intended to ensure that the powers in clause 142 should not be exercised in contravention of the United Kingdom's international copyright obligations. However, Government amendment No. 283 is considerably more comprehensive in regard to the obligations to be met. Therefore, I hope that the hon. Gentleman will be willing to withdraw amendment No. 17 on the basis that our amendment is more comprehensive.

Mr. Fisher: I am delighted that the learned opinions have convinced the Government so comprehensively. I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment made: No. 283, in page 62, line 42, at end insert—

'(2A) A Minister shall only exercise the powers available by virtue of this section if he is satisfied that to do so does not contravene any Convention relating to copyright to which the United Kingdom is a party.'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 147

JURISDICTION OF THE TRIBUNAL

Amendment made: No. 89, in page 64, line 37, leave out from 'proceedings' to end of line 2 on page 65 and insert 'under—

(a) section 116, 117 or 118 (reference of licensing scheme),
(b) section 119 or 120 (application with respect to entitlement to licence under licensing scheme),
(c) section 123, 124 or *(Application for review of order as to licence)* (reference or application with respect to licensing body),
(d) section 137 (appeal against order as to coverage of licensing scheme or licence),
(e) section 140 (application to settle royalty or other sum payable for rental of sound recording, film or computer program),
(f) section 142(3) (application to settle terms of copyright licence available as of right),
(g) section 185 (application to give consent for purposes of Part II on behalf of performer),
(h) paragraph 5 of Schedule 6 (determination of royalty or other remuneration to be paid to trustees for the Hospital for Sick Children).'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 149

COSTS, PROOF OF ORDERS, &C.

Mr. Michael Colvin (Romsey and Waterside): I beg to move amendment No. 239, in page 65, line 32, leave out subsection (1) and insert—

'(1) The Copyright Tribunal may not order that the costs of a party to proceedings before it shall be paid by any other party.'.

Madam Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take the following amendments: No. 241, in page 65, line 32, leave out subsection (1) and insert—

'(1) If the Copyright Tribunal considers that a party to proceedings before it has behaved unreasonably it may order that that party shall bear the whole, or such part as may be specified in the order, of the costs of any other party to those proceedings; and in that case the Tribunal may tax or settle the amount of the costs, or direct in what manner they are to be taxed; but in no other case may an order in respect of costs be made.'.

No. 240, in page 65, line 33, after 'proceedings before it', insert

'(other than those of a licensing body)'.

Mr. Colvin: At this hour of the morning, I shall not take long in moving amendment No. 239, but I shall speak to amendments Nos. 240 and 241. They relate to clause 149 and the same subject, the costs involved in appearing before copyright tribunals for trade associations representing pubs and clubs, which are the National Licensed Victuallers Association in the case of public houses, and the Committee of Registered Clubs Associations—CORCA—in the case of clubs.

I declare an interest as a licensee, although I must say that mine is a silent pub; there is no piped music. I always insist on drinking my beer in peace. I am also an adviser to the NLVA.

The House will know that from time to time, fees for the licence to play music in pubs and clubs are negotiated between the trade associations and the Performing Rights Society, the PRS. We have appreciated that, at times, the PRS can be extremely heavy-handed. For example, it recently tried to lay down a new club tariff that made no distinction between the profit-making disco type of club and the non-profit-making club such as the British Legion. Following an outcry and some powerful lobbying by CORCA, the increase for non-profit-making clubs has been limited to only 100 per cent. CORCA can be tough in its negotiations.

With some justification, it is felt that the negotiations can be a little one-sided. If a matter is taken to the copyright tribunal, it is often costly for the loser, not just in terms of the new fees but costs. A trade association might try to reduce its costs by appointing a solicitor to represent it, but the PRS, which enjoys substantial resources, can field leading, and sometimes extremely expensive counsel. The association might have costs awarded against it, so under the present system, and that which is proposed in the Bill, appeals are discouraged. Surely that is not just.

My amendments would give some protection against heavy costs being awarded against an unsuccessful appellant. I could commend any of the three amendments to the House, but I moved No. 239 because it seemed to be the best, being a compromise between amendments Nos. 240 and 241.

In effect, amendment No. 239 provides that in proceedings before the copyright tribunal, each party should pay its own costs in all circumstances. The House will appreciate that that is a proposition that can cut both ways. If a trade association were to succeed in proceedings before the tribunal, however handsomely, it would have to bear its own costs.

Mr. Blair: I am following the hon. Gentleman's argument closely. I should like to know the present practice of the copyright tribunal. Does it make costs follow the event in the cases that he is describing—in other words, if a party loses, does it automatically pay the costs—or does it exercise discretion?

Mr. Colvin: I believe that it operates on a discretionary basis. I want a provision written into the Bill to ensure that all the costs cannot be awarded against the appellant in some cases.

Amendment No. 240 is throughout one-sided, in that it would ensure that a licensing body had always to pay its own costs while leaving the tribunal free to order that such a body should pay the costs of other parties as well. That may seem a bit steep, but it is not when we bear in mind the position of the licensing body—in this instance the PRS—that is responsible for forming and operating the licensing schemes.

Amendment No. 241 is a qualified version of amendment No. 239. It sets out to ensure that the tribunal should not cast the costs of any party upon another party unless it considers that the other party has behaved unreasonably.

Other amendments could be devised to give similar protection against the awarding of costs. Of the three amendments which I have tabled, I believe that No. 239 comes closest to that which is required. I consider it to be modest, sensible and just, and I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will accept it.

Mr. Butcher: The amendments seek to limit in varying degrees the power of the copyright tribunal to order that

[Mr. Butcher]

the costs of one of the parties to proceedings before it should be paid by the other. This power is already given to the performing right tribunal by paragraph 5 of schedule 4 to the Copyright Act 1956. Of course it would be wrong if the tribunal used it unfairly or so as to deter parties with a legitimate case from bringing proceedings, but there is no evidence at all that the performing right tribunal has acted in this way or that the copyright tribunal would be likely to do so.

On the contrary, I understand that orders as to costs are made by the performing right tribunal extremely rarely. In the limited time available since my hon. Friend the Member for Romsey and Waterside (Mr. Colvin) tabled his amendments, we have been able to identify only one such case in recent years, where the originators were considered to have persisted with an application that was wholly misconceived after this fact had been made clear to them. Even in that instance the originators were asked to contribute only £250 towards the costs of the other party. Moreover, in making the award the tribunal specifically drew attention to the importance

"that individual applicants should not be deterred from applying to it by apprehension of the possibility that very substantial costs might be awarded against them".

The power in clause 149(1) is discretionary only and I am confident that the copyright tribunal can be trusted not to abuse it. The record shows that that is exercised only in exceptional circumstances, and I believe that that will continue to be the case. I see no reason to deprive the tribunal of this power, or to limit it in the ways provided by amendments Nos. 240 or 241. The possibility of frivolous and time-wasting applications or references occurring from time to time cannot be ruled out, and the power to make an order for costs in those circumstances is important. The provisions in the Bill regarding the copyright tribunal have been scrutinised by the Council on Tribunals and it has raised no objection to this provision.

My hon. Friend hoped that I would be able to agree to the amendments. Regrettably, I cannot, and I hope that he will withdraw them for the reasons that I have given.

2.30 am

Mr. Colvin: With the leave of the House, I shall withdraw the amendments because the remarks of my hon. Friend the Minister have reassured me.

I noted that the powers are already available in legislation and that orders for costs are rare in practice; I hope that that will continue. My hon. Friend the Minister obviously places much trust in the tribunal's activities, but, if things go wrong, I trust that he and his successor will keep a careful watch on matters. I notice that, on the same page as clause 149, clause 148 relates to the general powers of the Lord Chancellor to make rules in respect of the activities of the Copyright Tribunal. There is power to use secondary legislation under the statutory instrument procedure to make rules to govern the operation of the tribunal. Given that those reserve powers are available to the Government, I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 150

APPEAL TO THE COURT ON POINT OF LAW

Amendments made: No. 90, in page 66, line 13, leave out subsection (4).—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 151

QUALIFICATION FOR COPYRIGHT PROTECTION

No. 254, in page 66, line 27, leave out 'and 161' and insert

'(Copyright in Acts and Measures), 161 and *(Copyright in Parliamentary Bills)'.—[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 155

COUNTRIES TO WHICH THIS PART EXTENDS

Amendment proposed: No. 91, in page 68, line 31, leave out subsection (5).—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Madam Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss Government amendments Nos. 92, 101, 129 and 136.

Mr. Blair: I should like a word of explanation, because clause 155 is important as it declares the jurisdiction, extent and application of this part of the Bill.

I am not entirely sure what are the effects of the amendments, but if they are to extend or limit the territorial application of the Bill, we should be told.

Mr. Butcher: The hon. Gentleman is correct.

The five amendments together make three technical changes to the provisions in the Bill about extension of its effect to dependent terrorities.

Clause 155 provides for the extent of part I of the Bill. Orders in Council may be made to extend the part to the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or any colony. In a sort of mirror-image provision, paragraph 36(3) of schedule 1 provides for Orders in Council to repeal the extension of existing copyright law to the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man if they introduce their own copyright laws, as the Isle of Man is doing. In both cases, the orders are subject to the negative resolution procedure. The use of this procedure would be contrary to the principle that an Order in Council extending an Act of Parliament to a dependent territory is not subject to parliamentary scrutiny. Amendments Nos. 91 and 136 therefore leave out the provision for the negative resolution procedure in those cases, thus bringing clause 155 and schedule 1 into line with clause 245, which deals with the extension of part 3 to dependent territories. I hope that that is a sufficient explanation for the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Rowlands: I was pleased to hear the Minister use the words "dependent territories," as I tried to move an amendment to the effect that that was the appropriate term. The Minister told me that it would require such immense legislative changes that he could not accept the amendment.

Secondly, I ask the Minister the time scale in which he will implement this legislation. The Lego case—*[Interruption.]* My hon. Friend the Member for Aberdeen, South (Mr. Doran) throws his hands up in horror because I have referred to the Lego case again. It was some years after the Lego case that the copyright legislation was applied to Hong Kong. Will there be a long time lapse between the implementation of the legislation domestically

and its application to dependent territories? It was in some of the dependent territories that battles were fought over design and copyright. The Minister will remember that it was in a dependent territory that the Lego battle was initially fought. It was the application of the legislation to dependent territories which led to that case.

It would be useful if the Minister could give some idea of the speed or lack of speed with which the Bill will be applied to dependent territories. That can have profound effects on the copyright rights of companies if those cases are taken up in dependent territories.

Mr. Butcher: It is, of course, up to the Governments of the independent territories to decide when the Bill should be extended, and it is not for us.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 160

CROWN COPYRIGHT

Amendments made: No. 225, in page 71, line 10, at end insert 'calendar'.

No. 256, in page 71, line 19, leave out from 'that,' to end of line 20 and insert

'Parliamentary copyright subsists in the work (see sections 161 and (*Copyright in Parliamentary Bills*)).'.—[*Mr. Butcher.*]

Clause 161

PARLIAMENTARY COPYRIGHT

Amendment made: No. 92, in page 72, line 12, leave out 'the provisions of this Part extend'

and insert 'this Part extends'.—[*Mr. Butcher.*]

Clause 166

RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES UNDER OTHER ENACTMENTS OR THE COMMON LAW

Amendment made: No. 257, in page 74, line 26, at end insert—

'(5) The savings in subsection (1) have effect subject to section (*Copyright in Acts and Measures*) (4) and section (*Copyright in Parliamentary Bills*) (7) (copyright in Acts, Measures and Bills: exclusion of other rights in the nature of copyright).'.—[*Mr. Butcher.*]

Clause 167

GENERAL PROVISIONS AS TO CONSTRUCTION

Amendment made: No. 178, in page 74, line 34, leave out 'such'.—[*Mr. Butcher.*]

Clause 170

MEANING OF PUBLICATION AND COMMERCIAL PUBLICATION

Mr. Page: I beg to move amendment No. 273, in page 76, line 39, at end insert—

'(7) In the case of a film, and notwithstanding subsection (4)(c) of this section, the issue of copies of the film for purposes of performance in public, or being broadcast or included in a cable programme service, constitutes publication.'.

Amendment No. 273 adds to the definition of publication the release of a film for purposes of theatrical, broadcast or cable performances. At the moment, publication is defined as issue of copies to the public and expressly excludes broadcasting or cable casting of a film from the definition. That has two consequences. First, a film that has been the subject of a theatrical release in the cinema or a first run showing on broadcast or cable television may not be considered a public work. I could be wrong in my reading of that, and I should be grateful if my hon. Friend could reassure me. However, if I am right, it would appear that only the sale of video cassettes to the public satisfies the definition of publication.

Secondly, a foreign film that has only been shown in cinemas or broadcasts or on cable television in a foreign country is not eligible for copyright protection in the United Kingdom unless the copyright owner can prove that the author was a national of a country with which the United Kingdom had a copyright treaty at the relevant time.

By contrast, in the case of a published work, eligibility for copyright protection in the United Kingdom can be established more easily by showing that the work was first published in a country with which the United Kingdom had copyright treaty relations at the time of the first publication.

Those rules place the owner of copyright in a foreign film at a significant disadvantage if he wishes to enforce those rights in an English court before the film has been published within the meaning of the Bill. The proof of nationality of the author is much more difficult and costly than trying to prove the place of the first theatrical or television release. I leave aside the difficulties of trying to prove the nationality of an author who is a production company incorporated in a country that may not meet the nationality requirements.

I believe that the amendment overcomes those difficulties. It provides for the publication of films and it includes the issue of copies of the film for purposes of performance in public or being broadcast or included in a cable service. I hope that my hon. Friend will be able to reassure me that I am misreading the definitions, or that he will be able to accept the amendment.

Mr. Butcher: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his explanation, as his amendment puzzled us considerably. I must tell him that the amendment is largely unnecessary, even in terms of its own objectives. Under subsection (1)(a) of the clause, the issue of copies of a film to the public, for whatever purpose, already constitutes publication, so the amendment is relevant only to the extent that the "group of persons" it refers to is not a sector of the public. That means that the effect of the amendment would be limited to cases where a copy of a film is issued to a group which does not constitute the public, but where the objective is nonetheless to give a public performance. That seems a very limited set of circumstances.

I find the amendment enigmatic because my hon. Friend seems to be trying to make publication not a restricted act. Virtually all that is achieved by providing that in particular circumstances the issue of copies of a film constitutes publication is to ensure that the term of copyright starts to run from that date because, under clause 13, the term of copyright in a film expires 50 years from the end of the calendar year in which the film is released, and "released" includes when it is first published.

I hope that my hon. Friend therefore accepts that the amendment is not entirely necessary.

Mr. Page: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his explanation. I have some difficulty with the definition of what will be accepted as a publication, particularly as, for some reason, the clause goes out of its way to exclude

"the broadcasting of the work or its inclusion in a cable programme service"

in subsection (4)(iv).

In view of my hon. Friend's assurance, however, I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 173

MINOR DEFINITIONS

Amendments made: No. 93, in page 77, line 29, leave out 'a'.

No. 94, in page 78, line 3, leave out 'means' and insert 'includes'.

No. 95, in page 78, line 4, leave out from 'having' to end of line 5 and insert 'authority to decide any matter affecting a person's legal rights or liabilities'.

No. 96, in page 78, line 7, at end insert—

'"rental" means any arrangement under which a copy of a work is made available—

(a) for payment (in money or money's worth), or

(b) in the course of a business, as part of services or amenities for which payment is made,

on terms that it will or may be returned;'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 174

INDEX OF DEFINED EXPRESSIONS

Amendments made: No. 179, in page 79, line 32, column 2, leave out 'Section 168' and insert 'Sections 100(2) and 168'.

No. 258, in page 79, line 37, column 2, leave out 'section 160(2)' and insert

'sections 160(2) and (*Copyright in Acts and Measures*) (3)'.

No. 259, in page 80, line 39, at end insert

'and (*Copyright in Parliamentary Bills*)' (6).

No. 97, in page 80, line 55, at end insert—

'rental section 173'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 190

RIGHT TO DELIVERY UP OF ILLICIT RECORDINGS

Amendment made: No. 180, in page 86, line 18, leave out from 'Part' to end of line 24 and insert

'may apply to the court for an order that the recording be delivered up to him or to such other person as the court may direct.

(2) An application shall not be made after the end of the period specified in section *(Period after which remedy of delivery up not available under Part II)*; and no order shall be made unless the court also makes, or it appears to the court that there are grounds for making, on order under section *(Order as to disposal of illicit recording)* (order as to disposal of illicit recording).

(3) A person to whom a recording is delivered up in pursuance of an order under this section shall, if an order under section *(Order as to disposal of illicit recording)* is not made, retain it pending the making of an order, or the decision not to make an order, under that section.

(4) Nothing in this section affects any other power of the court.'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 191

RIGHT TO SEIZE ILLICIT RECORDINGS

Amendments made: No. 181, in page 86, line 25, leave out subsection (1) to (5) and insert—

'(1) An illicit recording of a performance which is found exposed or otherwise immediately available for sale or hire, and in respect of which a person would be entitled to apply for an order under section 190, may be seized and detained by him or a person authorised by him.

The right to seize and detain is exercisable subject to the following conditions and is subject to any decision of the court under section (*Order as to disposal of illicit recording*) (order as to disposal of illicit recording).

(2) Before anything is seized under this section notice of the time and place of the proposed seizure must be given to a local police station.

(3) A person may for the purpose of exercising the right conferred by this section enter premises to which the public have access but may not seize anything in the possession, custody or control of a person at a permanent or regular place of business of his and may not use any force.

(4) At the time when anything is seized under this section there shall be left at the place where it was seized a notice in the prescribed form containing the prescribed particulars as to the person by whom or on whose authority the seizure is made and the grounds on which it is made.'.

No. 182, in page 87, line 8, leave out subsection (8).—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 192

MEANING OF "ILLICIT RECORDING"

Amendments made: No. 183, in page 87, line 20, leave out 'criminal liability and forfeiture' and insert 'offences and orders for delivery up in criminal'.

No. 184, in page 87, line 29, at end insert

'paragraph 12(2) (recordings of performance in electronic form retained on transfer of principal recording).'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 194

FORFEITURE OF ILLICIT RECORDINGS

Amendments made: No. 185, in page 88, line 37, leave out subsections (1) and (2) and insert—

'(1) The court before which proceedings are brought against a person for an offence under section 193 may, if satisfied that at the time of his arrest or charge he had in his possession, custody or control in the course of a business an illicit recording of a performance, order that it be delivered up to a person having performers' rights or recording rights in relation to the performance or to such other person as the court may direct.

(2) For this purpose a person shall be treated as charged with an offence—

(a) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, when he is orally charged or is served with a summons or indictment;

(b) in Scotland, when he is cautioned, charged or served with a complaint or indictment.

(3) An order may be made by the court of its own motion or on the application of the prosecutor (or, in Scotland, the Lord Advocate or procurator-fiscal), and may be made whether or not the person is convicted of the offence, but shall not be made—

(a) after the end of the period specified in section *(Period after which remedy of delivery up not available under Part II)* (period after which remedy of delivery up not available), or

(b) if it appears to the court unlikely that any order will be made under section *(Order as to disposal of illicit recording)* (order as to disposal of illicit recording).'.

No. 186, in page 89, line 2, leave out subsection (4) and insert

'; and in Scotland, where an order has been made under this section, the person from whose possession, custody or control the illicit recording has been removed may, without prejudice to any other form of appeal under any rule of law, appeal against that order in the same manner as against sentence.'.

No. 187, in page 89, line 4, leave out subsection (5) and insert—

'(5) A person to whom an illicit recording is delivered up in pursuance of an order under this section shall retain it pending the making of an order, or the decision not to make an order, under section *(Order as to disposal of illicit recording)*.

(6) Nothing in this section affects the powers of the court under section 43 of the Powers of Criminal Courts Act 1973, section 223 or 436 of the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1975 or Article 7 of the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 1980 (general provisions as to forfeiture in criminal proceedings).'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 198

SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS WITH RESPECT TO FORFEITURE ORDERS

Amendment made: No. 188, in page 89, line 43, leave out clause 198.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 222

RIGHT TO DELIVERY UP OF INFRINGING ARTICLES, &C

Amendment made: No. 189, in page 99, line 8, leave out from 'question' to end of line 13 and insert

'may apply to the court for an order that the infringing article or other thing be delivered up to him or to such other person as the court may direct.

(2) An application shall not be made after the end of the period specified in the following provisions of this section; and no order shall be made unless the court also makes, or it appears to the court that there are grounds for making, an order under section *(Order as to disposal of infringing article, &c.)*.

(3) An application for an order under this section may not be made after the end of the period of six years from the date on which the article or thing in question was made, subject to subsection (4).

(4) If during the whole or any part of that period the design right owner—

(a) is under a disability, or

(b) is prevented by fraud or concealment from discovering the facts entitling him to apply for an order,

an application may be made at any time before the end of the period of six years from the date on which he ceased to be under a disability or, as the case may be, could with reasonable diligence have discovered those facts.

(5) In subsection (4) "disability"—

(a) in England and Wales, has the same meaning as in the Limitation Act;

(b) in Scotland, means legal disability within the meaning of the Prescription and Limitation (Scotland) Act 1973;

(c) in Northern Ireland, has the same meaning as in the Statute of Limitations (Northern Ireland) 1958.

(6) A person to whom an infringing article or other thing is delivered up in pursuance of an order under this section shall, if an order under section *(Order as to disposal of infringing article, &c.)* is not made, retain it pending the making of an order, or the decision not to make an order, under that section.

(7) Nothing in this section affects any other power of the court.'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 223

SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS WITH RESPECT TO FORFEITURE ORDERS

Amendment made: No. 190, in page 99, line 14, leave out clause 223.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 225

RIGHTS AND REMEDIES OF EXCLUSIVE LICENSEE

Amendment made: No. 191, in page 100, line 19, leave out subsections (2) to (4) and insert—

'(2) His rights and remedies are concurrent with those of the design right owner; and references in the relevant provisions of this Part to the design right owner shall be construed accordingly.'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 226

PROVISIONS WITH RESPECT TO CONCURRENT RIGHTS OF ACTION

Amendment made: No. 192, in page 101, line 8, at end insert—

'(5) The design right owner shall notify any exclusive licensee having concurrent rights before applying for an order under section 222 (order for delivery up of infringing article, &c.); and the court may on the application of the licensee make such order under that section as it thinks fit having regard to the terms of the licence.'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 228

LICENCES AVAILABLE IN LAST FIVE YEARS OF DESIGN RIGHT

Amendment made: No. 98, in page 101, line 18, leave out 'any act' and insert 'anything'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 230

UNDERTAKING TO TAKE LICENCE OF RIGHT IN INFRINGEMENT PROCEEDINGS

Amendment made: No. 193, in page 102, line 19, leave out

'the forfeiture of any articles'

and insert 'delivery up'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 231

CROWN USE OF DESIGNS

Amendment made: No. 99, in page 102, line 44, leave out from 'realm' to 'or' in line 46 and insert

', in pursuance of an agreement or arrangement to which the government of that country and Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom are parties;'.—*[Mr. Maude.]*

Clause 242

REFERENCE OF DISPUTES RELATING TO CROWN USE

Amendments made: No. 335, in page 108, line 28, leave out 'or'.

No. 336, in page 108, line 29, at end insert

', or

(c) section *(Crown use of design right: compensation for loss of profit)* (Crown use: compensation for loss of profit),'.

No. 100, in page 109, line 15, leave out 'a' and insert 'any'.—*[Mr. Maude.]*

Clause 245

COUNTRIES TO WHICH THIS PART EXTENDS

Amendment made: No 101, in page 110, line 26, at end insert—

'(5) Where a country to which this Part extends ceases to be a colony of the United Kingdom, it shall continue to be treated as such a country for the purposes of this Part until —

(a) an Order in Council is made under section 246 designating it as a country enjoying reciprocal protection, or

(b) an Order in Council is made declaring that it shall cease to be so treated by reason of the fact that the provisions of this Part as part of the law of that country have been amended or repealed.

(6) A statutory instrument containing an Order in Council under subsection (5)(b) shall be subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament.'. —*[Mr. Maude.]*

Clause 253

MINOR DEFINITIONS

Amendment made: No. 102, in page 112, line 11, leave out 'a'.—*[Mr. Maude.]*

Clause 254

INDEX OF DEFINED EXPRESSIONS

Amendments made: No. 194, in page 113, line 1, column 2, leave out 'Section 248' and insert 'Section 225(2) and 248'.

No. 337, in page 113, line 5, at end insert 'government department concerned (in section 231(5) relation to Crown use)'.—*[Mr. Maude.]*

Clause 255

REGISTRABLE DESIGNS

2.45 am

Mr. Rowlands: I beg to move amendment No. 326, in page 113, line 26, after 'eye', insert 'of persons acquiring or using the article'.

Madam Deputy Speaker: With this, it will be convenient to discuss the following: Amendment No. 325, in page 113, line 41, leave out subsection (3).

Government amendment No. 103.

Mr. Rowlands: Important issues arise from my amendment. The Minister will recall that we covered this course and discussed this issue in Committee on 16 June when we discussed what was required to attract registered design right. The Minister stated that the Government wanted to

"ensure that purely functional designs do not qualify for the longer and stronger protection given by the Registered Designs Act 1949".—[*Official Report, Standing Committee E,* 16 June 1988; c. 621.]

Then, he stated that we had to show that not only were the articles that would attract registered design aesthetically pleasing in themselves, but that they made an impact on the purchaser. We had a considerable discussion about the basis on which one could decide how to define whether a purchaser had bought an article on the grounds of the attraction of its design. That is what new section 1(3) attempts to do.

The clause meets the problem of whether a purely functional design could attract a registered design right. That is barred in subsection (1)(b)(i) of the new section 1 in clause 255. Therefore, there is no problem on that front, as we have already covered ourselves on that. However, it is possible that a problem will arise in connection with subsection (3) of clause 255.

I understand from the advice that I have received that under the law as it stands, the court must have regard to the eye of the customer when deciding whether an article attracts a registered design right. It was in the case of Amp *v.* Utilex in 1972 that that principle was established. Therefore, the idea that one must go beyond the aesthetic appeal and prove and demonstrate that the design would attract the purchaser in such a way as to qualify for a registered design right, is already enshrined in case law, and in existing law. It is under subsection (3) as it was drafted that we believe that problems might arise.

I have referred to cases where the number of articles that may attract design right may be ruled out under subsection (3) on the ground that it would be difficult to prove that anyone had had his design to purchase certain articles affected by the design itself. I have argued that that would lead to greater confusion and that, even worse than confusion, it might rule out whole series of articles which could attract a registered design right under existing law but might not do so as a result of subsection (3).

In column 623 the Minister said that he could not see any difficulty as to why a telephone or even a computer —I am sure that the hon. Member for Torridge and Devon, West (Miss Nicholson) will be interested in this —would not attract a registered design right and that he believed that this subsection would not rule that out.

I cast doubt then in Committee and do so again now on whether that would be the case. How would one prove whether the purchaser of hi-fi equipment, a computer or a telephone had been materially affected in making the decision to purchase by the design as opposed to the many functional and pricing issues? Does one buy a computer because of its design, its purely functional character or its price? Those issues are raised by clause 255(3), which says:

"A design shall not be registered in respect of an article if the appearance of the article is not material, that is, if aesthetic considerations are not taken into account to a material extent by persons acquiring or using the article."

It is the phrase "material extent" that worried me, and I think that it worried others.

Many designs might not qualify for registered design right because it could not be proved that the purchase had been made as result of the material extent to which the aesthetic appeal of an article had attracted the purchaser. My two amendments seek to return to that argument, first by deleting subsection (3) and secondly by underpinning what we think is the existing law as a result of the 1972 Amp *v* Utilex case. Amendment No. 326 says:

"after 'eye', insert 'of persons acquiring or using the article'."

That makes it quite clear not just that one must take into account some theoretical aesthetic appeal but that the appeal must have some impact on the consumer.

The amendment reinforces the law as we think it stands, and as the Government intend. We are worried about the nature of clause 255(3). The Government have tabled amendment No. 103, which introduces the word "normally". I wait with bated breath to hear from the Minister whether the amendment meets the worry that I expressed in Committee. If he can say that, I shall be

happy to withdraw my amendment. We are on solid ground in worrying the Minister and the House about the potential impact of subsection (3) and the broad reference to the material extent to which purchases are affected by aesthetic design.

Mr. Butcher: We are aware that the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands) does not like new section 1(3) of the Registered Designs Act 1949. However, it will not produce any significant change to the law as it stands following the recent Lego case, which I know has been keeping him awake for at least 12 months.

As I explained in Committee, the new section 1(3) is intended to make it clear that the question to be answered is not simply whether something has eye appeal in an abstract sense, but whether the eye appeal has a real impact on purchasers. It is important that designs of essentially functional articles are not registered, and the registry needs a workable test if it is to exclude essentially functional designs.

We are, of course, proposing a small change ourselves so that the test would be whether customers normally—the word to which the hon. Gentleman drew attention—take aesthetic appearance into account when they acquired articles of the kind in question. This is essentially the test stated by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in its recent judgment in the Lego case. We want to make this explicit so that the designs registry has a workable test that it can apply. That would be the difficulty with the hon. Gentleman's proposal. It would mean that we would still have a law which does not explicitly make clear what is required. That would be a mistake.

I am satisfied that there will be no problem about the clarity of the provision. I hope that that statement will not be held against me in future. When someone applies to register a design for a particular article, what will have to be decided is whether the aesthetic appearance of that kind of article normally matters to the customer. In other words, do customers normally care about the appearance of the article?

The fact that they may care as much, or even more, about other things is neither here nor there. All we want to know is whether aesthetic appearance normally matters, and in most cases there will be no doubt. In a few cases, however, there will be a doubt, and the registry will ask for evidence. Given that the reward is a registration giving a 25-year monopoly, I do not think that it is too much to ask applicants to follow such procedures in doubtful cases. The test is there to prevent essentially functional articles, such as internal structural girders, from being registered. It is not there to make life difficult or to limit unreasonably what can be registered, and I am confident that it will not do so.

Mr. Rowlands: The Minister is being extremely helpful, I think. Is the word "normally" being introduced to qualify the words "to a material extent"? We were worried that the requirement was broad and sweeping, but if the Minister can confirm that the word "normally" is intended to limit and restrict the concept of "to a material extent", I shall be more than happy to withdraw the amendment.

Mr. Butcher: I am divining what I think is an affirmative answer to the hon. Gentleman's question.

Mr. Rowlands: In that case, I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave withdrawn.

Amendments made: No. 103, in page 113, line 43, leave out from 'not' to end of line 44 and insert

'normally taken into account to a material extent by persons acquiring or using articles of that description'.

No. 338, in page 114, line 15, leave out '256' and insert *'(Provisions with respect to certain designs registered before commencement)'.—[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 256

PROVISIONS WITH RESPECT TO CERTAIN DESIGNS REGISTERED BEFORE COMMENCEMENT

Amendment made: No. 104, in page 114, line 17, leave out clause 256.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 258

RIGHT GIVEN BY REGISTRATION OF DESIGN

Mr. Butcher: I beg to move Government amendment No. 105, in page 116, line 11, at end insert—

'(6) The right in a registered design is not infringed by the reproduction of a feature of the design which, by virtue of section 1(1)(b), is left out of account in determining whether the design is registrable.'.

Mr. Doran: I am not sure whether at this time in the morning I can articulate my argument. The amendment appears to introduce a "must match" type provision into registered design right. Read together with new section 1(1)(b) of the 1949 Act, it seems to open up a whole new area of potential conflict and dispute. Can the Minister explain how he expects the proposal to operate in practice?

Mr. Butcher: The amendment is needed to overcome an unwanted effect of a part of the reasoning in the Lego judgment. Part of the reasoning in that judgment was that a design qualifies for registered designs protection if it includes any features that are not excluded by the definition of "design" in section 1 of the 1949 Act, and of course it is quite right that non-excluded features should be protected. However, according to Lego, what is registered, and therefore what is protected, is the whole of the design, including any excluded features. That would mean that "must match" and any other excluded features would in fact be protected, provided only that the design of which they form a part contains at least one non-excluded feature. This is, of course, the wrong result.

The aim of the "must match" exclusion is to allow copying of those features of a design for which there is no design freedom while protecting those features where there is design freedom. It is therefore necessary to make a specific provision to ensure that "must match" and other excluded kinds of design features do not get protection by the back door. The amendment makes the necessary provision.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 259

DURATION OF RIGHT IN REGISTERED DESIGN

Mr. Butcher: I beg to move amendment No. 106, in page 116, line 19, leave out from 'design' to 'if' in line 28 and insert—

'(2) The period for which the right subsists may be extended for a second, third, fourth and fifth period of five years, by applying to the registrar for an extension and paying the prescribed renewal fee.

[Mr. Butcher]

(3) If the first, second, third or fourth period expires without such application and payment being made, the right shall cease to have effect; and the registrar shall, in accordance with rules made by the Secretary of State, notify the proprietor of that fact.

(3A)'.

Madam Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take the following Government amendments: Nos. 107, 151 to 153, 295 and 154.

Mr. Blair: I would be grateful if the Minister could confirm that nothing in this group or the next group of amendments is inconsistent with our discussions in Committee, because they follow the pattern of points raised in Committee and concerns expressed to the Minister then.

Mr. Butcher: The amendments follow up the amendments that the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) and his hon. Friends tabled in Committee and which I agreed to consider. They will require the design registry to send reminders when renewals are overdue and will allow registered designs that have inadvertently been allowed to lapse to be restored. We are also taking the opportunity to revise and update the corresponding provisions of the Patents Act 1977.

3 am

Mr. Rowlands: The amendments are important because they touch on the duration of rights in registered design. Do the amendments have any effect upon existing design rights? Under clause 259(2), existing design rights will be unable to qualify for the extra period.

When the patent law was changed, a concession was given. Do the amendments offer any hope that some extension will be granted to those holding existing design rights? If people enjoy design rights under the existing 15-year rule, surely there is no harm in offering a transitional extension to that right as we move over to the 25-year term. Such an extension was offered during the transitional period when the patent law was changed.

Mr. Butcher: Hon. Members will notice that we are also proposing some changes to the existing patent restoration provision. Our examination of registered designs has revealed that there are a few problems with the existing patent provision, which concern the way in which restoration is backdated and the protection given to those who take steps to work an invention that is the subject of a lapsed right, before an application for restoration is published.

The amendments deal with those matters, which are also embodied in the new registered design provisions. Amendment No. 154 also makes corresponding changes to section 64 of the Patents Act 1977 because, although it concerns a different subject, its drafting is similar to that in the restoration provisions.

It is clear from all this that I have reason to be particularly grateful to the Opposition. Not only have they suggested a worthwhile addition to the registered design provisions, but they have enabled us to attend to some necessary remedial work in the patents provisions. In reply to the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands), a number of the amendments that I have moved formally are amendments that I believe he would have welcomed in response to questions asked in Committee.

Mr. Rowlands: In clause 259(2), none of the extensions to 25 years applies to the existing 15-year registered design right. Will the amendments help those who enjoy an existing registered design right? That right will last for 15 years under the existing provisions, but could be 25-year design right under the new terms. Under subsection (2), none of the existing registered design rights would enjoy any additional years, as provided for during the changeover in patent law.

Mr. Butcher: We contemplated whether the amendment to the Registered Designs Act 1949 should contain transitional provisions, since no such provisions presently exist. Present registration can be renewed, at most, twice only. The complexity of any amendment seems to outweigh any benefit.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment made: No. 107, in page 117, line 11, at end insert—

'Restoration of lapsed right in design

8A.—(1) Where the right in a registered design has expired by reason of a failure to extend, in accordance with section 8(2) or (3A), the period for which the right subsists, an application for the restoration of the right in the design may be made to the registrar within the prescribed period.

(2) The application may be made by the person who was the registered proprietor of the design or by any other person who would have been entitled to the right in the design if it had not expired; and where the design was held by two or more persons jointly, the application may, with the leave of the registrar, be made by one or more of them without joining the others.

(3) Notice of the application shall be published by the registrar in the prescribed manner.

(4) If the registrar is satisfied that the proprietor took reasonable care to see that the period for which the right subsisted was extended in accordance with section 8(2) or (3A), he shall, on payment of any unpaid renewal fee and any prescribed additional fee, order the restoration of the right in the design.

(5) The order may be made subject to such conditions as the registrar thinks fit, and if the proprietor of the design does not comply with any condition the registrar may revoke the order and give such consequential directions as he thinks fit.

(6) Rules altering the period prescribed for the purposes of subsection (1) may contain such transitional provisions and savings as appear to the Secretary of State to be necessary or expedient.

Effect of order for restoration of right

8B.—(1) The effect of an order under section 8A for the restoration of the right in a registered design is as follows.

(2) Anything done under or in relation to the right during the period between expiry and restoration shall be treated as valid.

(3) Anything done during that period which would have constituted an infringement if the right had not expired shall be treated as an infringement—

(a) if done at a time when it was possible for an application for extension to be made under section 8(3A); or

(b) if it was a continuation or repetition of an earlier infringing act.

(4) if after it was no longer possible for such an application for extension to be made, and before publication of notice of the application for restoration, a person—

(a) began in good faith to do an act which would have constituted an infringement of the right in the design if it had not expired, or

(b) made in good faith effective and serious preparations to do such an act,

he has the right to continue to do the act or, as the case may be, to do the act, notwithstanding the restoration of the right in the design; but this does not extend to granting a licence to another person to do the act.

(5) If the act was done, or the preparations were made, in the course of a business, the person entitled to the right conferred by subsection (4) may—

(a) authorise the doing of that act by any partners of his for the time being in that business, and

(b) assign that right, or transmit it on death (or in the case of a body corporate on its dissolution), to any person who acquires that part of the business in the course of which the act was done or the preparations were made.

(6) Where an article is disposed of to another in exercise of the rights conferred by subsection (4) or subsection (5), that other and any person claiming through him may deal with the article in the same way as if it had been disposed of by the registered proprietor of the design.

(7) The above provisions apply in relation to the use of a registered design for the services of the Crown as they apply in relation to infringement of the right in the design.'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 265

PERSONS ENTITLED TO DESCRIBE THEMSELVES AS PATENT AGENTS

Amendments made: No. 108, in page 120, line 35, leave out 'words' and insert 'expressions'.

No. 284, in page 120, line 38, leave out subsection (6).

No. 285, in page 120, line 44, at end insert—

'(7) This section has effect subject to—

(a) section 266 (persons entitled to describe themselves as European patent attorneys, &c.), and

(b) section *(Use of the term "patent attorney": supplementary provisions.)* (1) (use of term patent attorney" in reference to solicitors).'—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 266

PERSONS ENTITLED TO DESCRIBE THEMSELVES AS EUROPEAN PATENT ATTORNEYS, &C.

Amendments made: No. 109, in page 121, line 26, leave out 'words' and insert 'expressions'.

No. 286, in page 121, line 30, leave out subsection (6).—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 268

PRIVILEGE FOR COMMUNICATIONS WITH PATENT AGENTS

Amendments made: No. 287, in page 122, leave out lines 23 to 25 and insert—

'(1) This section applies to communications as to any matter relating to the protection of any invention, design, technical information, trade mark or service mark, or as to any matter involving passing off.

(2) Any such communication—'.

No. 110, in page 122, leave out line 43.

Clause 272

PRIVILEGE FOR COMMUNICATIONS WITH REGISTERED TRADE MARK AGENTS

Amendment made: No. 288, in page 125, leave out lines 1 and 2 and insert—

'(1) This section applies to communications as to any matter relating to the protection of any design, trade mark or service mark, or as to any matter involving passing off.

(2) Any such communication—'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Mr. Iain Mills (Meriden) *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): We are dealing with amendments that have been discussed at the moment. I think the hon. Gentleman is concerned with amendment No. 278, which we shall come to later.

Amendments made: No. 111, in page 125, line 14, after 'partnership', insert

'entitled to describe itself as a firm of registered trade mark agents, or

(c) a'.

No. 112, in page 125, leave out line 16.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 284

DEVICES DESIGNED TO CIRCUMVENT COPY-PROTECTION

Amendments made: No. 113, in page 130, line 28, leave out 'have been' and insert 'are'.

No. 114, in page 130, line 31, leave out 'who issues' and insert 'issuing'.

No. 289, in page 130, line 32, leave out from 'who' to end of line 33 and insert

"knowing or having reason to believe that it will be used to make infringing copies—'.

No. 115, in page 130, line 35, leave out 'apparatus or device' and insert 'device or means'.

No. 290, in page 130, line 35, at end insert 'specifically'.

No. 291, in page 130, line 38, leave out 'calculated' and insert 'intended'.

No. 116, in page 130, line 42, leave out 'apparatus or device' and insert 'device or means'.

No. 195, in page 130, line 45, leave out from 'an' to end of line 46 and insert 'infringing copy'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

No. 237, in page 131, line 2, after 'prevent' insert 'or restrict'—*[Mr. Tim Smith.]*

No. 196, in page 131, line 14, at end insert

'; and section *(Order as to disposal of infringing copy or other article)* of this Act applies, with the necessary modifications, in relation to the disposal of anything delivered up or seized by virtue of subsection (3) above'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 285

OFFENCE OF FRAUDULENTLY RECEIVING PROGRAMMES

Amendment made: No. 117, in page 131, line 17, leave out from 'a' to 'with' and insert 'broadcasting or cable programme service provided from a place in the United Kingdom'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 286

RIGHTS AND REMEDIES IN RESPECT OF APPARATUS, &C. FOR FRAUDULENTLY RECEIVING PROGRAMMES

Amendments made: No. 292, in page 131, line 29, leave out from 'who' to 'is' in line 31 and insert '—

(a) makes charges for the reception of programmes included in a broadcasting or cable programme service provided from a place in the United Kingdom, or

(b) sends encrypted transmissions of any other description from a place in the United Kingdom,'.

No. 119, in page 131, line 35, leave out 'without payment' and insert

'or other transmissions when they are not entitled to do so'.

No. 120, in page 131, line 37, leave out 'without payment' and insert

'or other transmissions when they are not entitled to do so'.

No. 197, in page 131, line 41, leave out from 'an' to end of line 42 and insert 'infringing copy'.

No. 198, in page 131, line 48 at end insert—

'(5) Section *(Order as to disposal of infringing copy or other article)* of this Act applies, with the necessary modifications, in relation to the disposal of anything delivered up or seized by virtue of subsection (4) above '.

No. 293, in page 131, line 48, at end insert—

'(4A) In section 96(1) (innocent infringement of copyright) as it applies to proceedings for infringement of the rights conferred by this section, the reference to the defendant not knowing or having reason to believe that copyright subsisted in the work shall be construed as a reference to his not knowing or having reason to believe that his acts infringed the rights conferred by this section.'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 287

SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS AS TO FRAUDULENT RECEPTION

Amendments made: No. 121, in page 132, line 1, leave out from beginning to 'no' in line 10 and insert—

'(1) Her Majesty may by Order in Council—

(a) provide that section 285 applies in relation to programmes included in services provided from a country or territory outside the United Kingdom, and

(b) provide that section 286 applies in relation to such programmes and to encrypted transmissions sent from such a country or territory.

(2)'.

No. 122, in page 132, line 13, leave out 'services falling within subsection (1)' and insert

'broadcasting or cable programme services provided from the United Kingdom or, as the case may be, for encrypted transmissions sent from the United Kingdom.

(2A) A statutory instrument containing an Order in Council under subsection (1) shall be subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament.'.

No. 123, in page 132, line 15, leave out first 'service'.

No. 124, in page 132, line 19, leave out subsections (4) and (5) and insert—

'(5) In sections 285 and 286, and this section "programme", "broadcasting" and "cable programme service", and related expressions, have the same meaning as in Part I (copyright).'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 288

FRAUDULENT APPLICATION OR USE OF TRADE MARK AN OFFENCE

Amendment proposed: No. 125, in page 133, line 7, at end insert—

'(1A) It is also an offence, subject to subsection (2) below, for a person to possess in the course of a business goods or material bearing a mark identical to or nearly resembling a registered trade mark with a view to enabling or assisting another person to do any of the things mentioned in subsection (1)(a) to (c), knowing or having reason to believe that the other person is not entitled to use the mark in relation to the goods in question and that the goods are not connected in the course of trade with a person who is so entitled.'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this we are considering the following: Government amendments Nos. 126 and 127.

Amendment No. 278, in page 135, line 7, at end insert—

'Information, 58D

(1) Where articles seized or detained by any enforcement authority are, or appear to that authority to be, goods or material bearing such a mark as is mentioned in subsection (1) of section 58A of this Act, the authority may notify the proprietor of the registered trade mark or his authorised agent of the seizure or detention, as the case may be, and may disclose to him—

(a) the time, and the address of the place, of seizure or detention of the goods or materials;

(b) the nature and quantity of the goods seized or detained

and, if the authority is satisfied that the following information is required for the purpose of preventing the continuance of activities which amount to an offence under section 58A of this Act, or which are being committed abroad and would, if committed within the jurisdiction, amount to such an offence then the authority may also disclose to the said proprietor—

(c) the name and address of the person from whom the goods or materials have been seized or detained;

(d) any information identifying the source from which the goods or materials have come or by which they were produced.

(2) Any disclosure of information or documents made pursuant to this section shall not amount to an offence.'.

Mr. Mills: I apologise to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There was some confusion: I had wished to speak on privilege—patent agents and trade mark agents—but the remarkable and exciting pace of our proceedings rather caught me out. I hope that you and the House will forgive me.

Clause 288 introduces one of the most important matters in the Bill—criminal penalties against industrial counterfeiting. It is perhaps mean of me to raise a final point at this time of night, but I congratulate officials and the Minister on a job well done. They have done something to help industry and to ensure that the jobs that we have been losing—perhaps 100,000 of them—through industrial counterfeiting will now be protected against such activities.

My amendment tries to ensure that the communications between the statutory bodies—the trading standards officers, the customs and the police—are as good as they can be, so that information about industrial counterfeiting is exchanged when it is suspected or detected. I raised this in Committee, but I am told by trading standards officers that the solution described by the Minister then was not entirely simple. My amendment would allow freer disclosure of information between the statutory authorities, as well as between trading standards officers, the Customs and industry.

My hon. Friend knows the point that I am making. So as not to detain the House for too long, I shall ask him only two questions. First, is he truly satisfied that we have communication both ways between the statutory authorities? I am assured by the trading standards officers that it is not a simple matter of saying that the powers already exist. Secondly, will he go further and accept my amendment or, if not, make some helpful remarks on the information that will be passed between those authorities and industry?

Mr. Butcher: Amendment No. 278 is very similar to an amendment moved by my hon. Friend the Member for Meriden (Mr. Mills) in Committee. At that time, I said that there was little harm in the authorities disclosing the types of information identified in what are now paragraphs (a) and (b) of subsection (1) of the new clause to be inserted in the Trade Marks Act. However, I said that no specific provision was needed because the authorities were already free to disclose the information. Nothing has happened since to cause me to change my opinion on this point, and I consider that it would be positively misleading to insert a provision along those lines, with the implication that without it disclosure would be prohibited.

That leads me to paragraphs (c) and (d). They also featured in the previous amendment, and I resisted their inclusion on two grounds. The first was that information of this sort necessarily includes an element of judgment on

the facts that would prejudge the very matters that must be decided by a court, whether civil or criminal. It would be wrong for the authorities to release to one side only information that may be of use in possible litigation.

Our other reason for rejecting the amendment was that it would be wrong to regard trade mark proprietors or their representatives as being on a par with the official enforcement agencies. If anything, the way in which the amendment is now structured brings that point into stark relief.

I hope that for the reasons that I have given, especially that it would be misleading to insert such a provision, my hon. Friend will sympathetically consider withdrawing his amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. Gentleman need not do that. His amendment is being discussed with a group.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendments made: No. 126, in page 133, line 8, after '(1)' insert 'or (1A)'.

No. 127, in page 133, line 17, leave out 'that subsection' and insert 'subsection (1)'.

No. 199, in page 133, line 41, leave out from 'may' to 'goods' in line 43 and insert

', if satisfied that at the time of his arrest or charge he had in his possession, custody or control—

(a)'.

No. 200, in page 134, leave out lines 4 to 9 and insert 'order that the goods or material be delivered up to such person as the court may direct.

(2) For this purpose a person shall be treated as charged with an offence—

(a) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, when he is orally charged or is served with a summons or indictment;

(b) in Scotland, when he is cautioned, charged or served with a complaint or indictment.

(3) An order may be made by the court of its own motion or on the application of the prosecutor (or, in Scotland, the Lord Advocate or procurator-fiscal), but shall not be made if it appears to the court unlikely that any order will be made under section 58BA (order as to disposal of offending goods or material).'.

No. 201, in page 134, line 14, leave out subsection (4) and insert

'; and in Scotland, where an order has been made under this section, the person from whose possession, custody or control the goods or material have been removed may, without prejudice to any other form of appeal under any rule of law, appeal against that order in the same manner as against sentence.'.

No. 202, in page 134, leave out lines 17 to 23 and insert—

'(5) A person to whom goods or material are delivered up in pursuance of an order under this section shall retain it pending the making of an order under section 58BA.

(6) Nothing in this section affects the powers of the court under section 43 of the Powers of Criminal Courts Act 1973, section 223 or 436 of the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1975 or Article 7 of the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 1980 (general provisions as to forfeiture in criminal proceedings).'.

No. 203, in page 134, line 23, at end insert—

'Order as to disposal of offending goods or material

58BA.—(1) Where goods or material have been delivered up in pursuance of an order under section 58B, an application may be made to the court for an order that they be destroyed or forfeited to such person as the court may think fit.

(2) Provision shall be made by rules of court as to the service of notice on persons having an interest in the goods or material, and any such person is entitled—

(a) to appear in proceedings for an order under this section, whether or not he was served with notice, and

(b) to appeal against any order made, whether or not he appeared;

and an order shall not take effect until the end of the period within which notice of an appeal may be given or, if before the end of that period notice of appeal is duly given, until the final determination or abandonment of the proceedings on the appeal.

(3) Where there is more than one person interested in goods or material, the court shall make such order as it thinks just.

(4) References in this section to a person having an interest in goods or material include any person in whose favour an order could be made under this section or under section *(Order as to disposal of infringing copy or other article), (Order as to disposal of illicit recordings)* or *(Order as to disposal of infringing article, &c.)* of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (which make similar provision in relation to infringement of copyright, rights in performances and design right).

(5) Proceedings for an order under this section may be brought—

(a) in a county court in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, provided the value of the goods or material in question does not exceed the county court limit for actions in tort, and

(b) in a sheriff court in Scotland;

but this shall not be construed as affecting the jurisdiction of the High Court or, in Scotland, the Court of Session.'.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Clause 292

EXTENT

Amendments made: No. 128, in page 136, line 16, leave out 'broadcasts' and insert 'transmissions'.

No. 339, in page 136, line 19, leave out 'broadcasts' and insert 'transmissions'.

No. 129, in page 136, line 26, leave out from first 'which' to 'amends' in line 27.—*[Mr. Butcher.]*

Schedule 1

COPYRIGHT: TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS AND SAVINGS

Amendments made: No. 130, in page 138, line 49, at end insert—

'(2) However—

(a) copyright subsists in the sound recording only if copyright subsisted in the film immediately before commencement, and it continues to subsist until copyright in the film expires;

(b) the author and first owner of copyright in the film shall be treated as having been author and first owner of the copyright in the sound recording; and

(c) anything done before commencement under or in relation to the copyright in the film continues to have effect in relation to the sound recording as in relation to the film.'.

No. 131, in page 139, line 8, at end insert

'in accordance with the new copyright provisions for the purposes of the rights conferred by Chapter IV of Part I (moral rights), and for all other purposes shall be determined'.

No. 260, in page 140, line 25, after 'Crown', insert 'or Parliamentary'.

No. 261, in page 140, line 26, leave out 'paragraph 40' and insert 'paragraphs 40, 40A and 41'.

No. 132, in page 140, line 35, leave out from 'VII' to 'and' and insert

'(provisions with respect to copyright licensing).'.

No. 133, in page 140, line 44, leave out from beginning to first 'of' and insert

'So much of section 18(2) as extends the restricted act of issuing copies to the public to include the rental to the public'.

No. 134, in page 140, line 47, leave out 'hiring' and insert 'renting'.

No. 206, in page 141, line 19, leave out from 'Section' to second 'in' and insert

'*(Transfer of copies of works in electronic form)* (transfer of copies, adaptations, &c. of work'.

No. 135, in page 142, line 38, leave out from '239' to 'apply' and insert

'and 240 (appeals and rules)'.

No. 136, in page 146, line 41, leave out sub-paragraph (6).

No. 244, in page 147, line 25, at end insert—

'*British ships, aircraft and hovercraft*

38A. Section *(British ships, aircraft and hovercraft: Part I)*(British ships, aircraft and hovercraft) does not apply in relation to anything done before commencement.'.

No. 262, in page 147, line 27, leave out sub-paragraph (1) and insert—

'(1) Section 160 of this Act (general provisions as to Crown copyright) applies to an existing work if—

(a) section 39 of the 1956 Act applied to the work immediately before commencement, and

(b) the work is not one to which section *(Copyright in Acts and Measures)*, 161 or *(Copyright in Parliamentary Bills)* applies (copyright in Acts, Measures and Bills and Parliamentary copyright: see paragraphs 40A and 41 below).'.

No. 263, in page 148, line 17 at end insert—

'40A.—(1) Section *(Copyright in Acts and Measures)* (copyright in Acts and Measures) applies to existing Acts of Parliament and Measures of the General Synod of the Church of England.

(2) References in that section to Measures of the General Synod of the Church of England include Church Assembly Measures.'.

No. 264, in page 148, line 19, leave out paragraph 41 and insert—

'41.—(1) Section 161 of this Act (general provisions as to Parliamentary copyright) applies to existing unpublished literary, dramatic, musical or artistic work, but does not otherwise apply to existing works.

(2) Section *(Copyright in Parliamentary Bills)* (copyright in Parliamentary Bills) does not apply—

(a) to a public Bill which was introduced into Parliament and published before commencement,

(b) to a private Bill of which a copy was deposited in either House before commencement or

(c) to a personal Bill which was given a First Reading in the House of Lords before commencement.'.—*[Mr. Garel-Jones.]*

Schedule 2

RIGHTS IN PERFORMANCES: PERMITTED ACTS

Amendments made: No. 137, in page 150, line 1, after ', hire', insert 'or'.

No. 138, in page 150, line 2, leave out 'or distributed'.

No. 139, in page 150, line 28, after ', hire' insert 'or'.

No. 140, in page 150, line 29, leave out 'or distributed'.

No. 141, in page 151, line 15, at end insert—

'(2A) Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed as excluding any defence of statutory authority otherwise available under or by virtue of any enactment.'.

No. 207, in page 151, leave out lines 17 to 28 and insert—

'*Transfer of copies of works in electronic form*

12.—(1) This paragraph applies where a recording of a performance in electronic form has been purchased on terms which, expressly or impliedly or by virtue of any rule of law, allow the purchaser to make further recordings in connection with his use of the recording.

(2) If there are no express terms—

(a) prohibiting the transfer of the recording by the purchaser, imposing obligations which continue after a transfer, prohibiting the assignment of any consent or terminating any consent on a transfer, or

(b) providing for the terms on which a transferee may do the things which the purchaser was permitted to do,

anything which the purchaser was allowed to do may also be done by a transferee without infringement of the rights conferred by this Part, but any recording made by the purchaser which is not also transferred shall be treated as an illicit recording for all purposes after the transfer.

(3) The same applies where the original purchased recording is no longer usable and what is transferred is a further copy used in its place.

(4) The above provisions also apply on a subsequent transfer, with the substitution for references in sub-paragraph (2) to the purchaser of references to the subsequent transferor.

(5) This paragraph does not apply in relation to a recording purchased before the commencement of Part II.

(6) Expressions used in this paragraph have the same meaning as in section *(Transfer of copies of works in electronic form)*.'.

No. 252, in page 152, line 1, at end insert—

'*Recordings of folksongs*

6A.—(1) A recording of a performance of a song may be made for the purpose of including it in an archive maintained by a designated body without infringing any of the rights conferred by Part II, provided the conditions in sub-paragraph (2) below are met.

(2) The conditions are that—

(a) the words are unpublished and of unknown authorship at the time the recording is made,

(b) the making of the recording does not infringe any copyright, and

(c) its making is not prohibited by any performer.

(3) Copies of a recording made in reliance on sub-paragraph (1) and included in an archive maintained by a designated body may, if the prescribed conditions are met, be made and supplied by the archivist without infringing any of the rights conferred by Part II.

(4) In this paragraph—

"designated body" means a body designated for the purposes of section *(Recordings of folksongs)*, and "the prescribed conditions" means the conditions prescribed for the purposes of subsection (3) of that section;

and other expressions used in this paragraph have the same meaning as in that section.'.—*[Mr. Garel-Jones.]*

Schedule 3

REGISTERED DESIGNS: MINOR AND CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS OF 1949 ACT

Amendments made: No. 142, in page 154, line 34, leave out from 'fit' to end of line 40 and insert—

'(3A) The registrar may, in such cases as may be prescribed, direct that for the purpose of deciding whether a design is new an applicant shall be treated as made on a date earlier or later than that on which it was in fact made.'.

No. 143, in page 156, line 41, leave out '(3)' and insert '(3A)'.

No. 208, in page 158, line 41, leave out paragraph 17 and insert—

'17.—(1) Section 28 of the Registered Designs Act 1949 (the Appeal Tribunal) is amended as follows.

(2) For subsection (2) (members of Tribunal) substitute—

"(2) The Appeal Tribunal shall consist of—

(a) one or more judges of the High Court nominated by the Lord Chancellor, and

(b) one judge of the Court of Session nominated by the Lord President of that Court.".

(3) In subsection (5) (costs), after "costs" (twice) insert "or expenses", and for the words from "and any such order" to the end substitute—

"and any such order may be enforced—

(a) in England and Wales or Northern Ireland, in the same way as an order of the High Court;

(b) in Scotland, in the same way as a decree for expenses granted by the Court of Session.".

(4) For subsection (10) (seniority of judges) substitute—

"(10) In this section 'the High Court' means the High Court in England and Wales; and for the purposes of this section the seniority of judges shall be reckoned by reference to the dates on which they were appointed judges of that court or the Court of Session.'.

(5) The amendments to section 28 made by section 10(5) of the Administration of Justice Act 1970 (power to make rules as to right of audience) shall be deemed always to have extended to Northern Ireland.'.

No. 245, in page 163, line 3, at end insert—

'(5) In paragraph (4) for "a department of the Government of Northern Ireland" substitute "a Northern Ireland department", and at the end add "and in relation to a Northern Ireland department references to the Treasury shall be construed as references to the Department of Finance and Personnel".'.—*[Mr. Garel-Jones.]*

Schedule 4

The Registered Designs Act 1949 as amended

Arrangement of Sections

Amendments made: No. 144, in page 164, line 14, at end insert—

'8A. Restoration of lapsed right in design.

8B. Effect of order for restoration of right.'.

No. 145, in page 165, line 42, leave out from 'not' to 'and' in line 43 and insert

'normally taken into account to a material extent by persons acquiring or using articles of that description'.

No. 146, in page 166, line 43, leave out from 'fit' to end of line 51 and insert—

'(3A) The registrar may, in such cases as may be prescribed, direct that for the purpose of deciding whether a design is new an application shall be treated as made on a date earlier or later than that on which it was in fact made.'.

No. 147, in page 170, line 38, at end insert—

'(6) The right in a registered design is not infringed by the reproduction of a feature of the design which, by virtue of section 1(1)(b), is left out of account in determining whether the design is registrable.'.

No. 148, in page 170, line 41, leave out from 'design' to 'if' in line 1 on page 171 and insert—

'(2) The period for which the right subsists may be extended for a second, third, fourth and fifth period of five years, by applying to the registrar for an extension and paying the prescribed renewal fee.

(3) If the first, second, third or fourth period expires without such application and payment being made, the right shall cease to have effect; and the registrar shall, in accordance with rules made by the Secretary of State, notify the proprietor of that fact.

(3A)'.

No. 149, in page 171, line 27, at end insert—

'Restoration of lapsed right in design

8A.—(1) Where the right in a registered design has expired by reason of a failure to extend, in accordance with section 8(2) or (3A), the period for which the right subsists, an application for the restoration of the right in the design may be made to the registrar within the prescribed period.

(2) The application may be made by the person who was the registered proprietor of the design or by any other person who would have been entitled to the right in the design if it had not expired; and where the design was held by two or more persons jointly, the application may, with the leave of the registrar, be made by one or more of them without joining the others.

(3) Notice of the application shall be published by the registrar in the prescribed manner.

(4) If the registrar is satisfied that the proprietor took reasonable care to see that the period for which the right subsisted was extended in accordance with section 8(2) or (3A), he shall, on payment of any unpaid renewal fee and any prescribed additional fee, order the restoration of the right in the design.

(5) The order may be made subject to such conditions as the registrar thinks fit, and if the proprietor of the design does not comply with any condition the registrar may revoke the order and give such consequential directions as he thinks fit.

(5) Rules altering the period prescribed for the purposes of subsection (1) may contain such transitional provisions and savings as appear to the Secretary of State to be necessary or expedient.

Effect of order for restoration of right

8B.—(1) The effect of an order under section 8A for the restoration of the right in a registered design is as follows.

(2) Anything done under or in relation to the right during the period between expiry and restoration shall be treated as valid.

(3) Anything done during that period which would have constituted an infringement if the right had not expired shall be treated as an infringement—

(a) if done at a time when it was possible for an application for extension to be made under section 8(3A); or

(b) if it was a continuation or repetition of an earlier infringing act.

(4) If after it was no longer possible for such an application for extension to be made, and before publication of notice of the application for restoration, a person—

(a) began in good faith to do an act which would have constituted an infringement of the right in the design if it had not expired, or

(b) made in good faith effective and serious preparations to do such an act,

he has the right to continue to do the act or, as the case may be, to do the act, notwithstanding the restoration of the right in the design; but this does not extend to granting a licence to another person to do this act.

(5) If the act was done, or the preparations were made, in the course of a business, the person entitled to the right conferred by subsection (4) may—

(a) authorise the doing of that act by any partners of his for the time being in that business, and

(b) assign that right, or transmit it on death (or in the case of a body corporate on its dissolution), to any person who acquires that part of the business in the course of which the act was done or the preparations were made.

(6) Where an article is disposed of to another in exercise of the rights conferred by subsection (4) or subsection (5), that other and any person claiming through him may deal with the article in the same way as if it had been disposed of by the registered proprietor of the design.

(7) The above provisions apply to the use of a registered design for the services of the Crown as they apply in relation of the infringement right in the design.'.

No. 150, in page 174, line 49, leave out '(3)' and insert '(3A)'.

No. 209, in page 181, line 48, leave out from 'of' to end of line 50 and insert—

(a) one or more judges of the High Court nominated by the Lord Chancellor, and

(b) one judge of the Court of Session nominated by the Lord President of that Court.'.

No. 210, in page 182, line 18, after 'costs', insert 'or expenses'.

No. 211, in page 182, line 20 leave out from 'be' to end of line 21 and insert 'enforced—

(a) in England and Wales or Northern Ireland, in the same way as an order of the High Court;

(b) in Scotland, in the same way as a decree for expenses granted by the Court of Session.'.

No. 212, page 182, line 43, at end insert 'or the Court Session'.

No. 246, in page 187, line 43, leave out from 'a' to end of line 44 and insert

'a Northern Ireland department, and in relation to a Northern Ireland department references to the Treasury shall be construed as references to the Department of Finance and Personnel'.

No. 247, in page 191, line 50, at end insert—

'COMPENSATION FOR LOSS OF PROFIT

2A.—(1) Where Crown use is made of a registered design, the government department concerned shall pay—

(a) to the registered proprietor, or

(b) if there is an exclusive licence in force in respect of the design, to the exclusive licensee

compensation for any loss resulting from his not being awarded a contract to supply the articles to which the design is applied.

(2) Compensation is payable only to the extent that such a contract could have been fulfilled from his existing manufacturing capacity; but is payable notwithstanding the existence of circumstances rendering him ineligible for the award of such a contract.

(3) In determing the loss, regard shall be had to the profit which would have been made on such a contract and to the extent to which any manufacturing capacity was under-used.

(4) No compensation is payable in respect of any failure to secure contracts for the supply of articles to which the design is applied otherwise than for the services of the Crown.

(5) The amount payable under this paragraph shall, if not agreed between the registered proprietor or licensee and the government department concerned with the approval of the Treasury, be determined by the court on a reference under paragraph 3; and it is in addition to any amount payable under paragraph 1 or 2 of this schedule.

(6) In this paragraph—

"Crown use", in relation to a design, means the doing of anything by virtue of paragraph 1 which would other-wise be an infringement of the right in the design; and

"the government department concerned", in relation to such use, means the government department who or on whose authority the act was done.".

No. 248, in page 191, line 52 *[Schedule 4]*, leave out from 'to' to 'may' in line 2 on page 192 and insert—

'(a) the exercise by a Government department, or a person authorised by a Government department, of the powers conferred by paragraph 1 of this Schedule,

(b) terms for the use of a design for the services of the Crown under that paragraph.

(c) the right of any person to receive any part of a payment made under paragraph 1(3), or

(d) the right of any person to receive a payment under paragraph 2A,'.—*[Mr. Garel-Jones.]*

Schedule 5

PATENTS: MINOR AMENDMENTS

Amendments made: No. 294, in page 194, line 15 at end insert—

'4A. In section 130(1) of the Patents Act 1977 (interpretation), in the definition of "search fee", for "section 17 above" substitute "section 17(1) above".'.

No. 151, in page 194, line 26 at end insert—

'(2A) After subsection (2) insert—

"(2A) Notice of the application shall be published by the comptroller in the prescribed manner.".'.

No. 152, in page 194, line 30, leave out from beginning to 'does' and insert 'This amendment'.

No. 153, in page 194, line 34, at end insert—

'(4) Omit subsections (5) to (9) (effect of order for restoration).

5A. After that section insert—

"*Effect of order for restoration of patent*

28A.—(1) The effect of an order for the restoration of a patent is as follows.

(2) Anything done under or in relation to the patent during the period between expiry and restoration shall be treated as valid.

(3) Anything done during that period which would have constituted an infringement if the patent had not expired shall be treated as an infringement—

(a) if done at a time when it was possible for the patent to be renewed under section 25(4); or

(b) if it was a continuation or repetition of an earlier infringing act.

(4) If after it was no longer possible for the patent to be so renewed, and before publication of notice of the application for restoration, a person—

(a) began in good faith to do an act which would have constituted an infringement of the patent if it had not expired, or

(b) made in good faith effective and serious preparations to do such an act,

he has the right to continue to do the act or, as the case may be, to do the act, notwithstanding the restoration of the patent; but this right does not extend to granting a licence to another person to do the act.

(5) If the act was done, or the preparations were made, in the course of a business, the person entitled to the right conferred by subsection (4) may—

(a) authorise the doing of that act by any partners of his for the time being in that business, and

(b) assign that right, or transmit it on death (or in the case of a body corporate on its dissolution), to any person who acquires that part of the business in the course of which the act was done or the preparations were made.

(6) Where a product is disposed of to another in exercise of the rights conferred by subsection (4) or (5), that other and any person claiming through him may deal with the product in the same way as if it had been disposed of by the registered proprietor of the patent.

(7) The above provisions apply in relation to the use of a patent for the services of the Crown as they apply in relation to infringement of the patent.".'.

No. 295, in page 194, line 34, at end insert—

'5B. In consequence of the above amendments—

(a) in section 60(6)(b) of the Patents Act 1977, for "section 28(6)" substitute "section 28A(4) or (5)"; and

(b) in sections 77(5), 78(6) and 80(4) of that Act, for the words from "section 28(6)" to the end substitute "section 28A(4) and (5) above, and subsections (6) and (7) of that section shall apply accordingly.".'.

No. 296, in page 195, line 3, at end insert—

'6A. In section 74(6) (meaning of "entitlement proceedings"), for "section 37(1)(a) above" substitute "section 37(1) above".'.

No. 154, in page 196, line 37, at end insert—

'*Right to continue use begun before priority date*

10A. For section 64 of the Patents Act 1977 (right to continue use begun before priority date) substitute—

"*Right to continue use begun before priority date*

64.—(1) Where a patent is granted for an invention, a person who in the United Kingdom before the priority date of the invention—

(a) does in good faith an act which would constitute an infringement of the patent if it were in force, or

(b) makes in good faith effective and serious preparations to do such an act,

has the right to continue to do the act or, as the case may be, to do the act, notwithstanding the grant of the patent; but this right does not extend to granting a licence to another person to do the act.

(2) If the act was done, or the preparations were made, in the course of a business, the person entitled to the right conferred by subsection (1) may—

(a) authorise the doing of that act by any partners of his for the time being in that business, and

(b) assign that right, or transmit it on death (or in the case of a body corporate on its dissolution), to any person who acquires that part of the business in the course of which the act was done or the preparations were made.

(3) Where a product is disposed of to another in exercise of the rights conferred by subsection (1) or (2), that other and any person claiming through him may deal with the product in the same way as if it had been disposed of by the registered proprietor of the patent.".'.

No. 249, in page 196, line 37, at end insert—

CROWN USE: COMPENSATION FOR LOSS OF PROFIT

10A.—(1) In the Patents Act 1977, after section 57 insert—

"*compensation for loss of profit*

57A.—(1) Where use is made of an invention for the services of the Crown, the government department concerned shall pay—

(a) to the proprietor of the patent, or

(b) if there is an exclusive licence in force in respect of the patent, to the exclusive licensee,

compensation for any loss resulting from his not being awarded a contract to supply the patented product or, as the case may be, to perform the patented process or supply a thing made by means of the patented process.

(2) Compensation is payable only to the extent that such a contract could have been fulfilled from his existing manufacturing or other capacity; but is payable notwithstanding the existence of circumstances rendering him ineligible for the award of such a contract.

(3) In determining the loss, regard shall be had to the profit which would have been made on such a contract and to the extent to which any manufacturing or other capacity was under-used.

(4) No compensation is payable in respect of any failure to secure contracts to supply the patented product or, as the case may be, to perform the patented process or supply a thing made by means of the patented process, otherwise than for the services of the Crown.

(5) The amount payable shall, if not agreed between the proprietor or licensee and the government department concerned with the approval of the Treasury, be determined by the court on a reference under section 58, and is in addition to any amount payable under section 55 or 57.

(6) In this section 'the government department concerned', in relation to any use of an invention for the services of the Crown, means the government department by whom or on whose authority the use was made.

(7) In the application of this section to Northern Ireland, the reference in subsection (5) above to the Treasury shall, where the government department concerned is a department of the Government of Northern Ireland, be construed as a reference to the Department of Finance and Personnel.".

(2) In section 58 of the Patents Act 1977 (reference of disputes as to Crown use), for subsection (1) substitute—

"(1) Any dispute as to—

(a) the exercise by a government department, or a person authorised by a government department, of the powers conferred by section 55 above,

(b) terms for the use of an invention for the services of the Crown under that section,

(c) the right of any person to receive any part of a payment made in pursuance of subsection (4) of that section, or

(d) the right of any person to receive a payment under section 57A,

may be referred to the court by either party to the dispute after a patent has been granted for the invention.";

and in subsection (4) for "under this section" substitute "under subsection (1)(a), (b) or (c) above".

(3) In section 58(11) of the Patents Act 1977 (exclusion of right to compensation for Crown use if relevant transaction, instrument or event not registered), after "section 57(3) above)" insert ", or to any compensation under section 57A above,".

(4) The above amendments apply in relation to any use of an invention for the services of the Crown after the commencement of this section, even if the terms for such use were settled before commencement.'.

No. 297, in page 196, line 37, at end insert—

'*Compulsory licensing: reliance on statements in competition report*

10A. In section 53(2) of the Patents Act 1977 (compulsory licensing: reliance on statements in reports of Monopolies and Mergers Commission)—

(a) for "application made in relation to a patent under sections 48 to 51 above" substitute "application made under section 48 above in respect of a patent"; and

(b) after "Part VII of the Fair Trading Act 1973" insert "or section 17 of the Competition Act 1980".'.

No. 213, in page 199, leave out lines 32 to 34 and insert—

'(2) If the application, or the designation of the United Kingdom in it, is withdrawn or (except as mentioned in subsection (3)) deemed to be withdrawn under the Treaty, it shall be treated as withdrawn under this Act.'.

No. 214, in page 199, line 35, leave out

'cease to be treated as an application'

and insert 'be treated as withdrawn'.

No. 215, in page 199, leave out lines 45 to 49.

No. 216, in page 200, line 12, at end insert

'having such date of filing as he may direct'.

No. 217, in page 200, line 21, leave out from 'begins' to end of line 27 and insert

'—

(a) when the prescribed period expires, provided any necessary translation of the application into English has been filed at the Patent Office and the prescribed fee has been paid by the applicant; or

(b) on the applicant expressly requesting the comptroller to proceed earlier with the national phase of the application, filing at the Patent Office—

(i) a copy of the application, if none has yet been sent to the Patent Office in accordance with the Treaty, and

(ii) any necessary translation of the application into English,

and paying the prescribed fee.'.

No. 218, in page 200, line 36, leave out from 'if' to 'otherwise' in line 38 and insert

'—

(a) when the prescribed period expires, any necessary translation of the amendment into English has been filed at the Patent Office, or

(b) where the applicant expressly requests the comptroller to proceed earlier with the national phase of the application, there is then filed at the Patent Office—

(i) a copy of the amendment, if none has yet been sent to the Patent Office in accordance with the Treaty, and

(ii) any necessary translation of the amendment into English;'.

No. 219, in page 200, line 51, leave out from 'where' to second 'the' in line 52 and insert

'in accordance with the Treaty any extra days are allowed'.

No. 220, in page 201, line 4, after 'application', insert—

', not having been published under this Act,'.

No. 221, in page 201, line 11, after 'application', insert—

', not having been published under this Act,'.

No. 222, in page 201, line 27, leave out 'an' and insert 'the'.—*[Mr. Garel-Jones.]*

Schedule 7

CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS: GENERAL

No. 156, in page 207, line 4, at end insert

'*Public Libraries (Scotland) Act 1955 (c. 27)*

5A. In section 4 of the Public Libraries (Scotland) Act 1955 (extension of lending power of public libraries), make the existing provision subsection (1) and after it add—

"(2) The provisions of Part I of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (copyright) relating to the rental of copies of sound recordings, films and computer programs apply to any lending by a statutory library authority or copies of such works, whether or not a charge is made for that facility.".'.

No. 157, in page 207, leave out lines 5 to 8.

No. 158. in page 207, line 14, at end insert—

'*Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 (c. 75)*

7A. In section 8 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 (restrictions on charges for library facilities), after subsection (5) add—

"(6) The provisions of Part I of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (copyright) relating to the rental of copies of sound recordings, films and computer programs apply to any lending by a library authority of copies of such works, whether or not a charge is made for that facility.".'.

No. 159, in page 210, line 11, leave out from 'or' to 'of' in line 12 and insert

'any patents county court having jurisdiction by virtue of an order under section 275'.

No. 160, in page 212, line 4, at end insert—

'*Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 (S.I. 1986 594 (N.I.3))*

32A. In Article 77 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 (charges for library services), after paragraph (2) add—

"(3) The provisions of Part I of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (copyright) relating to the rental of copies of sound recordings, films and computer programs apply to any lending by a board of copies of such works, whether or not a charge is made for that facility.".'.—*[Mr. Garel-Jones.]*

Schedule 8

REPEALS

Amendments made: No. 298, in page 216, line 51, column 3, at end insert—

'Section 28(5) to (9).'.

No. 299, in page 216, line 52, column 3, at end insert—

'Section 72(3).'.

No. 300, in page 217, line 9, column 3, at end insert—

'In section 130(7), the words "88(6) and (7),".'.

No. 161, in page 217, line 10, column 3, leave out 'paragraph' and insert 'paragraphs 1 and'.—*[Mr. Garel-Jones.]*

Title

Amendment made: In line 10, leave out 'programmes' and insert 'transmissions'.

Order for Third Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, That the Bill be read the Third time.—*[Mr. Garel-Jones.]*

3.12 am

Mr. Blair: This is an historic Bill in the law of copyright. I say that because Copyright Bills are so rare that when they occur they are invariably historic. None the less, this Bill has done a tremendous amount to bring the law of copyright up to date.

I thank the officials of the Department of Trade and Industry, who were of tremendous assistance to Members on both sides of the Committee. I also thank many of those who lobbied us on the Bill. We have always had an ambivalent attitude to those lobbies. On the one hand, they can make life extremely hot for us, but on the other, if they had not been there to lobby us, we would not have appreciated many of the issues to be debated in the Bill.

I thank also my hon. Friends who have raised many points with considerable assiduity and concern. The Government have met many of the problems that we raised. I commend them for doing so. They have met the difficulties raised concerning photographers. They have partly met those on publishing and commercial photocopying, rentals, computers and a host of other minor matters. The Government have rejected other Opposition pleas, particularly those relating to journalists, the blank tape levy and moral rights, but ultimately the Bill will be judged by its effect on industry and its ability to strike a correct balance between industry and the consumer.

I do not believe that the Opposition are necessarily right about every aspect of the Bill. We do not have a monopoly of wisdom. However, we have done our best to ensure that an adequate balance has been struck. Ultimately it will be those who work and earn their living in the copyright industries who will have the final word.

3.14 am

Mr. Butcher: First, I thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and also Madam Deputy Speaker, Mr. Speaker and the hon. Member for Cambridge (Mr. Rhodes James) who presided over the Committee stage, for the courtesy, kindness and, when needed, the brisk approach that have been applied to our proceedings.

My officials have been in the trenches on this issue for about four years. Therefore, I thank them on behalf of the whole House. They have made themselves available at all times to all members of the Committee, on both sides. There were even occasions when they briefed Opposition Members before they briefed me. I am sure that the House wishes to acknowledge their great efforts on our behalf.

In my view, the proceedings on this Bill have shown the House of Commons in its best light. Such a view of the House is not often presented to the public. Its mood has almost always been constructive. Sincerely held views were expressed and the exchanges were candid.

I thank all my hon. Friends who served on the Committee and who have stayed so late tonight. In particular I thank my two parliamentary private secretaries who served the Committee without a formal brief. As volunteers, their work was very much appreciated.

I commend the Bill to their Lordships. I hope that they will be particularly kind to it. I believe that it will stand the test of time but that, like Halley's comet, it will come back after another two decades. We hope that it will return to this House in good shape.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read the Third time, and passed, with amendments.

PETITION

Greyhound Racing (Taxation)

3.17 am

Mr. Austin Mitchell (Great Grimsby): I beg to present a petition from Mr. Robert Anthony Fisher of 32 Colne avenue, Watford, in the county of Hertford. It states that various dog tracks have imposed a levy on all winning bets and that bookmakers have imposed an additional levy on top of the off-course betting duty, both without

Parliament's consent. Mr. Fisher is petitioning Parliament to stop that illegal taxation. I shall ask the Clerk to read the petition.

The Clerk at the Table *read the petition, which was as follows:*

To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland assembled in Parliament.

The Humble Petition of Robert Anthony Fisher:

Sheweth

That, whereas by authority of Parliament held in the twenty-fifth year of the reign of Edward the Third, King of England, it was declared and enacted that thenceforth by the good laws and statutes of this Realm your petitioner has inherited the freedom that he should not be compelled to contribute to any tax or other like charge not set by common consent in Parliament and later called the 'Petition of Right' and

Whereas of late divers persons have, contrary to this freedom, usurped the authority of Parliament and notwithstanding the protests of your humble petitioner, imposed upon him and many others of Her Majesty's subjects, Taxes, which have not been approved by Parliament and in the manners following.

Notwithstanding that by the gracious consent of Parliament in 1987 on course Betting Duty, for the benefit of the public purse was abolished absolutely, the proprietors of a number of greyhound stadia, having the power to admit bookmakers at their discretion, have persuaded the latter to levy a tax upon all winning bets placed by members of the public and to deliver the proceeds to the said proprietors for their use or benefit. Your humble petitioner has thus been unlawfully taxed at Wembley, Wimbledon and Wathamstow and

Whereas it has been enacted by Parliament that off-course Betting Duty be set at 8% divers persons and companies, namely Ladbrokes, William Hill, Mecca, Corals, Ansell & Sons and many others have imposed rates of tax in excess of 8% upon your humble petitioner and other good and loyal subjects and have converted the surplus to their own devices and benefit.

And all these taxes are taken contrary to protest, without the consent of those who are required to pay and without consideration and contrary to the laws, freedoms and customs of this Realm and Reckless of the authority of the honourable Commons in Parliament assembled.

Wherefore your petitioner prays your honourable House do put down those pernicious practices and do confirm and strengthen the laws of this Realm and the Authority of Parliament so that it be a punishable offence for any person to demand or receive any tax or like charge

(i) levied upon the public or any part thereof, for which no consideration is given or consent obtained, save as may be lawfully sanctioned by Parliament

(ii) as aforesaid in respect of any amount or rate of tax in excess of that laid down and approved by Parliament

And your petitioner, as in duty bound, will ever pray etc. . . .

To lie upon the Table.

Trainees (Dyslexia)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Garel-Jones.]*

3.20 am

Mr. James Paice (Cambridgeshire, South-East): Obviously, at this late hour, it is difficult to be grateful for everything, but I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to present this short Adjournment debate to bring to the attention of the House a matter which I believe is of great significance for a small number of people, who are, in their own way, very important. I refer to young people on youth training schemes who suffer from severe dyslexia, a malady which has been researched in some detail, but about which a great deal is still to be discovered.

Before explaining the problem more fully to the House, I should explain that the initial impetus for my inquiries came from problems experienced by a company of which I am a director, and which operates a managing agency for the youth training scheme.

Although I wish to approach the general aspects of the problem, I shall refer to a specific example and I am grateful to my right hon. Friend the Member for Suffolk, Coastal (Mr. Gummer) and to my hon. Friend the Member for Suffolk, Central (Mr. Lord) for their agreement to my using information pertaining to their constituencies.

One of the great strengths of the youth training scheme is the amount of effort that has been put in by the Manpower Services Commission, now the Training Commission, in ensuring the provision and the promotion of equal opportunity for all young people in YTS, and particularly the comprehensive range of special help which is provided for people with disabilities so that they should be able to achieve the same advantages from YTS training as their peers.

The commission's definition of disability includes moderate or severe learning difficulties, however, caused. The information which I wish to draw to the attention of the House and my hon. Friend the Minister shows that the highly commendable objective of the commission and the Government is being thwarted by the intransigence of at least one vocational examining body.

There are a number of occupations which are purely practical in nature and which a dyslexic worker could fulfil just as well as any other individual. Obviously, in terms of future advancement in the industry, illiteracy due to dyslexia can become a hindrance, but at the craft level, the ability to obtain and to practise the skills is unaffected by dyslexia.

The problem is that in some cases the vocational qualifications to demonstrate the skills can be achieved only by written examination. For example, I have here a total of four question papers put out in June 1988 by the City and Guilds of London Institute for an agriculture phase 2 exam. There is a total of 10 hours of written examinations.

I have read carefully every single question in those papers, and it is extremely difficult to conceive of a time when a working person would ever have to read one of those questions, let alone write down the information required, other than for the purposes of passing that examination. As my hon. Friend the Minister is aware, in

[Mr. James Paice]

agriculture the City and Guilds phase 2 is recognised as the appropriate qualification at craft level and was the final qualification under the agricultural apprenticeship offered by the Agricultural Training Board.

What is essential for the trainee and for a future employer is that the young person has demonstrated the level of knowledge and skill required. Obviously, an employer would wish to know if there are problems of illiteracy, but that is a matter separate from the assessment of skills.

The example I shall give demonstrates that all that could be achieved under this system is a failure of the examination paper with the result that any potential employer would almost certainly jump to the conclusion that the examination had been failed through ignorance rather than because of a fundamental problem of dyslexia, which is totally unrelated to the knowledge and skills involved in the occupation.

I should like to refer to the example of a young lad named Ian Hurren. He is a constituent of my hon. Friend the Member for Suffolk, Central. Ian has just completed a two-year youth training scheme in agriculture but he has not achieved any national vocational qualification, despite the view of the managing agent and staff of the agricultural college he attended that he is a student of exceptional ability. I have with me a catalogue of documents, including several letters. I have one from his original school, in which the senior teacher says:

"throughout his time at the school, he suffered from a form of dyslexia which presents him with considerable reading and, therefore, learning problems."

I also have a letter from the senior educational psychologist of Suffolk county council which states—this is significant—

"On a short form of the Weschler Adult Intelligence Scale, Ian's sub-test scores show wide variation. This can be readily attributed to his reading deficiency as those sub-tests which are more directly related to this are scored lower whilst the others are scored much higher. Indeed, on the block design sub-test, a measure of ability to analyse and synthesise, he scored maximum points and well within the allocated time limits. If this had been repeated throughout, Ian would be intellectually outstanding."

That demonstrates that that young lad has an inbuilt difficulty but that it would be totally unjustified and unwarranted to associate that with any lack of overall ability or intellect. That letter demonstrates the opposite. The same letter goes on:

"I recommend unreservedly that Ian is given some dispensation for formal academic examinations. There is a need for questions or instructions to be read to him for practical tests with the opportunity for repetition on request (perhaps pre-recorded magnetic tape) otherwise, an amanuensei is necessary."

Armed with information such as that, one would have expected notice to have been taken. Requests from the managing agent, the agricultural college and the Training Commission at headquarters level to the City and Guilds of London all met with a nil response. In a letter to the college it stated:

"I am afraid that our current policy regarding students with differing disabilities of dyslexia is quite firm in not permitting readers or amanuenses."

Yet the regulations of the City and Guilds of London state:

"in general the employment of readers or amanuensis is not permitted except where such activity could be shown to be a normal aspect of the job being examined. It is, however, usually possible for a candidate who is suffering from a temporary handicap such as a fractured wrist to be permitted the assistance of an amanuensis provided medical evidence is available."

In other words, if young Ian Hurren had conveniently broken his wrist the week before the examination, he could have taken it, had an amanuensis and nobody would have been any the wiser. Because he had a different problem, that was not allowed. No help was available other than the offer of extended time for the examination. The Dyslexia Association has told us that that is of no value to somebody who is genuinely suffering from dyslexia.

The House will not be surprised to note that, as a result of that intransigence, Ian did not take the exam formally. However, he sat it informally, with an amanuensis, under the auspices of the agricultural college. On the four papers to which I have referred, he achieved marks of 77 per cent., 69 per cent., 73 per cent., and 69 per cent.—a clear illustration of his ability.

That is but one example. I do not wish the House to believe that I have come to the debate with just one problem. I considered that I should illustrate the problem and bring it to the attention of the House and in particular of my hon. Friend the Minister.

I am aware that, because of the level of intransigence regarding the provision of amanuenses, it has been the practice of certain examination centres to provide an amanuensis and not to tell the City and Guilds of London. Many would say that that is a dishonest practice, but, in the circumstances, it is an understandable reaction.

I look forward to hearing what my hon. Friend says in reply. It is important to remind the House of the policy of the National Council for Vocational Qualifications. It is totally endorsed by the Training Commission in its codes of practice. The council states:

"key criteria for national vocational qualifications, of particular relevance to trainees with special needs, is that they should be based on the assessment of standards, free of definition of mode, place or pace of learning".

It goes on to state:

"any valid method of assessment which demonstrates that the competence under test has been achieved to the specified standard should be encouraged, for example, it may be possible to substitute oral questions for written ones."

Again it states:

"where a trainee's performance can be assisted with the use of mechanical aids such as typewriters or tape recorders, these should also be permitted".

As my hon. Friend knows, I have a total commitment to the youth training scheme and to the Government's efforts to provide opportunities for all young trainees, regardless of their backgrounds or personal problems. YTS has come a long way since it began. The advent of the National Council for Vocational Qualifications has added great depth and meaning to many qualifications that are available through YTS. It is now policy that, under the NCVQ, assessment must not become a barrier to achievement. I am sure that that view will be shared by all hon. Members. Sadly, though, as I have explained, there are individuals for whom it is very much a barrier.

Although there are practical occupations, it is absolutely essential that we have a vocational qualification system that allows skills and knowledge to be accurately assessed without them being hidden by other problems such as dyslexia. I am well aware that dyslexia is sometimes used as a means of hiding a lack of academic ability, but there are several genuine cases in which the

lack of an effective means of assessment—I have demonstrated one—can jeopardise a young person's career.

The charge of ignorance is often laid at the door of the dyslexic. I hope that the House will agree that that charge is totally unwarranted. The example that I quoted demonstrates that point. It is essential that we remove that slur from the dyslexic's existing list of problems.

I have quoted just one example from one industry. I have discussed the matter with the National Council for Vocational Qualifications. It assured me that it is a genuine and important problem across a whole range of practical occupations. It is important, not only to the lad to whom I have referred but to many other people, now and in the future, who embark on training within and outside the YTS, who will look to a form of assessment of their genuine skills. I hope that such opportunities for forms of assessment exist in future and that my hon. Friend will be able to give me some encouragement.

3.35 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. Patrick Nicholls): Despite the lateness of the hour, I compliment my hon. Friend the Member for Cambridgeshire, South-East (Mr. Paice) on choosing this subject for debate, for the way that he has introduced it and for the detail that he has given us. I am grateful to him for his courtesy in giving me a detailed idea of the sort of material that he would be bringing before the House.

It might help the House if I outline briefly where the youth training scheme programme stands and then try to pick up the points that my hon. Friend has made in the time that remains available to me. We can all agree that the YTS has been a remarkable achievement. We spend over £1 billion a year on YTS, and 70 per cent. of 16-year-old school leavers and a growing proportion of 17-year-olds who leave school are involved in the scheme. In many parts of the country, and for many industries, YTS has become the normal route into work for those who do not go into some form of further or higher education. The YTS offers a sustained and well-structured vocational training course with on and off the job training and the opportunity to study for relevant vocational qualifications.

The figures show that the scheme is working. For example, 80 per cent. of young people who have been trained through YTS say that they found it worth while, and over 75 per cent., when we follow them up three months later, say that they are in a job or going into some form of further education.

An important development in YTS is the provision for YTS trainees to work for nationally recognised vocational qualifications. That is at the heart of tonight's debate. All trainees on two-year YTS have the opportunity to work for nationally recognised qualifications or, at the least, a credit towards one, and 98 per cent. of trainees who have gone on to a second year in YTS went in for a qualification in their first year. It is the aim that trainees with different needs and abilities should be able to proceed at their own pace. That brings me on to young people on YTS with disabilities and special training needs.

From the start, YTS has always made provision for young people with disabilities. "Disabilities" is widely defined, and includes those who suffer from dyslexia. There are a number of ways in which special help is made available on YTS to enable such young people to take full advantage of the opportunities that are offered, and to compete on equal terms with their peers. We are much aware of the need to ensure equality of access to vocational qualifications. We established the National Council for Vocational Qualifications in 1986 to reform the qualification system and make qualifications more relevant to work. The council is addressing this task by giving its kitemark—the NVQ—only to qualifications that reflect competence to do the job.

It is a corollary of that that those who are competent should not be prevented from gaining or even taking a qualification because of a disability which is irrelevant to their chosen occupation. Where an examination is intended to measure a practical skill, the NCVQ may well ask the examining body to consider testing techniques other than a written examination to ensure equality of access to the qualification.

My hon. Friend the Member for Cambridgeshire, South-East will understand that I cannot comment specifically on the particular instances that he has in mind. However, the relevant awarding body has submitted the qualification in agriculture to the NCVQ for accreditation and the council has given the qualification a conditional accreditation at level 1 of the NCVQ framework. Conditional accreditation means that the qualification substantially meets the NCVQ's criteria but that certain improvements need to be made to bring the qualification fully into line with the council's requirements. I understand that the conditions in the case to which my hon. Friend referred relate to whether the qualification is a valid measure of competence in the job.

I am sure that my hon. Friend the Member for Cambridgeshire, South-East will understand also that I cannot preface my remarks by talking specifically about the case that he has in mind that involves the NCVQ, but there are a number of points, subject to that caveat, to which I can helpfully draw attention.

My hon. Friend mentioned amanuenses, and quoted from a letter written by the City and Guilds of London Institute, which stated, in effect, that it is not current policy to provide amanuenses. Perhaps my hon. Friend derived some comfort from that. That use of "current" suggests that there might be the possibility of change.

My hon. Friend spotted in the correspondence, as I did, the reference to it being possible to provide extra time in most instances. Without commenting on the particular case, it may be that because of the disability, as my hon. Friend said, the provision of extra time is wholly inapplicable. One can imagine, without stretching credulity too far, being given an extra half an hour to sit an examination in Spanish, which is not much use if one does not speak Spanish or wish to learn it.

I had a look at the various examination boards that deal with academic subjects. Until now, it has not been the practice of the Oxford and Cambridge board to allow the use of an amanuensis, but it intends to do so from 1990. The northern examination board already provides for dyslexics to be able to use its facilities. There might be the rather bizarre result that somebody could do their O and A levels on the northern examination board, go to university, use the facilities of an amanuensis there, graduate with a first-class degree in ergonomics or agriculture, go to the finest agricultural college in the land —Seale-Hayne, in my constituency—leave it with a first-class examination qualification, be competent to get a job running a substantial estate, but, because of dyslexia,

[Mr. Patrick Nicholls]

be incapable of being an agricultural craftsman. That may be reductio ad absurdum, but it is a point that one should bear in mind.

Without commenting on the merits of the case that we are discussing, it might be said that a farm worker should be sufficiently literate because of the requirements of the health and safety legislation. If we were to say that no one should be entitled to work on a farm unless they were literate to that extent, I am not sure what it would do to agriculture, but I certainly have my suspicions. It would be bizarre if a graduate manager were able to work on a farm but not an agricultural worker.

My hon. Friend made two telling points. He mentioned the ludicrous proposition that if Mr. Hurren had broken his wrist he would have been able to avail himself of the services of an amanuensis and pass his examinations. My hon. Friend said that this young man had a trial run and passed with flying colours. Mr. Hurren is a young man of proven ability in his chosen job. He is of substantial intellectual ability that is incapable of being measured in conventional terms. He has secured the support of the college where he studies, and I understand from my hon. Friend that he has secured a job. He was obviously capable of convincing his employer that he was capable of operating at a high level.

My hon. Friend is concerned that facilities that would be available to those in middle-class cerebral occupations —where one might have thought that the necessity for literacy would be greater—are being denied to somebody who is in a more manual occupation. It is no secret that hon. Members who have made substantial contributions to our deliberations over the years—sometimes in government—have suffered from dyslexia. In a middle-class way, they have been able to compensate for their disability and have made a substantial contribution.

I prefaced my remarks—I make no apologies for doing so—by saying that it would be inappropriate for me to comment on the circumstances of this specific case. I cannot fail to be impressed not only by the way in which my hon. Friend advanced his case but by the struggles that this young man has had, and the creditable efforts he has made to equip himself for life. I have tried to say something to my hon. Friend other than mere pious platitudes and compliments. As a result of the debate, I shall read *Hansard* and write to the City and Guilds of London Institute telling it of my concern about the debate and drawing it to its attention. I shall ensure that the Training Commission and NCVQ understand the concern that has been expressed in the debate.

Certainly, even at this late hour—or it may be an early hour—if the effect of the debate is to ensure that such young people have the ability to qualify for tasks that they are obviously capable of doing, the fact that one or two of us may have slightly blurry eyes will be a small price to pay.

Once again, I thank my hon. Friend for giving us the opportunity to consider this subject.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at sixteen minutes to Four o'clock.

House of Commons

Tuesday 26 July 1988

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

BRITISH WATERWAYS (NO. 2) BILL *[Lords]*
Order for Third Reading read.
To be read the Third time tomorrow.

LONDON DOCKLANDS RAILWAY (BECKTON) BILL
Order for consideration read.
To be considered tomorrow.

BRITISH RAILWAYS (NO. 2) BILL *(By Order)*
Order for consideration read.
To be considered tomorrow.

HARWICH HARBOUR BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*
Order for Second Reading read.
To be read a Second time tomorrow.

Oral Answers to Questions

DEFENCE

NATO (Conventional Stability Talks)

1. **Mr. Harry Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Defence Ministers have had concerning a mandate for the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation negotiators at the forthcoming conventional stability talks.

6. **Mr. David Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Defence Ministers have had concerning a mandate for the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation negotiators at the forthcoming conventional stability talks.

The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. George Younger): NATO Heads of State and Government set out their approach to conventional arms control at their summit on 2 March this year. We have regular discussions with our NATO partners concerning the translation of this overall approach into NATO proposals for tabling at the conventional stability talks which we hope will begin later this year.

Mr. Ewing: I congratulate the Secretary of State on holding on to his job yesterday when all around were losing theirs. Is he aware that that is the second narrow escape that he has had in the past 12 months?

Will the Secretary of State now finally accept the need for demilitarised zones as a contribution towards preserving world peace and reducing the risks of war? Is he aware that, in the next decade, the West German armed conscript forces will be reduced by 40 per cent. because of demographic changes? Against that background, is it not now vital that we establish demilitarised zones and negotiate for extensive disarmament in conventional weapons?

Mr. Younger: As the hon. Gentleman knows, the Government are pursuing disarmament most vigorously and, unlike all their predecessors, are achieving successful results in doing so. We are taking an active role in working out a mandate for the conventional disarmament talks. It is on our text that the discussion is now taking place. I cannot share the hon. Gentleman's enthusiasm for demilitarised zones. They are wholly unenforceable and, therefore, not something that we should approach.

Mr. Marshall: Will the Secretary of State tell the House whether the European Community's Foreign Ministers have welcomed Mr. Gorbachev's suggestion of a pan-European summit to reduce conventional forces in Europe? Is it only the Government's refusal to include in the talks dual-capable weapons that is standing in the way of NATO's mandate and of an agreement?

Mr. Younger: No, I do not agree with the hon. Gentleman. The preparations for the talks are going well. Discussions are proceeding principally on the text of the Western proposals. As the hon. Gentleman probably

knows, the inclusion of dual-capable systems will depend on whether their conventional role is applicable to the talks. That is not an obstacle to proceeding.

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg: As the European pillar of the NATO Alliance, does my right hon. Friend envisage any part being played by the Western European Union?

Mr. Younger: Yes. As my hon. Friend knows, we are now in the chair of the Western European Union and, in the course of our year's chairmanship, we shall encourage the WEU to make a contribution towards strengthening the European pillar of the Alliance and forwarding the disarmament talks.

Mr. Forman: Is there any hard evidence available to my right hon. Friend and to his NATO Defence Minister colleagues that, as a consequence of the internal changes that are in train in the Soviet Union, the Soviet Government are now more amenable than they have been over the years to appropriate reductions in conventional weapons on each side?

Mr. Younger: The new atmosphere in Moscow is more conducive that the previous atmosphere to achieving reductions in weapons, including conventional weapons. However, I am afraid that at this stage there is no sign of any reduction, or even easing, in the growth of military expenditure in the Soviet Union. We hope to see that, but there is no evidence of it yet.

Mr. O'Neill: Does the Secretary of State agree that it is a sad day when the French and German Foreign Ministers are prepared to accept the need for conventional cuts of the kind that have been suggested, but the British Government are not willing to enter into the spirit of the new hopes that many have for relations with the Soviet Union? Therefore, will the Secretary of State explain to the Foreign Secretary that there is scope for European initiatives as well as NATO initiatives on conventional talks and conventional cuts?

Mr. Younger: There is scope for ideas and initiatives from anyone involved in these processes, but it would be extremely disruptive of the opportunity to make progress in the talks if we were to start separate talks on other bases at the same time as we prepare for these major and important talks.

Spare Parts (Labelling)

3. **Mr. Riddick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what evidence he has on the effect on prices charged of his Department's policy of requiring suppliers to stick a two-tier price label on packages of spare parts; and if he will make a statement.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement (Mr. Tim Sainsbury): Last year the Department introduced the requirement for spares to be price-labelled. This initiative is part of the Ministry's drive to ensure value for money in defence procurement. Price labelling will provide a further check against possible overcharging for spares by contractors and improve cost awareness among our personnel. It is much too early to quantify the benefits that will be obtained.

Mr. Riddick: Is my hon. Friend aware that in practice in some cases the labelling requirement is resulting in higher prices being quoted to the Ministry of Defence? Is he aware that a company of my acquaintance made two quotes, one without the labelling requirement and one with the labelling requirement at a 5 per cent. premium, and the MOD contracts office accepted the higher price? Is there not a case for introducing greater flexibility into the system?

Mr. Sainsbury: I am sure my hon. Friend will understand that adding a small additional piece of information to a label that is already required is likely to result in a negligible increase in cost in the vast majority of cases. If particular difficulties are associated with one product, we are prepared to discuss that with the supplier, but, overall, we see major benefits which would greatly exceed the small extra cost of putting that information on the label.

Mr. Nicholas Brown: That is not the only anomaly in the Ministry of Defence's procurement policy. Is the Minister aware that his Department told the Public Accounts Committee that it

"sought to avoid getting into a situation where one"——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman must not quote. Paraphrase, please.

Mr. Brown: Is the Minister aware that his Department told the Public Accounts Committee that it sought to avoid a situation where one contractor was supplying all the frigate procurement package in order to make long-term savings and then went on to place the entirety of the frigate procurement package with one yard in direct contradiction to what was said to the Public Accounts Committee? How does the Minister account for that?

Mr. Sainsbury: We have capable frigates on order, and I scarcely think that they fall into the category of spares.

Mr. Page: Price labelling will help to give value for money on the £2 billion-plus spares order for military equipment and prevent scandals such as occurred in the United States with the $1,200 ashtray and the $1,500 toilet seat, but does my hon. Friend agree that more could be saved by avoiding small uneconomic batch ordering and looking more closely at the quantities that are being ordered?

Mr. Sainsbury: My hon. Friend has a good point. We are looking at the size and frequency of each order, but, as he is clearly aware, there is a large spend on spares—over £2 billion—and we must ensure that we avoid the sorts of instances that have been reported from the United States, where, to give another example, a list of stores contained what was called a multi-directional impact device priced at $400, which, on closer examination, turned out to be a hammer.

Royal Dockyards

4. **Mr. Pike:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if, in the light of the projected redundancies at Devonport and Rosyth, he will reconsider the balance between the core programme and unallocated work for the royal dockyards.

10. **Mr. Ray Powell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if, in the light of the projected redundancies at

Devonport and Rosyth, he will reconsider the balance between the core programme and unallocated work for the royal dockyards.

Mr. Sainsbury: With permission, Mr. Speaker, I will answer questions Nos. 4 and 11 together.

The balance between the core and unallocated programmes is kept under regular review.

Mr. Pike: Does the Minister accept that since privatisation it has been proved that the Government gave incorrect information at that time? Has not half the work force been destroyed in job terms since privatisation, and is it not a fact that another 1,500 jobs are in jeopardy at the Portsmouth repair yard? Will the Government reconsider the question of allocation and look at the situation again in order to safeguard the remaining jobs?

Mr. Sainsbury: I totally reject the hon. Gentleman's suggestion that we gave inaccurate information. We gave the information on job losses that was available to us at the time. The level of employment in the dockyard is a matter for DML. I am surprised that the hon. Gentleman should suggest that we re-examine the balance between the core and unallocated programmes, because about two dozen firms throughout the country benefit from the jobs provided by the unallocated programme. It would be totally inappropriate and destructive of our urge to seek greater competition to deprive them of the opportunity of tendering for that part of the work that is in the unallocated programme.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Minister mentioned question No. 11, but I believe that he meant question No. 10.

Mr. Powell: Have not the Government's assurances to the Devonport workers before privatisation proved to be more useless than a bent penny? They were promised 60 per cent. of the core naval refit and repair programme, but that work has since been slashed. Will the Government give an assurance that the cuts made to the naval refit programme will be reviewed and that some jobs will be saved?

Mr. Sainsbury: I apologise to the House, Mr. Speaker. We have had rather a large number of changes in questions. I should have referred to question No. 10.

It was known at the time of the contractorisation tender that we were maintaining a core programme to give a base work load for the new contractors. The royal dockyards, DML and BTL have an opportunity to tender for the work that is in the unallocated programme. As I have already said, it would be totally wrong to take that work back into the core programme and deprive a large number of other ship repair yards of the opportunity of obtaining work from the Ministry of Defence.

Mr. Robert Hicks: Is my hon. Friend aware that there is still genuine anxiety locally about dockyard capability to respond in an emergency? If he is not prepared to increase the core programme, will he consider lifting the artificial restraint placed on the dockyards in respect of the allocated work?

Mr. Sainsbury: I appreciate that there is concern in my hon. Friend's constituency about the dockyard's work load. As I have said previously, we keep under review the ship repair industry's total capacity, which covers not only the royal dockyards but the private sector as well. One of the factors taken into account is the opportunity in an emergency to transfer workers from refitting to repair work, because that could provide a considerable surge capacity. In those circumstances, we are confident that there is sufficient capacity in the dockyards to meet any crisis.

Mr. Brazier: Will my hon. Friend confirm that the purpose of offering all that repair work for tender is to obtain the best possible value for money for the Royal Navy rather than to provide local jobs in any particular area? Will he further confirm that the remaining core programme for Devonport is of a size and scope that almost any other naval repair facility in Europe would greatly envy?

Mr. Sainsbury: We have a substantial capacity in both the former royal dockyards and in the private sector, which we believe is sufficient to meet the Royal Navy's needs and to ensure that its ships are maintained to the usual high standards.

Mr. Douglas: Will the Minister review what he has been saying to the House, in the light of the evidence given to the Public Accounts Committee and to the Select Committee on Defence about the rate of redundancies at Devonport and Rosyth? Will he confirm that the rate of redundancies at Devonport is far in excess of what was anticipated, and that the crux of the matter is that the core programme has been diminished and the dockyard at Devonport has not found itself capable of obtaining additional work? We are finding it difficult to keep up an adequate repair and maintenance service in the Navy. Will he come clean on the issue?

Mr. Sainsbury: I assure the hon. Gentleman and the House that we are confident that we have an adequate ship repair capacity throughout the country in both the public and the private sectors. We have ample capacity to meet any surge of demand in a crisis, for the reasons that I have already advanced.

There has indeed been a more rapid rate of job loss than originally anticipated. We have discussed the matter in the House. The reasons include the lower maintenance needs of modern ships, as the hon. Gentleman is well aware. The total naval work load has been reduced, and that has been reflected in a more rapid reduction in the number of jobs available at Devonport than was first envisaged.

Challenger Tank (Replacement)

5. **Mr. Fatchett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to decide on a replacement for the Challenger tank; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Younger: The Challenger tank entered service in 1984, and deliveries to equip a total of seven regiments will not be completed until the end of the decade. We have no plans at present to replace Challenger.

Mr. Fatchett: We seem to go through this process of questioning every month. At the Vickers factory in Leeds there appears to be an unfortunate hiatus in orders for the new Challenger tanks and in their development. If an order is not placed before long, 700 jobs will be lost at the factory. Is the Secretary of State at all concerned about the potential loss of jobs in Leeds, or is he happy to allow the order to go to its German and American counterparts?

Mr. Younger: There is no question of that at present. As the hon. Gentleman knows, we are considering whether we can replace the Chieftain tank and, if so, with what tank we should replace it. We hope that there will be competition and that the Leeds factory will feel able to put in a competitive bid for whatever orders are put out to tender. We hope to decide what to do before the end of the year.

Mr. Wilkinson: Can my right hon. Friend assure the House that in making that important decision, which is overdue for the Army, he will take into consideration the potential of dedicated battlefield anti-tank helicopters against armour?

Mr. Younger: I thank my hon. Friend for his suggestion. We are looking widely at the whole range of methods by which we can deal with the threat from enemy armour. One is the provision of effective tanks, but there are other alternatives, and I shall not rule out what he has said.

Mr. Duffy: The Secretary of State's reply, that he has no successor programmes in hand, is very alarming. He must know that the last significant British development in tank technology was announced by a Labour Government, in respect of Chobham armour. There has been nothing of significance since, although, as the right hon. Gentleman will know, the Soviets have made significant developments over the past two years. As his hon. Friend the Member for Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Wilkinson) has just reminded him, that also applies to anti-tank weaponry.

Mr. Younger: That is perfectly true, and that is why we are examining the choices that we can make for the replacement of Chieftain and whether we can afford it.

Mr. Wiggin: Does my right hon. Friend accept, when taking advice on the matter, that the great weight of anti-tank weaponry possessed by all sides in a future battle is likely to make the tank about as effective as the horse was at the beginning of the last war? Will he be very careful before he proceeds to spend large sums on future tank technology?

Mr. Younger: I appreciate that there are various ways of dealing with the threat from tanks, but I do not think that I would subscribe to my hon. Friend's description of the tank as being quite so ineffective.

Mr. Wallace: Is not the delay in placing orders for Challenger tanks and coming forward with a replacement programme for Chieftain a symptom of the problems that the Secretary of State faces in trying to get his defence budget to match? He is postponing important decisions. Now that such a distinguished Conservative Back Bencher as the right hon. and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan) has advocated a defence review, does he not think that it is time to take that advice?

Mr. Younger: I do not agree. As there was no question in the past of further tank orders, we are now considering what to do about replacing the Chieftain tank. We review the defence programme every year and balance resources with the programme. This year is no exception.

Mr. Patnick: If and when my right hon. Friend considers a replacement for the Chieftain tank, will he bear in mind that the tracks and turret are made in a subsidiary of a Sheffield firm, William Cook plc? Will he take that fact into account in ensuring that the best possible equipment is obtained for the British Army?

Mr. Younger: I thank my hon. Friend for drawing my attention to that fact. It would be for the makers to decide whether subcontractors should be employed to do the work. I have no doubt that in due course that my hon. Friend will be drawing that fact to the attention of the makers of the tank.

Front-line Aircraft

8. **Mr. Buckley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his estimate of the current proportion of the Royal Air Force's front-line aircraft which are not fully operational.

13. **Mr. Soley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his estimate of the current proportion of Royal Air Force front-line aircraft which are not fully operational.

The Minister of State for the Armed Forces (Mr. Archie Hamilton): It has been the policy of successive Governments not to provide detailed information about the operational readiness of elements of the armed forces. However, I can assure the hon. Members that all Royal Air Force aircraft assigned to operational duties are fully manned and equipped and thus able to undertake their designated missions.

Mr. Buckley: The Select Committee on Defence has reported that, despite the high cost of the maintenance and repair budget, one third to one half of the front-line defence aircraft are not available. Is that not dangerous and deplorable, and is it not yet another example of the Ministry of Defence procuring expensive equipment and then having to spend large sums of money on repairing and maintaining it?

Mr. Hamilton: I think that the hon. Gentleman is referring to the Tornado aircraft. It is customary to have reserve aircraft, although I accept that the number of Tornado aircraft in reserve is very high. These aircraft are due to be modified at the end of the production run. I expect them to come on stream in the early 1990s.

Mr. Soley: No Opposition Member will be surprised to learn that the Conservatives have consistently refused to give such information, even though it is readily available to research workers at airports around the world. Will he say whether some of the operational failures are due to the lack of Foxhunter radar? Does he intend to return to the bizarre idea of filling the noses of some of the aeroplanes with concrete, with which, presumably, to ram our opponents?

Mr. Hamilton: The hon. Gentleman knows that in 1984-85 the non-availability of Foxhunter radar meant that the programme had to be rescheduled. That is why we are now operating according to the availability of both radar and pilots to fly the aircraft.

Sir Antony Buck: I congratulate my hon. Friend on his front-line appointment and wish him a long and happy tenure in his office.

Will he ensure that pressure is put on the Royal Air Force to make sure that a larger number of aircraft that at all times are operational are in service? Will he keep up pressure to that effect on the Royal Air Force?

Mr. Hamilton: I am grateful to my hon. and learned Friend for his kind remarks.

The intention is that the aircraft should operate at maximum efficiency. That is why we are not prepared to bring the reserve aircraft into service until they have been modified.

Sir Ian Lloyd: The ratio is of great significance, but what is the point of either the Royal Air Force or NATO maintaining a high ratio of operational aircraft if they are unable to communicate with each other in times of war, except through a third party, or if they are unable to be rearmed on the aerodromes of another allied nation or if, because of the current disastrous IFF position, a very large proportion are likely to be shot down by our own forces?

Mr. Hamilton: My hon. Friend confirms the remark that I made, which was that the operational efficiency of those aircraft must be supreme before we are prepared to let them fly.

Mr. Rogers: May I offer my congratulations to the Minister and welcome him back to quiet pastures.

The Defence Select Committee has rightly pointed out on a number of occasions in the past year that the Government's defence procurement programme is a shambles. When will the Government acknowledge that many of our front-line aircraft and other services are unable to meet a threat that may come at any time?

Mr. Hamilton: I thank the hon. Gentleman for his kind remarks.

That is precisely the point that I have been trying to make. In practice, it is very important to ensure that those aircraft maintain operational effectiveness on the front line. That is why aircraft that do not meet that requirement are kept in reserve.

Low-frequency Sonar

11. **Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what research is being done into low-frequency sonar for defence purposes.

Mr. Sainsbury: Low-frequency passive sonar is already in use with the Royal Navy. The Ministry of Defence is currently conducting a research programme into low-frequency active sonar and its potential applications. That work is being undertaken within the Ministry of Defence research establishments. For security reasons it would not be appropriate to comment on the specific research projects.

Mr. Cousins: Does the Minister accept that there has been a dangerous weakening in Britain's anti-submarine defences because of the declining effectiveness of towed array sonar and the hydrophone barrier? Will the Minister therefore give the research into long range low-frequency active sonar to which he has just referred the utmost priority and accompany it with design studies into a new generation of ships that are capable of deploying it?

Mr. Sainsbury: The hon. Gentleman was not very accurate in referring to the declining effectiveness of towed array sonar. The towed array sonars in use are very effective. What has changed is that the latest Soviet submarines are a great deal quieter than earlier generations.

With regard to the platforms from which we might deploy low-frequency active sonar, it is too early to make any decision. We can make a decision on the appropriate platform only after a decision on the sonar itself has been arrived at. As the hon. Gentleman knows, low frequency sonar exists in a number of forms. Some of them—like the sonar systems currently in service—could be fitted to existing or planned warships.

Mr. Harry Greenway: When does my hon. Friend expect to be in a position to make the decision to which he has referred, and when will the order for new sonar buoys be placed? Will he remember that the firm of Dowty's in my constituency has always done a brilliant job in such matters?

Mr. Sainsbury: I am aware of the contribution made by firms in my hon. Friend's constituency to our sonar capacity. We have a steady programme of new sonar buoys and sonar equipment. The particular type of sonar involved in the question is currently the subject of a major research programme and has not yet reached the stage where we can make a decision to purchase.

NATO (Expenditure)

12. **Mr. Clay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he next expects to discuss with NATO colleagues the relative share of military expenditure borne by individual countries within the Alliance.

Mr. Younger: I shall have a number of opportunities later in the year for discussion with NATO colleagues on the sharing of risks, roles and responsibilities within the Alliance, including at the defence planning committee in December.

Mr. Clay: Why is the Secretary of State being so acquiescent and weak-willed about the United States' demands that Britain and other European members should pay a higher proportion of NATO's costs? Has he ever pointed out to the United States—or will he point out to the United States—that Britain already pays disproportionately high amounts of NATO's costs? Are the British Government bailing out President Reagan's economic incompetence, with his budget and trade deficits? Most of NATO's policy decisions are made in the interests of the United States, so why does the Secretary of State not suggest that the United States pays most of the costs?

Mr. Younger: The United States does pay most of the costs. It pays more than any other member of NATO. It is worth noting that it does so because it takes the view that it is in the interests of defending the United States that Europe should be sound and solidly defended. It is my view, and that of the whole Alliance, that the European members should do more than they do at present, and I shall be encouraging them to do so.

Mr. Dykes: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the American request is entirely reasonable and that the European countries should respond? Bearing in mind that there is already limited discreet French co-operation on air

defence and related matters, although the French are not members of the military command, is my right hon. Friend confident that that can be extended, by a further limited amount at least, so that the pressure on the other contributors can be mitigated?

Mr. Younger: The European members of the Alliance have a major role to play in ensuring the defence of western Europe. The United States has drawn attention to that, and that matter has been dealt with by a NATO Alliance initiative to set in hand a study of the relative shares of the burden carried by Europeans and the United States. We hope to get a report of that study by the end of the year.

Mr. Sean Hughes: In view of the financial implications of our respective defence policies, will the Secretary of State tell us whether the Government believe that conventional parity is compatible with flexible response?

Mr. Younger: Yes, it is a very compatible aim that we should get conventional weapons on each side down to parity, or much nearer to parity, while the whole question of the flexible response enables us to have a variable range of different types of major weapon to respond to whatever threat comes.

Mr. John M. Taylor: Does my hon. Friend agree that it is most important that the United States, as the largest contributor to NATO by far, should be reassured that Europe is prepared not merely to contribute to its own defence but to pay for it as well?

Mr. Younger: I quite agree with my hon. Friend. It is remarkable that the United States is not only a full member of NATO but plays the largest part in providing resources for all of us to defend western Europe. That solidarity and that linkage across the Atlantic have prevented war for 40 years, and if the policy is maintained I see no reason why it should not continue to do that.

Nuclear Test Site (Nevada)

14. **Mr. Heffer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the likely continued availability of Nevada as a test site for British nuclear weapons and as to the factors which will influence this.

Mr. Sainsbury: Her Majesty's Government are satisfied that the Nevada test site will continue to be available for as far ahead as we can foresee. Any change to that position would have to be considered in the light of the needs and circumstances pertaining at the time.

Mr. Heffer: Is the Minister aware that it is now 43 years since Hiroshima was bombed? Is it not time that we worked towards a comprehensive test ban treaty? Is it not also time that we stopped following the United States of America, made our own decisions and recognised that we do not really have an independent nuclear deterrent? We are very much dependent upon the United States of America, and we ought to start declaring some independence from it.

Mr. Sainsbury: As the hon. Gentleman knows, we continue to play a leading role in efforts towards balanced and verifiable disarmament. That will continue to be the policy of Her Majesty's Government. In that policy we are fully supported by the whole of the NATO Alliance, which, as my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has just said, shares the view that there is a need for flexible response.

Mr. John Marshall: Will my hon. Friend look at the question again and note that it is interesting that the hon. Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer) should be worried about whether we shall continue to be able to test our nuclear deterrent? Does that not show a scintilla of sense that is unusual in the hon. Member for Walton?

Mr. Sainsbury: I have some sympathy with my hon. Friend's view. The hon. Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer) has his own special views on nuclear deterrence—to my mind he does not fully appreciate the nature of deterrence—and his views may be quite widely shared on the Opposition Benches.

Disabled Ex-Service Personnel

15. **Mr. Ashley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received regarding ex gratia payments for ex-service men and women seriously disabled by alleged negligence before 8 December 1986.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces (Mr. Roger Freeman): A number of representations have been received from the right hon. Gentleman and others.

Mr. Ashley: Does the Minister agree that every service man and woman now has a right to sue for compensation if he or she is disabled as a result of negligence and that that right was won partly by the campaigning efforts of a group of severely disabled ex-service men who, ironically, are denied that right? Will the Minister reconsider his refusal to set up a trust fund to make ex gratia payments to ex-service men who are disabled but who do not have the right to sue?

Mr. Freeman: I can confirm to the right hon. Gentleman that service men and women now have the right to sue for negligence. I pay tribute to him and to many other right hon. and hon. Members for the campaign that was waged to draw attention to this inequity. As was made clear during proceedings in the House, we have no intention of making that repeal retrospective, and that includes the application of the trust fund. But I can confirm that those ex-service men and women to whom he referred receive benefit payments from the DHSS and from the Ministry of Defence.

Mr. David Martin: Will my hon. Friend tell the House how many serving men and women have made claims for damages since December 1986?

Mr. Freeman: Yes. Since 8 December 1986 some 250 service men and women have made claims for damages and those cases are now in course of settlement.

Mr. Cohen: Have not many of the nuclear test veterans and their families suffered terribly purely in the course of serving their country? Should not the Government provide proper compensation for those families?

Mr. Freeman: The Government maintain that there is no evidence of any causal link between the nuclear tests

that took place in Australia in the 1950s and any injuries or disease that may or may not be suffered by service men and women.

Mr. Alexander: If there is negligence, surely an ex-service man or service men ought to be entitled to sue? What is so magical about the cut-off date? Is not the cut-off date causing grave damage and disturbance to those members of the services who otherwise would have perfectly valid claims?

Mr. Freeman: That was just the reason why the Government decided to repeal the law to permit service men and women, effectively from 8 December 1986, to sue for damages, so I agree with my hon. Friend, but we cannot turn the clock back and make that repeal retrospective.

F111 Aircraft (Cruise Missiles)

16. **Mr. Mullin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent discussions he has had with his United States counterpart about the possibility of F111s stationed in the United Kingdom carrying air-launched cruise missiles.

Mr. Younger: The United States Defence Secretary and I met at the NATO nuclear planning group meeting in April, when Ministers discussed the need to keep the Alliance's forces properly structured and up to date. No decisions on NATO force adjustments have yet been taken.

Mr. Mullin: Has the Secretary of State seen the report in the recent Jane's *Defence Weekly*, which says that a fleet of Amrican FB 111A planes will be stationed here in 1989-90 and that they will be armed with short-range attack missiles and air-launched cruise missiles? Is that not a cynical attempt to subvert the recent arms control treaties?

Mr. Younger: I did see some report of that nature, but there is no truth in it. NATO is still considering a number of options for adjusting its remaining nuclear forces following the INF agreement. Options include possible redeployment to a number of European countries of longer-range dual-capable aircraft currently based in the United States, but no decisions have yet been taken. Deployment to Europe of strategic air-launched cruise missiles is not one of the matters under consideration.

Mr. Wilkinson: Does not the INF accord enhance the importance for deterrence of air-launched systems such as the F111s stationed in this country? Is it not important that they should be able to continue to penetrate Warsaw pact air defences?

Mr. Younger: Yes. My hon. Friend is perfectly correct. It is necessary that at all times we should have the capability in the NATO Alliance to respond to any level of attack. To do so we have to be able to penetrate Soviet territory. It is our policy to make sure that in the evolving situation of threat we are always able to do so.

Mr. O'Neill: In the light of the Secretary of State's reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Knowsley, South (Mr. Hughes), conventional balance and flexible response are compatible. Is it not the case that it logically flows from that statement that the right hon. Gentleman would be prepared to accept air-launched cruise missiles as part of that flexible response?

Mr. Younger: I was talking about air-launched strategic cruise missiles. I made it clear that that was not one of the options. I have already made it clear that among the options that we are considering for the possible replacement of our nuclear free-fall bombs is an air-launched, air-to-ground cruise missile. That is perfectly well known, and we are still studying whether it will be possible.

NATO Ships (Nuclear Weapons)

17. **Mr. Galloway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any plans to review with his colleagues in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation the number of nuclear weapons carried by North Atlantic Treaty Organisation ships; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Younger: NATO Ministers regularly review the nuclear forces available to the Alliance, including sea-based weapons.

Mr. Galloway: The Secretary of State would not be so complacent if he had read the recently published American report, entitled "Nuclear Warships and Naval Nuclear Weapons", which reveals that 16,000 nuclear bombs are currently sailing on the world's waterways—that is, 16,000 nuclear accidents waiting to happen in a nuclear traffic jam on the high seas. Does the right hon. Gentleman agree that, even within his policy, and even within his nuclear obsessions, there is a case for talking to the other side about a reduction in the sheer number of weapons that are currently sailing on the high seas?

Mr. Younger: I am sure that there must be better ways of trying to get headlines than that. The hon. Gentleman must come to terms with the fact that, as long as nuclear weapons exist, our security depends upon any aggressor being certain that it cannot attack us without the risk of receiving an attack in return. That is the basis of the maintenance of peace, which the Government and the NATO Alliance are successfully achieving at the moment.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Franks:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 26 July.

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House I shall be having further meetings later today, including one with Mr. Paul Obeng, chairman of the Committee of Secretaries of Ghana.

Mr. Franks: I take this opportunity to thank the Prime Minister, who, in stark contrast to the Leader of the Opposition, once again when abroad batted for Britain and for Barrow to try to secure the Canadian submarine order. After almost eight weeks on strike, pending further negotiations to settle the dispute, is it not time that local unions in Barrow balloted their members for a return to work?

The Prime Minister: I have great sympathy with what my hon. Friend said. I understand that management and unions are meeting today, and I hope that the dispute will be resolved. I share my hon. Friend's view that the strike is damaging to Britain and to our prospects of getting more orders from abroad. It is particularly damaging to Vickers, and it could even be damaging the prospect of getting more home orders, too.

Mr. Kinnock: Does the appointment of a new Secretary of State for Health mean that the Government are now ready to provide the actual cost of the nurses' pay award and the grading review?

The Prime Minister: Dividing the DHSS is something that many people have thought should have been done for some time. I was in the Ministry of Pensions and National Insurance when it was mooted that the two Departments should be put together. The two Departments together were more than one person could legitimately undertake. The burden was very great indeed, so we have separated them.

With regard to nurses' pay, as the right hon. Gentleman is aware, we have provided the full amount of £803 million estimated by the review body. We believe that that should be sufficient for a fair implementation of the new structural pay agreement, and we hope that regional health authorities and districts will get on with making that structural arrangement.

Mr. Kinnock: The pay review body said:

"the actual cost of our recommendations may well differ from our estimates".

Will the Prime Minister now give a specific undertaking that if the actual costs are higher than the estimates she will make up the difference, or is she again to betray nurses and patients?

The Prime Minister: We believe that the £803 million is sufficient to reach a fair implementation of the structural pay agreement. It is for the regions to determine how to allocate the funds to the districts. The main allocation of the central funds has already been made to the regions. It is for the regions to determine how to allocate funds to districts, because they are best placed to take account of local factors that may affect the outcome of the grading exercise. One of the problems is that the local health authorities are not getting on sufficiently rapidly with the regrading and, therefore, the nurses do not quite know where they are.

I remind the right hon. Gentleman of the cuts to nurses pay under the last Labour Government.

Mr. Nicholas Baker: Do my right hon. Friend and her newly enlarged Cabinet plan to introduce legislation to abolish oaths of allegiance being sworn to the Crown and to replace them with democratic oaths? Does she not regard such a proposal as disloyal, if not treacherous? Is she surprised that a Bill has been introduced by a group of Members of the Labour party who expect that their candidate will win the next Labour leadership election on that basis?

The Prime Minister: I think that my hon. Friend has made his own point very effectively indeed.

Dr. Owen: In view of the deplorably short sighted decision not to give any further financial support to the HOTOL project, will the Prime Minister agree, first, to declassify the patents and, secondly, if any other Government are prepared to come forward in a collaborative project, that this Government will also support HOTOL?

The Prime Minister: As the right hon. Gentleman knows, the HOTOL project is only in its very early research stages, but I think that a contrary impression may have been given in certain newspapers. It is a concept of a space plane to reduce the cost of launching satellites. There is no question of this country being able to finance the research or production of such an enormous project, which would be in the order of £4 billion to £6 billion. We think that our research moneys could far better go to many other projects which would help our own people far more.

Mr. Alexander: Following my right hon. Friend's recent involvement with the Tidy Britain Group, will she consider turning her energies towards the problems of noise in our streets? Does she agree that some of the noise coming from open car windows and transistors in the streets is deeply offensive and that legislation should now be considered to reduce that noise to much more acceptable levels?

The Prime Minister: I agree—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. We should hear the answer.

The Prime Minister: Answering from this Dispatch Box, I agree with my hon. Friend about noise and how very difficult it can be to make oneself heard.

With regard to a clean Britain, if people did not throw things down, had more personal pride and responsibility for their villages, towns and cities, and made less noise and objection to such an unexceptionable statement, we might have very much cleaner towns and cities.

Q2. **Mr. Andrew Welsh:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 26 July.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Welsh: As the Prime Minister in her reshuffle has now made the Secretary of State in charge of the Department of Health and Social Security half the Minister that he once was, will she now sort out the mess in the Scottish Office? Is she aware that, on the one hand, there is no Law Officer or Agriculture Minister who can participate in debates in the House and, on the other, the one-man band from Stirling, for example, is responsible for education, for health, for social work, for sport and so on? He is not very good at it. To those have now been added agriculture, forestry and fishing. Will she turn her attention to a sensible and organised form of government in Scotland, for the first time in decades?

The Prime Minister: The Scottish Office works extremely well under one of the best Scottish Secretaries of State that it has ever had. It has an excellent team—*[Interruption.]* I point out to the hon. Gentleman, if I can be heard through the noise, which is such an awful example to schoolchildren, that the Scottish earnings are the third highest in Britain.

Q3. **Mr. Andy Stewart:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 26 July.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Stewart: Does my right hon. Friend recall that, when she visited the Nottinghamshire coalfield in 1976 output stood at 2 tonnes per manshift? Today, under the leadership of the Union of Democratic Mineworkers, output has reached over 5 tonnes per manshift. Recently, the Black Diamond of Sherwood Thoresby colliery broke the European weekly record for deep-mined coal, at 61,700 tonnes. Will my right hon. Friend take time in the next year to visit Nottinghamshire to see for herself how the Notts miners are preparing to meet the challenge of privatisation of the electricity industry?

The Prime Minister: Yes, Sir. The record that my hon. Friend mentions is quite outstanding and it is a great tribute to the UDM and all of those who work in the coal mine. It puts miners in a very good position to meet the challenges of the next decade. I shall certainly try to come up next year and give them my personal best wishes on their marvellous record.

Mr. McAvoy: Is the Prime Minister aware of the widespread anger in the country at her appointment of the right hon. and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan) as European Commissioner? Is she further aware that that appointment is regarded by the overwhelming majority of people as a pay-off for silence during the Westland affair?

The Prime Minister: The nomination—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. I ask the House to listen to answers.

The Prime Minister: The nomination of my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan) is an excellent one——

Mr. Skinner: Why did the right hon. Lady sack him then?

The Prime Minister: I believe——

Mr. Speaker: Order. It is only fair that, when the Prime Minister has been asked a question, she is given an opportunity to answer it.

The Prime Minister: The Opposition cannot debate—they can only shout. That is why they shout. The nomination of my right hon. and learned Friend, the former Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, is an excellent one. I believe very strongly that we should put to Europe those who have had considerable experience of Cabinet office. My right hon. and learned Friend served in the Treasury as a Cabinet Minister, he served in the Home Office as a Cabinet Minister and he served in the Department of Trade and Industry as a Cabinet Minister. He will be very well placed to represent Britain at an extremely difficult and important time for the future of Europe and of the Commission. I hope that the Opposition will see fit to put up names that are as distinguished.

Q4. **Mr. Neil Hamilton:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 26 July.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Hamilton: As the secretary of the ANZAC group, may I wish my right hon. Friend a successful visit to Australia at the end of the week? Will she confirm that while she is there she will not make any speeches critical of the Leader of the Opposition, that she will not make any tasteless jokes about his wife, that she will not swear at any Australian soldiers and that she will behave with a dignity that will forever elude the Leader of the Opposition?

The Prime Minister: I have no difficulty in giving the confirmation that my hon. Friend seeks.

Q5. **Mr. Wallace:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 26 July.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Wallace: The Prime Minister will be aware that although the closure of Dounreay is being phased over many years the job loss implications are worrying for the north of Scotland. Is she aware that we will not be satisfied by being fobbed off with the idea of a nuclear dump in the north of Scotland? Indeed, it might discourage many of the employment opportunities that we shall now have to develop in that part of the country.

The Prime Minister: I hope the hon. Gentleman appreciates the strenuous efforts that we have made to phase out those job losses over a long period, because we are well aware of the problems of getting extra jobs in that area. I did not know that the hon. Gentleman was such an enthusiast for nuclear energy. With regard to Nirex, we have not yet received a report from that organisation about the disposal of some of the waste.

Foreign Terrorist Organisations

Q6. **Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Prime Minister what is Her Majesty's Government's policy with regard to foreign terrorist organisations known to be in regular contact with the IRA having offices in the United Kingdom.

The Prime Minister: The IRA is a proscribed organisation in this country, and anyone who has a meeting with members of the IRA may be liable to prosecution under section 1 of the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984.

Mr. Hunter: Since the IRA, the ANC and SWAPO, as exemplified by the statement made by Mr. Sam Nujoma in Dublin last November, not only show interest in one another but support one another's tactics, and bearing in mind that the ANC is responsible for the murder of 600 black South Africans in the past two to three years, is it right that London should be an open haven for South African terrorist organisations, which are the self-confessed friends of the IRA?

The Prime Minister: The information that my hon. Friend has given about the links between those organisations will, of course, be investigated. As he knows, the other organisations that he has mentioned are not proscribed in this country. Therefore, the tradition is that anyone is free to express his political views, provided that he does so within the law. Of course, we condemn violence from whatever quarter it comes in South Africa. The only way in which progress can be made is by peaceful negotiation. The current talks on Angola and Namibia are encouraging in that respect.

Select Committee Report

3.31 pm

Mr. Eric Martlew (Carlisle): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I wonder whether you would investigate a serious breach of the procedures of the House. I am talking about the pressure that has been put on the Chairman of a Select Committee by the Government to change a report arbitrarily without taking it to the Committee. Today there was a press conference on the Chernobyl report, which had been agreed by both sides of the Committee. The Chairman instructed the Clerk of the Committee to alter the report—[HON. MEMBERS: "Oh!"]—where it said that it was "highly probable" that lamb had got into the food chain. The Chairman instructed the Clerk to delete the word "highly", so the report reads only "probable". The only reason for that was that the Chairman had been got at by the Government. It is a disgrace.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Matters of that kind must be dealt with in the Committee. They cannot be dealt with by me. I call Mr. Harry Barnes to move his motion on the ten-minute Bill.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I call Mr. Harry Barnes.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. It is not a matter for me—[HON. MEMBERS: "It is."] Order. Matters relating to a Select Committee are for the Select Committee concerned. They must be taken up in the Select Committee.

Mr. Skinner: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. Is it not true that at some point Select Committees must report to the House and that on occasions those reports are debated? What my hon. Friend has said is that the Chairman of that Committee has doctored that report, on the advice of the Government. The report has been nobbled. That means that a report that will be presented to the House, under your stewardship, Mr. Speaker, has been nobbled by the Government. Of course it is a matter for you to investigate.

Mr. Speaker: I am not responsible for reports made by Select Committees. That must be a matter for the Committee concerned. If the Committee does not like what has happened, it can report to the House.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I call Mr. Wiggin.

Mr. Jerry Wiggin (Weston-super-Mare): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker, of which I was given no warning by a member of my Committee. I was informed by the Clerk of the Committee that there had been a misprint in the summary of recommendations—[HON. MEMBERS: "Oh!"] Accordingly, I directed that that change should be reported to a press conference that I held this morning.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: The Chairman of the Committee has given his explanation.

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. With great respect to you, I, and I believe the House, would be extremely grateful if you would review, with great accuracy—as I know you will—the words that you used about the responsibilities of Select Committees. I am sure that the House will recognise that the sole function of a Select Committee is to report to the House. The substance of the remarks of my hon. Friend the Member for Carlisle (Mr. Martlew) related to a report to the House.

Mr. Martlew: It has been published.

Mr. Douglas: Yes. Therefore, if that report has been put into the public domain, any consequential alteration of that report is a matter for you and the House. I ask you to take that on board.

Mr. Speaker: First, as I understand it, this is not the report of the Committee, but a summary of it given at a press conference. Secondly, the substance of a Select Committee report is for the whole Committee to agree. If the Committee feels that something has gone wrong and that an alteration, which the Chairman has said is a technical one, has been made, it is a matter for the Committee to investigate.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. While a Select Committee is considering a report it remains the property of that Committee, but once the report is published by the Committee—the report in question obviously has been published, because it was dealt with at a press conference—it is then reported to the House. The general rule is that until a Committee has concluded its deliberations the report remains its property and you, Mr. Speaker, would object to hon. Members referring to its contents on the Floor of the House.

That is not the case here. The report has been published, the Government have apparently brought their influence to bear on the final report and therefore it is the job of this Chamber to ensure that some sort of investigation is established, because——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Let me deal with this, because the House knows that this is an Opposition Day, and we should get on with the debate. The position is absolutely clear. The report that is made to the House cannot be altered except by the Committee. It is not open to any individual hon. Member to do that. That is the position.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I shall take the points of order, but there must be no complaint if hon. Members who wish to take part in the housing debate do not get called.

Mr. Neil Hamilton (Tatton): On a genuine point of order, Mr. Speaker. In *Hansard* yesterday you rightly said that you hoped that

"the whole House will always uphold the authority of the Chair. If that does not happen, anarchy becomes the order of the day".—[*Official Report*, 25 July 1988; Vol. 138, c. 33.]

It is clear that that is what is happening. In the Division yesterday, on a motion to support you in your decision to name a Member, only three Opposition Members supported you and 26 voted against you. How does that in any way square with your advice to the House that the whole House should uphold the authority of the Chair when, patently, only a minuscule number of Opposition Members are prepared to support you and nine times as many are prepared to oppose you?

Mr. Eric S. Heffer (Liverpool, Walton): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. In view of what my hon. Friend the Member for Carlisle (Mr. Martlew) said about the Select Committee report, I ask you to say that, for once, you will look into the matter, consider it and report back to the House, rather than taking a hasty decision based upon the fact that my hon. Friend may or may not have been right. This is a matter that should be decided by Back Benchers and the House. Surely, as the representative of Back Benchers, it is your duty to uphold the rights of all Members of the House.

Mr. Speaker: Undoubtedly it is, but I believe that the whole House feels that it would be wrong for the Speaker to assume responsibilities that he has not got. As the hon. Gentleman has pressed the matter, and so that we may get on with the debate, I shall look into it. However, I do not believe that it is my responsibility and, as I have already said, I believe that it is the responsibility of the Committee. Once a Committee has reported, it is not possible to alter its report.

Mr. Doug Hoyle (Warrington, North): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The time taken by points of order will have to be taken into account later in the day.

Mr. Hoyle: Does it not concern you, Mr. Speaker when it is being said that a Select Committee report has been tampered with by the Chairman of that Committee?

Mr. Speaker: I have said that I shall look into the matter.

Mr. Harry Ewing (Falkirk, East): The point of order raised by the hon. Member for Tatton (Mr. Hamilton) has provoked me to take this up with you, Mr. Speaker. I was a bit disappointed that you did not respond to that point of order. It seemed to me that the hon. Gentleman was trying to put you in a position in which you felt that you did not have the support of the Opposition. That is simply not true. It is very unfair of the hon. Member for Tatton to raise that sort of point of order and it should not go unanswered. It should be denied here and now.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the hon. Gentleman for what he has said. I assure the House that if I felt that I did not have the support of the whole House there would be no point in continuing.

Mr. David Curry (Skipton and Ripon): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. You should know that the hon. Member for Carlisle (Mr. Martlew) is suffering from amnesia. He should recall that it was said in the body of the report that it was "probable", and that the whole Committee agreed to exclude the word "highly". That reflects what is in the body of the report. The hon. Gentleman's amnesia betrays him, and he should not cast aspersions on the Chairman of the Committee.

Mr. Speaker: I have no knowledge of this report. I said in answer to the hon. Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer) that I would look into the matter, even though I do not think that it is really for me.

Petitioners' Rights

3.42 pm

Mr. Harry Barnes (Derbyshire, North-East): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to protect the signatories of petitions presented to any organisation or body outside the House of Commons from any penalty or discrimination, legal or otherwise.

The Bill that I seek to introduce is about petitioners' rights. Three of the greatest petitions ever presented to Parliament were the people's charters of the 19th century. They contained six points of wide constitutional and democratic significance: secret ballots, equal electoral districts, payment of MPs, the end of property qualifications for people entering Parliament, universal male suffrage and parliaments to be elected annually. Only that last demand has not yet seen the light of day. The suffragettes helped to overcome the sexist limitations of the initial Chartists' demands.

The poll tax legislation which has just been adopted, together with the earlier measure for Scotland, likewise contains six points of great constitutional and democratic significance, but they are all regressive, making it a counter-charter. First, the franchise will be cut, as many of those who cannot afford their poll tax seek to evade it by leaving their names off the poll tax and electoral registers. Secondly, normal democracy will be virtually ended as the central state machine takes over the last remnants of local government independence. Thirdly, just to be on the safe side, local government elections will be fixed as pressure is created to keep down poll tax levels and the services that they provide.

Fourthly, the poor will be required to subsidise the rich, in contrast to the norms of democratic taxation systems. Fifthly, for the first time since the universal franchise was finally achieved in the Acts of 1918 and 1928, people will have to pay tax to qualify to vote. Sixthly, civil liberties essential to a democracy will be damaged, as poll tax registrars will be required to invade all sorts of sensitive information to try to discover who is missing from their registers.

In the House on 28 March, at column 839, the hon. Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Devlin) even hit on the notion of using anti-poll-tax petitions as an avenue for placing people's names on poll tax registers. The Minister of State, Scottish Office agreed with that in column 851 —as, it seems, did the Leader of the House in answer to my business question on 23 June, in columns 1278-79.

There is, of course, a logic to such illiberal thought. If criminal records, housing benefit and educational grant records and so on can be invaded by the poll tax registrar, why not use petitioners' names and addresses? Fortunately, public petitions to Parliament are out for such purposes because, as you confirmed, Mr. Speaker, in column 1281 of *Hansard* of 23 June, the names and addresses of such petitioners are Parliament's property and are not available to the Government or to the registrars. However, petitions to the Prime Minister, Government Departments and poll tax registrars are available for this use and abuse unless the House decides to pass a Bill on the lines of the one that I seek to introduce.

It is time to turn the logic of the hon. Member for Stockton, South the right way round. If there is a sound, democratic and constitutional reason for protecting

[Mr. Harry Barnes]

petitioners' names and addresses, might there not be a similar reason for protecting sensitive information on housing, employment and education? The word "petition" means a prayerful request and in its constitutional form it is an application for redress to an authority, and no duress can be levelled at petitioners for the act of petitioning. Nowadays such authorities are often Government Departments and agencies, but it is essentially the monarch, Parliament and the courts that are currently covered by petitioners' rights.

My Bill would protect the signatories to petitions presented to any organisation or body outside Parliament from any discrimination, legal or otherwise, and would include such petitions as the people's petition recently presented to the Prime Minister. Petitions to the Commons must be in writing and must be free from disrespectful language or imputations against any tribunal or constituted authority. The Bill would require similar provisions and checks over petitions qualifying for protection when delivered outside Parliament.

I am seeking to place petitions in this country on the same, or on a similar, level to petitions in the United States of America, while acknowledging the constitutional differences between the United Kingdom and the United States. The right to petition the Government in the USA is secured by the first amendment to the United States constitution, which was ratified between 1789 and 1791. It says:

"Congress shall make no law . . . abridging . . . the right of the people peacefully to assemble and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

A United States Supreme Court ruling in 1875 in the United States *v.* Cruikshank case took the view that the first amendment assumes

"the existence of the right of the people to assemble for lawful purposes and protects it against encroachment by Congress. The right was not created by the amendment; neither was its continuance guaranteed except as against congressional interference. For their protection in its enjoyment, therefore, the people must look to the states. The power for that purpose was originally placed there, and has never been surrendered. The right of the people peaceably to assemble for the purpose of petitioning Congress for a redress of grievances, or for anything else connected with the powers or duties of the national government is an attribute of national citizenship, and as such under the protection of and guaranteed by the United States. The very idea of a government republican in form implies a right on the part of its citizens to meet peaceably for consultation in respect to public affairs and to petition for a redress of grievances".

That protection should be provided in this country in connection with petitions to Government. My Bill seeks to protect petitioners who add their names and addresses to petitions to the Government and other official bodies. That protection would be similar to the protections provided to those who petition Parliament in the way that is laid down in "Erskine May".

In seeking to extend petitioning rights I should tell hon. Members that they should be aware of the role that petitioning played in the development of Parliament and parliamentary democracy. The right to petition the monarch goes back to Saxon times and was implicitely recognised in Magna Carta. The Bill of Rights 1688, the tercentenary of which we have just celebrated, said:

"it is the right of the Subjects to petition the King, and all commitments and prosecutions for such petitions are illegal."

Parliament probably originated in meetings of the King's Council, which considered petitions. Up to the start of the 15th century the main work of Parliament was the considering of petitions. It was only with the final growth of parliamentary democracy, especially with the slow start of the working-class franchise from 1867, that petitioning started to lose its constitutional significance.

When people acquire the vote, have the freedom to join together in trade unions which can freely negotiate for their interests, start to have their ideas and interests expessed in the press, make the political system respond to their concerns through a progressive taxation system and a growing welfare state, petitioning will be of minor significance. However, when employment Bills, Budgets, cuts in the Health Service, attacks on housing benefit and income support, Murdoch and the poll tax start to dismantle the workers' achievements, petitioning rights become important in an age of declining freedoms.

Furthermore, we can no longer be described as a parliamentary democracy. Elections are presidential. Governments dictate to Parliament through the Whips and through their use of patronage. The new computer technology adds to central control and authority. Against such trends, democratisation at the workplace and decentralisation are essential. Petitioning rights have their part to play in the struggle for re-enfranchisement, similar in many ways to the Chartists' initial struggle for working-class enfranchisement.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Harry Barnes, Mr. Thomas Graham, Mr. Max Madden, Mrs. Alice Mahon, Ms. Dawn Primarolo, Mr. Jim Cousins, Mr. John Cummings, Mr. Jimmy Wray, Mr. Dick Douglas, Mr. John Hughes, Mr. Harry Cohen and Mr. Alan Meale.

PETITIONERS' RIGHTS

Mr. Harry Barnes accordingly presented a Bill to protect the signatories of petitions presented to any organisation or body outside the House of Commons from any penalty or discrimination, legal or otherwise: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Wednesday 27 July and to be printed. [Bill 209.]

Opposition Day

[19TH ALLOTTED DAY]

Housing Benefit Transitional Scheme

3.52 pm

Mr. Robin Cook (Livingston): I beg to move,

That this House recalls that in April Her Majesty's Government imposed savage cuts in Housing Benefit which continue to cause serious hardship to millions of claimants; notes that the vast majority of losers are not eligible for help from the emergency scheme of transitional protection which Her Majesty's Government was forced to set up; is concerned that three months after this scheme was announced to the House only a handful of applications have been processed and that at the present rate it will be at least February 1989 before Her Majesty's Government achieves its inadequate target of 350,000 successful applications; records its alarm at recent Ministerial statements that even many of those who are successful will lose their transitional protection next March; takes the view that the scheme has failed to relieve the pressing hardship caused by the cuts in Housing Benefit; and calls upon Her Majesty's Government to reverse those cuts forthwith.

Mr. Speaker: I must announce to the House that I have selected the amendment in the name of the Prime Minister.

Mr. Cook: Last April, the Government, as an act of deliberate policy, cut housing benefit. That removed housing benefit from 1 million claimants and reduced housing benefit for 4·5 million other claimants. How popular that step turned out to be can be gauged from the front pages of today's newspapers in which the Secretary of State, who had to defend those cuts in the House, is variously described as "shunted sideways", "chopped in half" or "sidelined".

Over the past 12 months, I have developed a degree of affection for my sparring partner. I was not always sure whether that affection was reciprocated, but, nevertheless, I have a healthy respect for my opposite number. I regret the fact that he is unable to be with us on this occasion, owing to another engagement, but I am sure that he will read the report of our proceedings. As his skills of presentation have been somewhat criticised over the past 24 hours, I take this opportunity of putting it on the record that I, for one, am quite sure that, if it were possible to make popular the idea that taking £10 off the weekly benefit of a pensioner was a step toward ending the dependency culture, the right hon. Gentleman could have achieved it.

The Government are in trouble over health and social security not because the man at the top is not a good enough saleman, but because nobody wants to buy the Government's policies on welfare. I note that one of today's papers says that the Secretary of State is now left with

"the dull routine of benefit payments."

Let me offer encouragement to the Secretary of State, because he may need cheering up in his current position. Those constituents whom we meet who live on benefits do not regard the question of their payments as a dull routine. On the contrary, they are matters of vital necessity and importance to them. To nobody is that more important than those constituents whom my hon. Friends have met over the past three months, who have seen their housing benefit cut by £40, £80, £100 a month—by definition, people on low incomes.

There is a droll debate going on among the new Right on how one can define poverty. Let me offer an invitation to any hon. Members who may find it difficult to work out what poverty is. They need not worry themselves any more about such a difficult question. All they have to do is to come with me and my hon. Friends and meet the people we know who know the meaning of poverty because they live with it every day of their lives and have seen it worsen over the past three months. The most telling testimony to their poverty is the evidence that they simply cannot afford to pay the new levels of rents that are being demanded of them.

Rent arrears across Britain have bounded ahead since April. In Wales, a survey by the Association of District Councils has found that rent arrears have increased by 50 per cent. Lancaster informs me that its rent arrears have increased by one third since April, and it understands that that is one of the lowest increases in Lancashire. Edinburgh projects that the increase in rent arrears will double over the course of this year.

That evidence was not available to the House when we last debated the matter on 27 April. On that occasion, the then Secretary of State for Social Services wisely gave up the attempt to defend the scheme that he had just imposed. Instead, he pulled out of the hat an emergency package to mitigate the worst consequences of his own scheme. We were invited then, and we are invited again in the Government's amendment, to applaud the Government for their generosity in protecting some people from the worst consequences of the Government's cuts.

It is now three months almost to the day of that debate and I—and I suspect that I speak for many of my hon. Friends—have yet to meet anyone who has received a payment for transitional protection. I know that I meet different people from Ministers. I know that with some confidence because two weeks ago, opening a debate in the Scottish Grand Committee, the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, the hon. Member for Edinburgh, West (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton), expressed surprise when he heard of complaints that people had not been receiving transitional protection and proceeded to assure the Committee that if any hon. Members had evidence that somebody was not receiving the transitional protection he would investigate it on their behalf. He was obviously blissfully unaware that, on the day that he spoke, nobody in Britain had received a single payment for transitional protection. He is, I concede, not a Minister in the Department of Health and Social Security, only a Scottish Office Minister with responsibility for housing and, as such, cannot be expected to know about such things.

Since then, a handful of claimants have managed to get under the wire. Last week, in answer to a parliamentary question from me, the DHSS stated that 18 people had received payment for transitional protection. I checked again this morning and was informed that yesterday that figure of 18 leaped ahead to a total of 68 claimants who have been paid transitional protection. Some of my hon. Friends have met more losers of housing benefit in a single weekend in their constituencies than that figure.

I note that in today's amendment Ministers again preen themselves on the fact that it is remarkable that anyone

[Mr. Cook]

has been paid in such a short time. The last time that the Minister of Social Security and the Disabled took part in Question Time, he said:

"It is a remarkable achievement that we have been able to set up the new office, employ and train the staff, establish the procedures and advertise".—[*Official Report*, 12 July 1988; Vol. 137, c. 172.]

What busy people those Ministers are. No wonder they need another Secretary of State to help them shift the furniture around the new office. The truth is that it is not the Ministers who did all this, but the much-abused civil servants who have gamely set out to make sense of Minister's decisions.

I give credit to the civil servants who have been working these past three months to fit into that tight timetable, but I give none to the Ministers because for three years they knew that the cuts were coming. For three years they were warned what those cuts would mean by the citizens advice bureaux, Help the Aged, the Child Poverty Action Group, and the National Consumer Council, and for three years they did nothing to soften the blow.

One of the last things that the current crop of Ministers did before the blow fell was to abolish housing benefit supplement in the last week of March, rather than in the first week of April, in a deliberate attempt to stop those claimants qualifying for the transitional protection that they would otherwise have received. It is perfectly clear not only that Ministers did nothing for three years before the cuts were made, but that they would have done nothing in the three weeks that followed had they not faced the possibility of defeat on our motion of 27 April. As it was, the Secretary of State then produced the minimum necessary to buy off rebellion among his own Back Benchers.

I must utter a word of warning to Conservative Back Benchers, because I fear they are about to discover from their outraged constituents that they were bought off too cheaply. There has been another fresh development in the past couple of weeks. Not only have the first payments been made by the transitional protection unit, but the first rejection slips have been issued by that unit. Last week, 190 claims were processed by the transitional protection unit and, of that number, 96 did not qualify for a penny in transitional protection. Half of those who applied have been refused all benefit. They are the claimants who do not meet the scheme's small print.

I note from the circular to local authorities explaining the inquiry form that is completed in response to every application for transitional protection that where they fill in the boxes marked "No", they should then go straight to what are described as the "escape points". There are plenty of escape points in that form, each of them devised to evade liability to that particular claimant.

First, young tenants with no children are excluded from transitional protection. That is rather odd, because they are the very people who are hit hardest by the invention of a new junior rate of benefit. Any young adult under 26 years of age loses housing benefit at the ferocious marginal rate of 85p in every £1 on any income above £26 per week. I know of one case in Nuneaton of an unemployed man who has been in work, has paid his contributions, and who therefore qualifies for unemployment benefit of £32·75 per week. Out of that meagre income he must pay, as a result of the cuts in housing benefit, £5·70 rent per week, although his sole income is unemployment benefit. He is not entitled to a penny in transitional protection.

In my own constituency, I know of one person who is working on an MSC scheme, as are many of his generation, and whose net pay is £56 per week. He is now paying a full rent of £24 a week. He would be better off out of work than in work. He also does not qualify for a penny of transitional protection.

Nor is the existence of children itself sufficient to unlock the key to transitional protection. On the contrary, I predict that relatively few families with children will qualify. I can predict that with confidence because the Government's scheme offsets what they lose in housing benefit by any gain that they make in family credit.

I refer to a case that has been passed to me by my hon. Friend the Member for Renfrew, West and Inverclyde (Mr. Graham) concerning a Mrs. White, who is a single parent holding down a low-paid job. She gained £12·60 in family credit, but she also lost £13·60 in rent and rate benefits. On top of that, she lost £3·50 per week in free school meals and milk for her children. Therefore, she is £4·50 per week worse off. My hon. Friend took up Mrs. White's case with Ministers. I have before me the reply from the former Under-Secretary of State. I shall preserve it all the more carefully, because this morning I heard John Cole announce that he is a man who should be watched as a future Prime Minister. I shall treasure his letter with due care and as a memento that I knew him when he was a young man.

Replying to the case of Mrs. White, who the House will recall lost £4·50 per week in benefits because of the changes, the former Under-Secretary wrote that her case "demonstrates the success of this scheme."

Mrs. White is deemed to be a success. If the scheme's successes loses £4·50 per week, how much do its failures lose? Still, the Under-Secretary was promoted. In his letter, he helpfully went on to explain the scheme's details, although it must already have been clear to him, as it is clear to me, that Mrs. White has no hope of qualifying for transitional protection because her net loss of £4·50 is not large enough to make her eligible for it.

I turn to the largest number of people not qualifying for help because they are not hit hard enough by the cuts. The Government claim that anyone who has lost more than £2·50 housing benefit will qualify for transitional protection. That comes with a number of footnotes. First, that commitment to £2·50 maximum loss does not include the new 20 per cent. rates penalty that is now excluded from housing benefit. Since that is a new feature of the most startling novelty, I am perplexed as to why it is not covered by the transitional protection that was devised to help phase in the new scheme. I am particularly perplexed because, having met many tenants who have seen their benefits reduced, I can assure Ministers that not one of them has the remotest idea which part of that loss is attributable to the 20 per cent. cut and which is attributable to the general housing benefit cut.

In my own constituency—and, conveniently and coincidentally, in the constituency of the Minister of State—that 20 per cent. adds an average of another £2·60 per week to loss of benefits. Additionally, there are this year's rent and rates increases, most of which took place in April and which are good for another £2 increase in most weekly charges. That, again, is exempt from any transitional protection. That also is rather curious because the

increased rent and rates charge qualifies for housing benefit but apparently it does not qualify for transitional protection, to compensate for the cut in housing benefit.

There may be no logic in those exclusions, but I can understand their political attraction. They enable Ministers to keep saying that they have limited losses to a maximum of £2·60 per week, when in reality they are only helping people who have seen their weekly bills increase by a minimum of £7 per week. One of the dangers of which I am conscious—and it is a failing of which I myself am sometimes guilty—is that, because from time to time I and my hon. Friends meet people who have suffered spectacular losses in housing benefit, we end up with a dulled appreciation of their devastating impact on tight weekly budgets of lesser sums. To individuals or couples whose total weekly income is £50, £60 or £70, £7 per week is an enormous sum.

It may be difficult for certain hon. Members to appreciate the enormity of that sum to many people when, to them, £7 represents the price of a large round in the Smoking Room. However, I can tell hon. Members what £7 means in a pensioner's weekly budget. It means one dozen eggs, a daily newspaper, a couple of loaves, half a kilo of margarine, seven tins of soup, and half a stone of potatoes. That is what £7 means to pensioners, and that is what they must give up if they are to find another £7 out of their weekly budget. Those are the purchases that they must do without.

Mr. Frank Haynes (Ashfield): My hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook), in commenting that the Minister does not care, will have noticed that Conservative Members do not care either. Look at the empty Government Benches. They are not at all bothered about the subject that we are debating today.

Is my hon. Friend aware that there are many widows and pensioners in Nottinghamshire who are being served a dirty deal by the Government? The heating allowance that they receive from British Coal because of their service is linked to housing benefit, and part of that benefit is reduced because those widows and pensioners receive cash in lieu. That is how the Government serve the pensioners in my constituency.

Mr. Cook: My hon. Friend has made a brilliant cameo speech. Let me take him up on his second point first. It was precisely to allow for such local financial considerations that local authorities used to have the discretion to top up the rent rebate scheme that the Government have taken away.

As for the numbers present in the Chamber, I remind the House that in a previous debate I pointed out that each Conservative Member represents an average of 7,500 losers of housing benefit. Many of them, tragically, go unrepresented in today's debate, but I suspect that many will be in touch with their Members of Parliament in the weeks ahead as the rejection slips come in from the housing benefit transitional protection unit.

Among those excluded from transitional protection are the claimants who have fallen into one of the many oubliettes with which the new regulations are studded. I remind Ministers of one of the deepest traps, which I drew to their attention when we debated the regulations last November. That is the provision that, after six weeks in hospital, a tenant effectively loses entitlement to housing benefit, because of the odd notion of Ministers that after six weeks in hospital any person needs only pocket money. Now such people lose housing benefit at 85p in the pound on any income over £8·25 a week.

When I pointed that out to the House in November, the then Under-Secretary said that I had misunderstood the provisions. As he has kindly joined us for his swan song, let me tell him about an elderly constituent of mine who is currently in the local psychiatric hospital. As usual with such illnesses, she has been there for over six weeks. Now, on a single person's state pension, she is paying a weekly rent of £24 a week and is £157 in arrears. Last week she received a notice of repossession from the local authority. It would be an understatement to say that that is unlikely to aid her recovery from a psychiatric illness.

If the House wants to savour the full degree of political bias in the regulations, let me point out that my constituent would continue to qualify for maximum housing benefit if she were in a private hospital, because the regulations make explicit provision to protect the housing benefit of paying patients. However, she qualifies for no transitional protection towards the cut in her housing benefit.

As well as claimants who are not entitled to transitional protection, there are the minority who are so entitled. The real tragedy is that most of them probably will not receive it. Here it is necessary to grapple with the sheer complexity of the structure that emerged from Ministers' panic response to the consequences of their own cuts. We now have a system in which each claimant must apply to the local authority for housing benefit and then make a separate application to an entirely separate agency—the DHSS—for compensation for the cut in housing benefit that the same DHSS has imposed on the local authority.

If the claimant is lucky, he will end up with two separate payments for the same rent: payment of housing benefit from the local authority, and payment of transitional protection from the DHSS. It would be unkind at this point to remind Ministers that they promised us that the scheme would be simple to administer and less confusing for claimants. It has certainly succeeded in confusing some of their own Back Benchers. The Minister of State will recall the hon. Member for Norwich, North (Mr. Thompson) causing some hilarity at Question Time by asking if he would use his influence to get Norwich city council to hurry up payment of transitional protection, as the delay was causing hardship to his constituents. The Minister was rather more reticent than Norwich city council subsequently turned out to be in pointing out that it was nothing to do with the council.

How many claimants are as confused as Conservative Back Benchers we do not know. Nor do the Government. We know from a parliamentary question three weeks ago that the Government have made no estimate of the take-up rate of transitional protection. That is probably wise of them, as the indications are that it will be pretty miserable. In the past couple of weeks, Ministers have made much of the fact that applications are coming forward at a rate of 4,500 a day. That is a tiny fraction of housing benefit claimants. To be precise, it is 0·0006 per cent., or six per 10,000 claimants. On current form, half of them will receive nothing anyway. At the rate of 2,250 successful applications each working day, it will take until February to hit the Government's own pathetic target of one in 20 claimants—and four weeks later, in March, some of them will lose it again.

We now know from a letter from the Secretary of State that some claimants will lose their transitional protection

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at the end of the first year and others at the end of the second. That is because the protection is apparently to be subject to what is described as an erosion factor. That erosion factor has yet to be announced. Let it be announced today. Let us find out just how long "transitional" will be, and just how long the few claimants who receive transitional protection will be entitled to it before they are exposed to the full depth of the cut in their housing benefit.

It was always clear that the emergency package of transitional protection was too late and offered too little help to too few claimants. It is now clear that the scheme is failing to achieve even the Government's meagre targets for it. It is difficult not to compare this grudging, mean little scheme with the unstinting way in which our society helps with the housing costs of more affluent people. In the past week, the press has been full of coverage of the rise in mortgage rates. That 2 per cent. rise will cost the Treasury £900 million in tax relief—nine times the cost of transitional protection. It is given automatically: there is no need to fill out form RR4 and send it to the transitional protection unit. It is not transitional at all, but permanent —or at any rate for as long as interest rates remain high, which, under the present Government, would appear to guarantee it a degree of permanence.

The arrangement that automatically releases that support is not in contention between the two sides of the House. No doubt it is proper that a Government who have just forced up mortgage rates should subsidise owner-occupiers for the extra cost. I am sure that all quarters of the House were impressed a fortnight ago when the Prime Minister made the stirring declaration that she got very cross if anyone wanted to stop mortgage interest relief when they themselves had got their feet on the first rung of the ladder by making use of that relief. But what about the people who buy their houses and get their feet on the first rung with the help of mortgage tax relief, and then vote to take away the benefit that the poor need to pay their rent? Why does that not make her cross? Is it because she is among them?

I will tell the Prime Minister what makes Opposition Members angry. It is sitting in our surgeries and hearing the despair and bewilderment of those who have seen their careful weekly budgets wrecked. It is sitting in the Chamber witnessing how the Government can always find the money for tax handouts that target more help on those who need it least. Ours is not a heated, unwise anger, but a cold and resolute anger that leaves us with the determination that, although we may lose the vote tonight, we will spare no effort in gaining the support that we need to end this wicked Government and their evil priorities.

4.19 pm

The Minister of State, Department of Social Security (Mr. Nicholas Scott): I beg to move, to leave out from "House" to the end of the Question and to add instead thereof,

'applauds the Government's recent reforms of social security; notes that these will result in more taxpayers' money being spent this year than if the old system had continued, and spent in a way better targeted towards those in most need; recognises that the coverage of housing benefit had become too broad; notes that after the reforms housing benefit will still be received by more households than in 1979 and at greater real cost to the taxpayer; welcomes the Government's announcement of 27th April that some transitional protection for losses in housing benefit is to be made available to people in vulnerable groups; commends the Government for the speed with which the unit to administer these payments has been set up; and congratulates it on meeting its stated target of making the first payments in July.'.

I shall respond to the criticisms and comments of the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) by putting them in the context of what the Government have done about social security and housing benefit since they came to office. I remind the House of what my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer said in his Budget statement:

"But while tax reform is a simple matter for the armchair critic, it is very much more difficult in practice. It is difficult technically and difficult politically—since any tax system, however it arose, creates powerful vested interests in favour of the status quo."—[*Official Report*, 15 March, 1988; Vol. 129, c. 999.]

If that is true of the tax system, it is certainly true of the social security system.

Since we introduced our reforms in April the Opposition have been looking back all the time to a system to which, after this system has been running for a year or so, I do not believe for one moment anybody will wish to return. This system will be infinitely more desirable, flexible and able to cope with need than the previous system.

Apart from the structural reforms that we have introduced, anybody could be forgiven, after listening to Opposition Members, for forgetting that the Government are spending more, not less, overall on social security in the current year. It is worth reminding the House that, within the scope of the additional resources that we had made available, we have sought to simplify the social security system so that claimants are better aware of that to which they are entitled and staff are better able to administer the system.

We have sought to target the additional help that is available to those who need it most, to get rid of the nonsenses and idiocies of a tax and benefit withdrawal combination in excess of 100 per cent., and, above all, to deliver a better service to those who need the help of the social security system. Of course it is a huge change. It is the greatest change in the social security benefit system since the end of the second world war. No change of that kind can be introduced without problems, but at least the Government have had the courage to tackle the inadequacies, the complexities and many of the nonsenses of the old system.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths (Edinburgh, South): The Minister castigates what he calls the old system. Why does he not tell the truth? The old system was introduced by the Conservatives. The brand new system that they have introduced is causing so much chaos that they are having to rectify it because it is inflicting so much unnecessary pain and damage.

Mr. Scott: If that is to be the quality of Opposition interventions, I do not think that I shall bother to give way again.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: Answer the question.

Mr. Scott: I intend to answer it, but I should like to develop my speech. However, the hon. Gentleman is wrong. In April we changed a system whose basic structure

was established in 1948. As the years went by bits were bolted on to it, which added to its complexities and difficulties. We had the courage to put that right.

Mr. Rhodri Morgan (Cardiff, West): Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Scott: No, I shall not give way again. This is a short debate. The hon. Member for Livingston was not interrupted, and I should like to get on with my speech. The subject can then be debated for the rest of the afternoon.

It is worth reminding the House and those who read the accounts of its proceedings of the Government's record on social security. The taxpayer is now spending £1 billion a week on social security. That is one third higher in real terms than we were spending in 1979. We have spent that amount at a time when unemployment has come down in each of the last 21 months. It is also worth reminding the House that it is possible to pay the extra benefits only because of the success of the Government's economic policies.

Since 1979 we have steadily been spending more each year on housing benefit than was spent in previous years. Expenditure this year is running at over £5 billion. In real terms that is an increase of about 50 per cent. since we came to office in 1979, even after allowing for rises in rents and rates during that period. During the last Labour Administration, using the same measure, expenditure increased by only 3 per cent. in real terms.

Mr. Frank Field (Birkenhead): Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Scott: The hon. Gentleman knows that I always give way to him, but perhaps he will allow me to finish this point.

About 6 million people now get help—one in three households. In 1979-80, the equivalent figure was 5 million. I am prepared to stand by that record. We have given more help to more people than the Labour Government ever did.

Mr. Field: Will the Minister remind the House that the White Paper on public expenditure shows that expenditure on housing benefit will fall by £1 billion?

Mr. Scott: This year we shall spend £50 million less on housing benefit, but that has to be set against an overall w expenditure of £5·2 billion. That is a minimal clawback of a benefit which was set inexorably to rise and which we believed it right to bring under control. Increases in benefit, increases in the expenditure on social security and increases in expenditure on housing benefit do not matter to the Opposition. To them, April 1988 was Paradise lost.

Today we heard not a word from the hon. Member for Livingston about an alternative strategy. With his incisive intellect, the hon. Gentleman knows the kinds of problems that those in control of the social security system face, but he made no attempt to free himself from the intellectual and political baggage with which the 1987 general election landed the Labour party—a muddled, inconsistent and expensive policy. He set out no new strategy. He simply harked back to what the Opposition regard as the good old days.

Of all the graffiti that have bedecked our walls in recent years, the one proclaiming that nostalgia is not what it used to be might best be used as the Labour party's slogan. The reality under a Labour Government was, as Lord Barnett said, that when they were in office they spent money that they did not have, that they ended up in the arms of the International Monetary Fund and that they had to cut back, not enhance, the social security system. We have never been driven into that position and we do not intend to be.

In April 1988 we embarked on a new strategy. We said goodbye to over 20,000 paragraphs in the manual required to operate supplementary benefit. We said goodbye to the opportunities to be better off on benefit than in work. We said goodbye to an effective marginal tax rate of about 112 per cent. We also said goodbye to housing benefit supplement, the Byzantine bridge between two entirely different systems of help with housing costs for those in work and those not in work. The English language is rich in a variety of wise sayings. The saying that empty vessels make the most noise is the most accurate one to describe the Labour party. We said goodbye to many indefensible anomalies and extraordinary social security complexities which the last Labour Government had failed to tackle. We said goodbye to all those things—and good riddance.

I shall not pretend that there are no problems or dilemmas to be faced in remodelling social security. It is hard to achieve the right balance between providing a safety net for life's emergencies and creating disincentives to employment. It is hard to achieve a balance between the objective of targeting help on those most in need and the wish to avoid over-detailed and intensive means testing. As society changes, and as time goes by, we must constantly review and revise our judgments on these issues. We cannot indulge in the luxury of ignoring them, as the Opposition do.

I re-emphasise the point that the changes and the extra resources would not have been possible without steady growth in the economy, the tight control of inflation and a firm grip on public expenditure. Those were not qualities that were noticeable under the previous Labour Government. That is why we can spend more, not less, on social security. It is worth reminding the House that under this Government inflation over the past five years has been about the same as it was in a single year under the previous Labour Government.

I understand, of course, that the main thrust of the debate is on housing benefit, and it is right for me to set that within the context of the Government's wider policy on social security reform. I shall refer in a little more detail to the system that we have replaced. When we introduced changes to housing benefit, our objective was always to protect the poorest and neediest. Many families on low incomes who receive housing benefit will gain overall because of the more generous family credit scheme, so our reform of housing benefit reflects our overall approach to the reform of the system. We aim for a better targeted, simpler, system that helps those who are really in need, without encouraging dependence on the state—that is, the taxpayer. The old system was costly, complicated and random, and this Government have had the courage to tackle it.

Prior to April this year, 3 million householders on supplementary benefit were getting full rent and rate rebates paid by their local authorities. Another 3 million people on low incomes had their incomes judged by local authorities against a series of needs allowances. The amount of help that they received with rent and rates varied, depending on their individual circumstances. That

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was the system that was criticised by the Supplementary Benefits Commission in 1976. The anomalies that were pointed out and the criticisms that were made were not tackled by the Labour Government, and it was left to us to introduce changes finally in 1983. However, the continuance of two separate means tests made the system difficult to describe, and even more complicated to administer, and it was difficult for claimants to understand. The system worked very badly indeed.

The problems were easy to identify and costs were rising fast, but the system still did not give enough help to those who really needed it. It insulated many people against the real costs of local services, and we continue to believe that accountability suffered as a consequence. Therefore, we introduced a new system, with common rules for the three income-related benefits, and the same income test for everyone. People on similar incomes are treated in the same way. We also introduced the system whereby benefits are calculated on the basis of net, rather than gross, income, and that means that ordinary people see a cash increase for extra money earned. The Labour Government never tackled that problem. People on income support will continue to receive the maximum help available, as will others on similar incomes.

Mr. John Battle (Leeds, West): Will the Minister concede that many of us sought figures in the Green Paper "Reform of Social Security" that would show how the equalisation of benefits would work out, and that the only figure that the Government submitted showed a reduction in housing benefit? That was the only figure in the Green Paper. Does the hon. Gentleman agree that that is in the Green Paper?

Mr. Scott: We never made any secret of the fact that total expenditure on housing benefit was growing inexorably and that we thought it right to cut it back. We made that clear from the outset as we re-ordered our priorities in the overall system of social security. Although we have cut back expenditure very modestly, the reform of social security has meant that we are spending more on social security and are giving more help to those in greatest need. We have given almost £100 million extra to families through the income support structure, in which we have identified the real needs in society.

Mr. Tony Favell (Stockport): Is it not a fact that many Opposition Members will not be happy until 100 per cent. of the population are dependent on the state or their town hall for housing?

Mr. Scott: I have to say that sometimes I have that feeling when I listen to speeches from the Opposition.

In my opening remarks I referred to the issues that face those who have the responsibility of office when they seek to change and reform systems in the sensitive area of social security. One of the most important is the pace at which change can be introduced. When we made our reforms in April this year we recognised that there was a need for transitional protection from the outset for the poorest in our community—those who receive supplementary benefit. In April we listened again to the reasoned and reasonable arguments that changes in housing benefit were too sharp for some vulnerable groups.

We were not forced into that, as the Opposition motion implies. We followed the promise that we had given the House on several occasions to monitor, review and, if necessary, to act if we saw that the benefit system was not operating as it should. We did that, and I repeat today that we intend to continue to do so. That commitment was honoured and led to the changes that were outlined by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services on 27 April.

The changes showed that we could respond sensitively and quickly to areas of genuine concern about the operation of housing benefit, and we took swift action when we had identified what was necessary. We committed another £100 million to the already massive social security budget. My right hon. Friend then announced, less than 12 weeks ago, transitional payments to help up to 350,000 people. The first payment was sent out on 14 July and the unit set up to deal with applications on a national basis is now fully operational. It will quickly build up to optimum efficiency and output.

Any Opposition Member who has seen the application form for payments could not possibly—[HON. MEMBERS: "How many have gone out?"] I shall give hon. Members the figures. Thousands of them have been sent out and are available, and we shall make the process even simpler in future. Special arrangements have been introduced to deal with cases of urgency, and freepost and freeline services have been set up to provide help and advice to those who need it. Those services have been extensively used by the public and by many Opposition Members.

Mr. Alistair Darling (Edinburgh, Central): The form is very simple, but many people simply will not qualify for transitional payments. What will the Government do to help those who have lost out and who do not qualify under this miserable scheme?

Mr. Scott: I have already explained what the transitional protection scheme was designed to achieve, what it is achieving and what it will achieve in the near future. We have already run one national publicity campaign to encourage take-up for this very important protection. We shall launch another campaign later this week, which will run for two weeks. The advertisement will include a cut-out coupon so that people can receive an RR4 application form from the Department by return of post.

Despite the whingeing from the Opposition Benches, by any standards the arrangements for transitional protection have got off to an excellent start. In my letter to colleagues on 5 May I promised that freeline and freepost facilities would be put in place at once, and they were. We undertook to ensure that payments were made immediately to those in urgent need, and that has happened. The first general payments for housing benefit cases were promised for this month, and the first payments were made on 14 July. The next step is to ensure that applications are processed in the week when they are received. We are well organised to do that.

Yesterday I had the opportunity to visit the Glasgow unit. I spoke to a number of the 500 staff now in post there. They have been recruited and trained in record time to do that job and I was impressed by their commitment, their interest and the enthusiasm with which they are tackling the job. There was a feeling of drive, efficiency and commitment in the office. As a result of the applications

that have come in, the staff have already issued 50,000 inquiry forms to local authorities—*[Interruption.]* I thought that the hon. Member for Livingston was at pains not to criticise the civil servants who are doing that important job. The sneering by some of the hon. Members behind him at junior staff who are tackling the job ill becomes them.

About 50,000 inquiry forms have gone out to local authorities to provide the information that we need to process the claims. Of course we depend on local authorities' commitment to turning round those applications.

Miss Joan Lestor (Eccles) *rose*——

Mr. Scott: Our target is to get up to date as quickly as possible with the processing of the applications.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Scott: I intend to set firm and tight targets for the processing of the applications, although, to an extent that remains in the hands of the individuals to apply promptly and the local authorities to turn round the applications quickly. For our part, in the transitional payments unit, we shall seek to meet those very tight targets and to respond to individual needs.

Mr. Tony Banks *rose*——

Miss Lestor *rose*——

Mr. Scott: I should have thought that we should get some credit for coming to the House to talk about a scheme that has been introduced to provide significant help to pensioners, the long-term sick and disabled, widows and families with children, but I should have known better.

In my view, the Government have demonstrated a speedy and flexible response to large cash losses, but we have done that without deviating from the overall aim of providing a simple and straightforward system of housing benefit which is much better than that which it succeeded.

4.42 pm

Miss Joan Lestor (Eccles): After that speech, I do not think that we are in any danger that the phrase "incisive intellect" will be thrown around the Chamber. My hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) and I were trying to ask the Minister a very simple question to help us with our own remarks: how many payments have been made to date under the transitional scheme? My hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) raised that point. I believe his figures are correct and I have tried to check them. If a scheme is to be talked about in this way, it is essential that we should know exactly how it is working.

I take issue with the Minister on two other points. He made a distinction between the needy and the real needy. He spoke about those in "real need". People are either in need or they are not in need. His definition of the real needy means that large numbers of people who will not qualify for transitional payment will be left in poverty and need. The Minister did not deal with that.

The Minister made great play of the fact that the Government are spending more money now on social security than ever before. Of course they are, given the number of unemployed people in my constituency and throughout the country. That is not something to be proud of. Incidentally, they would not have had that money to spend without the revenues from oil and from selling off many of the country's assets. [AN HON. MEMBER: "He is not listening."] Of course the Minister is not listening; that is part of his arrogance throughout the debate. He should not be proud of the fact that we are spending more money; he should be ashamed of the fact that the rise in poverty and unemployment in areas such as my constituency have forced us into this situation.

I do not have very long, so I cannot read out all the cases, but this morning I spoke to my local DHSS office and my local city council. I have a large number of cases, which I shall be sending to the Minister; indeed, some have already been sent. They include the disabled, the elderly and one-parent families who are in desperate need and who have been badly affected by the changes in benefits, including housing benefit. As far as we can discover from the guidelines on the transitional benefits, insofar as they exist, those people will not qualify for those benefits.

The Minister did not deal with a matter that concerns many of us—the fact that transitional payments will not include the 20 per cent. of housing benefit that people will lose, so the qualifying amount is actually higher.

The Minister said that the scheme is working very well. This morning, I spoke to Salford city council. I understand that there is some pilot scheme in my area, but I am told that there is now a form to apply for the forms to start making applications for transitional payments. I remind the Minister that in my constituency, where the divide between the north and the south is very graphic, where industry declined over the years and where there is a large number of long-term unemployed people, the people who are receiving benefts are all in need. The Minister seems to have forgotten that the people were not receiving benefits that they did not need or to which they were not entitled. The people were already in poverty and already had very grave problems. Those other people have been very badly affected.

I should like to draw the House's attention to a letter that I received today from Salford city council, asking me to draw this point to the attention of the House of Commons:

"the increase in the number of tenants in rent arrears rose . . . by 6 per cent., which represented a rise in monetary arrears of £140,000"

in the period in which we have had a reduction in housing benefits. I am asked to draw to the attention of the House

"this increase in the amount of rent arrears, which is a direct result of the reduction in housing benefits which has made more tenants responsible for paying their water and general rates."

So the burden will be borne by many local authorities which are not in a position to bear it.

I could read out to the House many cases similar to those that were read out by my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston. One particular case is very important. It involves a constituent with injury who claimed supplementary benefit in 1984 but was not entitled, as his income exceeded requirements, even though those included high rate heating addition and diet, the cost of extra baths and a lower-rate diet for his wife. However, he was awarded housing benefit and housing benefit supplement by the local authority. When housing benefit supplement was abolished, he was then entitled only to housing benefit. As a result, he was liable to pay approximately £10 a week more for rent and general rates. Income support replacing

[Miss Joan Lestor]

supplementary benefit was not payable, as it was argued that his income exceeded requirements. Therefore, his total weekly reduction is now about £12 a week.

The DHSS in Salford said that this was very disturbing, but as far as the regulations are concerned, there is very little that it can do to counter it. I have asked whether he will be entitled to transitional payment, but I am told that on the basis of the guidelines he will not. There are many others, including pensioners and disabled people. A mentally handicapped person who is rehabilitating herself and has found a small job is now worse off than she would be had she remained in residential care. A pensioner receiving £40 a week retirement and industrial injury pension is now having to pay £15·90 towards his rent and rates instead of £1·74 before April.

I could go on reading out such cases, as I am sure we all could, but we have not gone around the country looking for them. Details arrive in our postbags, and they come to our constituency surgeries. I do not believe that Conservative Members have not experienced similar cases, and I do not understand why they are not defending their people. Right across the country, those who can least afford to meet the problems and pay the money are being discriminated against. It is an absolute disgrace.

As I said at the start, most of the people in that situation in my constituency were already in need. I object to the hon. Gentleman's distinction between "real need" and need: they were not scroungers. They were not getting something to which they were not entitled. By virtue of the kind of constituency that I represent, they were in need, are in need, and will continue to be in need.

The hon. Gentleman dealt with transitional payments in a cavalier fashion—as though they were flowing well and people's needs were being met. He did not answer the question about how many people had received transitional payments. He did not answer the question about what guidelines will determine what people are entitled to. Many people in my constituency and in other constituencies will be pushed into greater poverty. They were already in poverty, and that poverty will now be greater. As far as I can tell, despair is moving to deep distrust and misery. It is reminiscent of what happened in the 1930s. Poor people will get poorer, while those who have money will get richer. That is an absolute disgrace.

4.50 pm

Mr. John M. Taylor (Solihull): There are three acknowledged staples of life—food, clothing and housing. Food and clothing are predominantly provided by the private sector. There is variety, choice and good standards. There is a much larger public sector component in housing. That is why that staple has always been hedged about with political controversy and argument. It is part private, part public, and inevitably and understandably political. Among political contentions there have been disputes and debates about state and municipal intervention in the cost of housing. General assistance has taken two traditional forms. Tax relief on mortgage interest has benefited the home owner. Subsidised council housing has benefited the municipal tenant. Again, there is a kind of political counterpoint in the two general forms of housing assistance.

Mr. Jim Cousins (Newcastle upon Tyne, Central): Does the hon. Gentleman agree that more than half of owner-occupiers do not benefit from mortgage interest relief? They are owner-occupiers, usually elderly and usually on low incomes, who bought houses way back in the past and have paid them off. Therefore, they do not benefit from mortgage interest relief, and are dependent upon the housing benefit system, in common with all the other people about whom the hon. Gentleman is about to talk.

Mr. Taylor: It might oblige the hon. Gentleman if I concede his contention that not all home owners have the benefit of mortgage interest tax relief. That point must be self-evident. I do not know the exact proportion. I was endeavouring to be fair to an Opposition Member and let him comment on my somewhat undeveloped remarks. I was merely giving the background to financial intervention in housing, and showing that it had taken an essentially political form. On the one hand, by their origin and development, certain benefits tended to favour home owners and, on the other hand, certain other kinds of assistance helped municipal tenants. They are general assistances.

Specific assistance, which is directed to the individual rather than to his ownership or tenancy, has grown out of rent and rate rebates that were initially administered by local authorities. Furthermore, in the earlier stages, various local authorities introduced rebates according to their own rules. There was a different pattern of rules for rent and rates rebates before they became part of a national structure. Another origin from which specific personal housing assistances were derived were housing and rental additions, which were part of the national assistance scheme. That was one of the original principles of the welfare state, and a precursor of what we now call supplementary benefit. Payments of specific help were intended for the poorest members of society, and quite rightly so, and they were invariably means-tested.

We can be sure of one thing, and that is that, with every proper and supportable intention, those who devised the systems to help the poorest people cannot possibly have contemplated that, by 1987-88, amid quite admirable levels of general prosperity, qualifiers for "the neediest need" would have increased to one third of the population. In the words of a satirical newspaper, "Shomething wrong, surely."

I admit that it is easy to point out that something is wrong. One can mock a regime by highlighting anomalies —some hon. Members have made careers out of it—but, by any admission, it is a great deal harder to replace an outworked system with a new one that will be proof against all the old criticisms, cost less to operate, be much simpler to understand, and command instant universal respect, acclaim and even affection. They never found El Dorado, and they will not find such a benefit system either.

Over the course of time, I have learnt that man-made benefit systems are inevitably arbitrary. It is because they are man-made. They follow no natural law, because there is none. Instead, they follow a series of definitions. That is as true of education grants as it is of invalidity allowances and housing benefits.

One critical thing about definitions is that they describe qualifiers, but that is not the most critical thing that they do. The most critical thing that they do is to describe and define non-qualifiers. That is the original sin of man-made

arbitrary benefit systems. Their public face—their appearance from the street—is one of instruments of exclusion. Some people are only just excluded at the margin, frontier or boundary of the definition. They are the truly marginal cases.

Woe betide anyone who thinks that protestations about marginal cases can be bought out or paid off by pushing the frontier outwards a little, slightly extending the definition, or moving the margin. All that one gets for that is a new, larger category of marginal cases who were previously resigned to being some distance from the definition—even content to be so—but who now see themselves as only just outside the adjusted definition. They are a new set of near-qualifiers, who resent what they are only just not getting.

It would surprise me if the Government expected to win battalions of friends by introducing benefit system reforms. But if it is the Government's realistic purpose to tackle systems that have outgrown their original Good Samaritan intention and strength, they will gain respect for doing so, and hon. Members will support their amendment in the Lobby tonight.

4.59 pm

Mr. Charles Kennedy (Ross, Cromarty and Skye): The Minister is popular and respected in the House, even if hon. Members do not always agree with his policies, but in response to the characteristically excellent and incisive speech of the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) —this is an important issue to thousands of people—his speech was an utter disgrace. It was a disgrace to churn out that hackneyed cliché-ridden trash and to give so little information about the workings of the transitional payments centre. Hon. Members on both sides of the House have written to him daily on this matter, so he must be aware that a tremendous amount of anxiety is deeply felt by many thousands of people. He did himself and his Department—what is left of his Department—less than justice.

Although the Minister did not have the gall to refer to the amendment too much, it is one—although the Government have made a complete shambles of the issue —that applauds, welcomes, commends and congratulates. I wonder sometimes how Ministers have the gall to do such things.

Presumably the House appreciates that it is being asked to applaud a cut of £540 million in housing benefit. Presumably Conservative Back Benchers are welcoming the fact that many poor people have to start paying 20 per cent. of their rates contribution, and want to commend the fact that the capital limit that has been introduced, along with the taper that is now in place, will leave many pensioners who would otherwise have qualified for support ineligible. No doubt they are willing to "congratulate"—in the words of the motion—a transitional payments system which had to be introduced because of the original shambles and revolt.

From what the Minister said, we have no clearer idea how long that transitional protection will last. That was a specific question put to the Minister, which he skated around completely. He was asked how many payments had been made, but he did not tell us. If press reports are to be believed and it will take some 31 more weeks at present processing levels to meet the full payments, what will happen to those people whose transitional payments may not be fully met until next February, and who may be affected by further changes a few weeks after that? None of those questions was dealt with by the Minister. I hope that when he makes a further contribution we shall hear more.

The transitional protection scheme was designed to limit the losses of some groups of claimants—for example, the elderly, the sick and those with children. In other words, there will be no extra help for young single people. The Government's thinking comes over time and again —they believe that such people should not qualify for help, because they should be working.

We heard another illuminating speech from Ministers in the Scottish Grand Committee, and the hon. Member for Livingston referred to another one a few weeks ago. If the Minister had been at the Committee, he would have heard the figures quoted for job opportunities for young people. For every 50 youngsters coming out of school in Strathclyde, there is one job. How can it be unnatural for them not to be in employment? The Government appear to miss the fact that unemployment continues to bite deep.

Secondly, the Minister did not deal with the fact that the loss is to be limited to £2·50. It must be said again and again that that £2·50 maximum does not include any loss from the 20 per cent. rates contribution. It is much more tightly drawn than many of those who have applied, or who are seeking to apply at the moment, realise. They suspect that they will have a much more significant cushion in terms of their benefit loss than will prove to be the case.

I wonder to what extent the second round of the advertising campaign—I must have missed the first one —will underline that reality. That would avoid a second blow to morale when people make the application, find out about the centre, expect a transitional payment to come through, and then find out that it is limited strictly to the housing benefit implications and will not cover the other losses caused by the social security changes.

Perhaps this is a matter for a written question, but I wonder how much the DHSS is spending on those two advertising campaigns in comparison with how much was spent on the privatisation of British Telecom or the British Airways advertising campaign.

I very much endorse the comments made by the hon. Member for Eccles (Miss Lestor) about the dubious and distasteful distinction that is now being introduced between the needy, and the non-needy, or the legitimate needy and the less needy, when considering applications for transitional protection payments. The Minister makes a face, but his speech was shot through with such a distinction.

I shall take as an example one of my constituents. A Mrs. Corbett, who lives in Invergordon, came to see me recently. Mrs. Corbett has had housing benefit withdrawn. She now gets only £2·26 a week housing benefit towards her rent. Therefore, out of her £62·11 take-home pay as a caretaker in a community centre, she has to meet her rent of £17·67, minus £2·26 which she is losing, and all her rates. That equals £22·45. Her available income to spend is £62·11 minus £22·45, which works out at £39·66.

If Mrs. Corbett chose not to go to work, she would get a weekly allowance of £33·40. On top of that, all her rent would be met, as would 18 per cent. of her rates. Her weekly disposable income would therefore be £33·40, minus 20 per cent. of her rates—£1·24—which would give her £32·13 a week. For working a 40-hour week in a

[Mr. Charles Kennedy]

low-paid job, and looking after a young family as a single parent, she is the princely sum of £7·53 per week better off. However, that does not include her travel costs to and from work. We were told that the Government introduced this system to help people in that position—people whom the previous Secretary of State referred to as those who are poor with families.

Mrs. Corbett could not believe it when this scheme was introduced. She wrote me a letter in which she stated the position rather well:

"Can this really mean that someone with a good salary and any amount of savings is to be asked for only £2·26 more per week (the full rent and rates) than myself?"

The answer is yes. How the Minister can be sanguine about that I do not know.

Mr. Neil Hamilton (Tatton): I appreciate the problems that the reforms have brought about for some individuals, but I cannot understand what general point of principle the hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye (Mr. Kennedy) is putting forward. Unless he is prepared to say that there will be no rate of withdrawal, regardless of income, and he is therefore proposing a sort of basic earning guarantee which is non-taxable and unrelated to income, we shall always be faced with the problem of tapers and withdrawal of benefit, which will produce high marginal rates, which will be a combination of tax and withdrawal of benefit. The aim of the reforms is to reduce those difficulties to below 100 per cent. Surely that is an improvement.

Mr. Kennedy: The principle which I am enunciating, which I suspect is shared by Conservative Members with guilty consciences, is simply that social security reforms should not hit the poor, who are at the weakest end of the income spectrum. That is the simple principle which should guide any Government with a sense of morality. The case of Mrs. Corbett is indefensible and was a direct result of the changes. She was exactly the sort of person that was supposed to be helped.

For the longer term, I support full integration of the tax and benefits systems and the allocation of credits which are withdrawable as income rises, so that some of the worst marginal effects would be mitigated far more effectively than under the present system. The Government, however, have not seen fit to pursue that course of action.

Mr. Scott: I am not sure which party the hon. Gentleman is a member of at the moment, but the predecessor party which supported the Labour Government in office, and Opposition Members who were making such a noise earlier, supported a system in which there was a combination of tax and withdrawal of benefit of 112 per cent. We have at least got rid of that nonsense.

Mr. Kennedy: I think that the Government have got it down to 85 per cent. withdrawal in certain categories and 65 per cent. for most others. That is an improvement, certainly, but I do not accept the principle on which the new structure is established. I and my right hon. and hon. Friends opposed it in the previous Parliament and we shall continue to oppose it and argue for our alternative.

I have a second example of a problem. It arises because, lo and behold, the Inverness office has had a computer breakdown. That is hardly unheard of, but as a result, it has been impossible to assess many people's entitlement to transitional protection.

Another constituent—a widowed pensioner with an income of £53 a week—has written to me. At the moment, she pays an extra £10 into her rent account each fortnight in the hope that it, with her old rent payment and her new housing benefit entitlement, will cover the new figure. Given her age, she could well be entitled to transitional protection if the council ever manages to work out how much housing benefit she has lost. It is unable to do that, however, because of computer problems.

My constituent writes:

"I have been paying £10 approximately extra but it is hard going and this very long delay has changed me from a happy person to an anxious old woman. . . . I desperately want to go to visit my elder sister who is ill in Aberdeen but want to be clear before I go. I am a widow over 70 and unfortunately just above the magic figure which would entitle me to supplementary benefit so fare worse than most. My total income is £53 and with heating so necessary in this cold glen every penny has to count."

There are thousands of such people. Dozens come to my constituency surgery each weekend. They are confused, upset and dismayed about what they have lost and what they may still lose. Many are under the false impression that the £2·50 cushion is applied generally and is not drawn strictly for housing benefit. Many are confused because they do not know what they are eligible for. They find it almost impossible to believe the loss that they have already suffered.

The Minister has not answered the salient questions asked by the hon. Member for Livingston—how many payments have there been so far, for how long will the transitional arrangements go on, and what happens to the payments that are caught up with early next February? What steps is the Department taking to salvage this sorry and, from the point of view of the lack of political principle involved, increasingly sordid move towards changing housing benefit, with all the attendant misery?

5.13 pm

Mr. Michael Irvine (Ipswich): Before last April's reforms, one household in three received housing benefit. That statistic shows eloquently that housing benefit was being applied wrongly and that it was being distributed too widely and too indiscriminately.

It was absurd that a person with £30,000 in a current account could still be entitled to housing benefit. It was absurd that a person could have £20,000 in, for example, a low-yielding Japanese unit trust and still be entitled to housing benefit. It was unjust that capital was not taken into account.

Housing benefit cried out for reform. Reform was not just necessary—it was imperative. We needed a redirection of benefits towards those people in greatest need. Such a process inevitably means that some will get less. There is, at that point, a political dilemma. Alterations involve grave risk of political unpopularity.

By deciding to do something about the problem, and by facing the dilemma, the Government have shown high political courage. It is all very well for Opposition Members to mock the Government and to accuse them of callousness and hard-heartedness, but I should have a lot more respect for the Opposition's arguments if they acknowledged that there was a problem and a need for reform. Instead of approaching the issue positively,

however, Opposition Members only put forward the solution of never-ending waterfall of additional public expenditure.

Mrs. Margaret Beckett (Derby, South): I am following the hon. Gentleman's argument carefully. He seems to be arguing that, simply because of the number of people who receive housing benefit, there is a need for reform. Has he noted that one third more people get mortgage interest tax relief? What proposals does he have for reform of that system?

Mr. Irvine: The hon. Lady is trying to deflect me from my argument. As much as one household in three received housing benefit. That shows that the benefit was not being directed effectively.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): As the hon. Gentleman is arguing that people who do not deserve assistance have received it—an argument which I do not accept in respect of housing benefit—can he tell us whether he has ever received tax relief on mortgage interest? If he has, has he refused it on the grounds that, as a lawyer and a Member of the House of Commons, he does not require it? That being the case, did he refund the money to the Exchequer?

Mr. Irvine: I have received tax relief on mortgage interest. The hon. Gentleman is well away from the point that I am arguing. I am attacking Opposition Members because——

Mr. Winnick: Why did the hon. Gentleman take the money?

Mr. Irvine: —instead of making constructive arguments and acknowledging that there is a problem, they are entirely negative, try to deflect the thrust of the argument and resort to jeers, abuse and personal innuendo. That will not do.

In their heart of hearts, the thinking element of the Opposition, in so far as there is a thinking element in the Opposition, acknowledge the need for reform. They also acknowledge that any reform involves deciding priorities and making hard choices about how to allocate benefits. Such changes involve the danger of political unpopularity.

One of the most refreshing features of the Government throughout their nine years in office has been their readiness to face short-term political unpopularity and grasp the nettle of reform to attain necessary, desirable and long-term objectives. The House is debating another instance of that today.

Inevitably, when there is a major reform on the scale of that which was introduced last April, certain hardships and injustices will come to light. Opposition Members have referred to the volume of constituency correspondence that they have received and to the fact that Conservative Members must have received similar letters. I am sure that we have all received them and that we have all made our points to the Government. What is more, the Government listened and, within a month of the reforms coming into operation, announced the transitional arrangements. Far from being a sign of weakness or retreat, that was a sign of the Government's strength and readiness to be flexible and to adapt. Having listened to their Back Benchers, the Government announced the transitional arrangements and, moreover, directed those transitional measures rightly so as to give protection to pensioners, disabled people, low-income families with children, and single parents.

While congratulating the Government on their political courage, may I, however, say to my hon. Friend the Minister that there is no doubt that some people—a minority—have suffered sudden and proportionately severe reductions in their income levels and standards of living as a result of the introduction of the changes. It is a fair point that a reduction of £7 or £8 a week on an income of £70 or £80 is a substantial hardship. I acknowledge that.

The Government must have in mind two essential points. First, it is important that the Government should press ahead with all possible speed to implement the arrangements for transitional protection. I am glad that the transitional protection unit has been set up and is now in operation. It is important that the unit is given all the forresources that it needs to operate effectively.

Secondly, it is essential that the Government remember that there are some people on modest incomes who, for one reason or another, fall just outside the qualification for transitional protection. In recent months I have sent details of cases where that is so, or where it seems to be so, to Ministers for their consideration.

Careful monitoring of the effects of the changes that have taken place in housing benefit is essential. There are bound to be further instances of hardship and further injustices that require to be remedied. However, if there is careful monitoring and identification of such cases, and if injustices are remedied promptly, the underlying merits of the Government's reforms will become more speedily apparent. The Goverment would then end up reaping long-term benefits from their courage in facing short-term unpopularity and taking the difficult decisions necessary to implement the reforms.

5.23 pm

Mrs. Alice Mahon (Halifax): This morning I received some staggering information about soaring rent debt in local authority housing in my constituency. Because I received this information this morning, I tried to raise the problem under a Standing Order No. 20 application, but was advised that I might be called to speak in the debate.

Before April and the so-called reforms of housing benefit, the record of rent arrears in my constituency was comparatively good, despite the fact that the economy has been through troubled times, and despite the fact that we are an area of high unemployment and low wages. Good counselling, a good committee and a good housing management kept rent arrears at a reasonable level, considering the poverty and distress that people face.

However, since April, when the Government introduced the changes, there has been a serious escalation in rent debt. On 1 April the current debt outstanding stood at £468,582. In the 10 weeks that followed, including one free week, rent debt soared to over £639,000. That increase in debt of over one third was almost certainly due to the reductions in housing benefit.

Mr. Irvine Patnick (Sheffield, Hallam): Will the hon. Lady give way?

Mrs. Mahon: No, I shall not give way. The hon. Gentleman should make his own speech.

Mr. Patnick *rose*——

Mrs. Mahon: No, it is a short debate and I want to get some facts on the record.

A similar pattern of escalating debt is evident throughout the country. It is important that the responsibility for such an increase falls squarely where it belongs—at the feet of the Government. In Calderdale, after 48 weeks of the financial year ending April 1988, 11,344 people—76 per cent. of council tenants—received housing benefit, totalling £236,580. By the 11th week of this financial year 10,077 people—68 per cent. of tenants —received housing benefit, totalling £220,076. That is a loss, not only to tenants, but to the local economy, because that money is not available for other things. Therefore, the level of housing benefit has fallen despite the fact that there were rent and rate increases in 1988 which mask the full level of the reduction.

Those shocking figures do not include housing association tenants, of whom there are many. There is no doubt that housing associations have suffered a similar increase in rent arrears. Many elderly people, and many people who fall into special categories, need to live in housing association accommodation. In fact, there are specific schemes for them.

I should like to read out a couple of cases and to give some figures of some of the people whom the Minister claims to have protected. We know that 6,000 tenants now have to pay a weekly water rate charge, plus 20 per cent. of their general rates. Those are the protected people, but they have to pay. The capital cut-off point was £6,000—it is now £8,000—and the national income from capital calculations for persons with over £3,000 has affected about 1,000 rent rebate claims. Steeper taper adjustments of 65p for rent rebate and 20p for rates rebate applied to every pound of excess income over income support levels have meant reduced entitlement for about 3,000 tenants. I repeat that the people who have lost all that enjoyed the Minister's protection. About 400 single parents not on income support have had their benefit entitlement reduced because single parents are no longer treated as couples when benefit entitlement is assessed. None of those people has £30,000 in the bank, which is what the hon. Member for Ipswich (Mr. Irvine) hinted.

A single male, aged 24, recently came to my surgery. He is employed on a Manpower Services Commission scheme for three days a week. Before April he paid £24·26 rent and received a rebate of £15·19. After April his rent was £26·02. He is worse off by £16·95 per week. That is a substantial reduction by any stretch of the imagination.

I also have the tragic case of a 20-year-old who is unemployed and is worse off by £17·55 per week. He is now in serious rent arrears and is before the county court for repossession. That young man had to leave home because of the depressing situation there. Those are the people whom the Minister claims he has protected. He should be ashamed of himself.

My hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) already described the difficulties with the transitional arrangements. According to the information that I received this morning from my local authority, it is facing many problems with people complaining that the forms are difficult to understand. The housing staff in my local authority have concluded that the forms appear to be designed to deter people from applying for benefit. They are under no illusion about that.

I do not know whether we will have any impact on the Government, and I do not believe that they will make the transitional arrangements work to the benefit of the poor. I believe that they are designed to do the opposite. I believe that these arrangements are part and parcel of another attack on local authority housing. Perhaps that was the bonus that the Minister handed to the Prime Minister and to the Minister for Housing and Planning.

The housing benefit reforms represent an attack on local authorities as providers of public housing. Any loss as a result of the write-off of arrears must be borne by the housing revenue account. Obviously the reduction in rent income adversely affects a council's cash flow. Ultimately, that will lead to a loss of interest on balances and, therefore, to rent increases.

Mr. Patnick *rose——*

Mrs. Mahon: I have already said that I will not give way. This is a short debate and the hon. Gentleman can make his own speech.

The housing benefit reforms will damage the provision of local authority housing and will also damage housing associations, which the Government purport to want to help.

The Minister has made the outrageous claim that he wants to protect the poor and that the reforms are intended to do that. The poor know that they are worse off. The young man who I shall see in my constituency next week knows that he will be homeless and that he will not have a roof over his head. People who are getting further and further into debt are aware of that possibility. Because one is poor and on an extremely low income, it does not mean that one is brain-damaged or mentally inadequate. People know that they are receiving less money. The Minister should cease to adopt a hypocritical stance and stop talking about reforms, because doing so insults the dignity of people who are in serious debt and it also insults the intelligence of hard-working housing officials and councillors who are trying to cope with the disgraceful increase in debt that the Minister has deliberately triggered.

5.32 pm

Mr. Tony Favell (Stockport): My hon. Friend the Member for Solihull (Mr. Taylor), in an elegant speech, spoke of the three staples of food, clothing and shelter and the danger of allowing the state to assume responsibility for them.

My hon. Friend's speech reminded me of a conversation that I had with a German boy whom I recently took round the Houses of Parliament. We got on to the inevitable subject of the unification of Germany. I asked him if he thought that that was likely and he said that he thought that it was extremely unlikely. On being asked why, he told me that a completely different philosophy exists in East Germany from that in West Germany. He said that 40 years of Socialism had completely changed the East German people. Although the East Germans originally came from the same stock and spoke the same language, he thought it highly unlikely that the unification would take place. I asked him why he had come to that conclusion, and he told me about two boys who had recently joined his school after coming over the border from East Berlin with their families.

At first those two boys were absolutely delighted to be in West Germany and thought that people were better off, that housing was better, that the standard of living was

better, that they had a great future before them and that things were much brighter and more cheerful. However, gradually they became more depressed because their family background was one of complete dependency on the state. The West German boy had come to the conclusion that those two boys would go back to the grey, drab life from which they had come because of the way in which they and their families had been oppressed for the

Conditions in our country are completely different from those in East Germany. In terms of housing—one of the three staples mentioned by my hon. Friend the Member for Solihull—almost 64 per cent. of the population own their own homes.

Mr. Battle: It is 68 per cent.

Mr. Favell: I am grateful to the hon. Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Battle) for his help.

Despite the fact that 68 per cent. of the population own their homes, one third of all households depend upon housing benefit for help towards the payment of their rent and rates. As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Security recently asked: where is the sense in two thirds of the people supporting one third of households to meet their housing costs?

The figures are bad enough for the entire country, but in certain parts of the country the position is far worse. In Manchester, for example, 57 per cent. of all households are receiving housing benefit. In Liverpool, no less than 81 per cent. of council house tenants receive rent and rate rebates. That means that more than four fifths of council tenants in Liverpool receive housing benefit. They are dependent upon the town hall and the state for the most basic human need, shelter. Because they are dependent and unable to move they are held capitive within their grey surroundings. What a joy that is to their Left-wing Socialist masters, but what misery for those dependent upon them.

Those people, deterred from work lest they lose their housing benefit and unable to save to provide for themselves, are caught in a vicious circle of dependency and are enslaved by the masters of Liverpool.

I welcome the first brave steps away from housing benefit, away from state subsidy of housing costs and towards a greater concentration upon family credit. That will encourage poorer families to look for and to stay in work, and eventually it will enable them to escape from their grey, drab housing estates in Liverpool and the other northern cities that I know so well.

Mr. Eric. S. Heffer (Liverpool, Walton): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Favell: No.

With a major upheaval such as the reform of the housing benefit system, there have been some hardship cases and it is to the Government's great credit——

Mr. Heffer *rose*——

Mr. Favell: No, I shall not give way because I wish to develop my argument.

Mr. Heffer: The hon. Gentleman does not know anything about Liverpool.

Mr. Favell: The hon. Gentleman has just entered the Chamber.

Mr. Heffer: So what? I heard what the hon. Gentleman has said.

Mr. Favell: My constituency also happens to be on the Mersey, but my constituents do not depend on Socialist masters to provide for all. Four fifths of council tenants in my area do not receive housing benefit because we have an independence culture and the people are happier. Unemployment in my constituency is now under 7 per cent. Such are the differences between a town further up the Mersey and Liverpool, where the people who run that city insist on having the local population dependent upon them because that keeps them in their fat jobs in the town hall.

Mr. Battle: Is the hon. Gentleman suggesting that the unemployed should have their housing benefit cut to price themselves into work? Is that the logic of his argument?

Mr. Favell: The logic of my argument is to encourage people to go out to work rather than to stay at home.

Mr. Battle: Where are they going to work?

Mr. Favell: It is to the Government's great credit that they have recognised the hardship cases. The hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) has said that the surgeries of Opposition Members have been packed with people bemoaning their loss of housing benefit, but in the previous breath he was bemoaning the lack of people claiming transitional relief. The only conclusion that I can draw from that is that fewer people are dissatisfied with their lot than the hon. Gentleman would have us believe.

I was glad to learn from my hon. Friend of the Government's determination to continue to roll back the sea of housing benefit, which now reaches one in three households in the United Kingdom. I have already mentioned the unemployment trap in places such as Liverpool and Manchester, which are close to my constituency, but such unemployed people will be relieved by the doubling of family credit.

Housing benefit has other unwelcome effects. For example, as much as 57 per cent. of the population of Manchester depend upon housing benefit to pay their rates. Therefore, there is absolutely no incentive for that town hall to keep its spending down. For that reason, I also welcome the introduction of the 20 per cent. payment of the community charge, which will be paid for by everyone. That will control spending. It will bring sense to our town halls; and the sooner it is introduced, the better. I shall have no hesitation in supporting my right hon. and hon. Friends in the Lobbies tonight.

5.40 pm

Mrs. Maria Fyfe (Glasgow, Maryhill): Like other Opposition Members—if not Conservative ones—I have talked to people in my surgery, who are in tears, who wonder how they will cope with the severe loss of the income that they used to get in housing benefit. Some of them have asked me to explain why this is happening, because they cannot quite believe it. I shall send a copy of today's *Hansard* to every one of them. Then they will understand why this is happening—when they read the speeches made by Conservative Members, whose conduct hardly merits the description of "honourable". They inflict misery on people who have done nothing to deserve it.

We have heard how hard it is to achieve the right balance, and that the objective of the Government is to protect the poorest. I shall spend a few minutes talking about a mere sample of the hardship cases that I have

[Mrs. Maria Fyfe]

heard of in my surgery. These people are only a few of the large number of losers in Maryhill and other constituencies. The Government have said that they aim their benefits at those who need them most. I know of a wide variety of people in all sorts of need. Who will benefit if they do not?

I shall use people's initials, because some of them have expressed the fear that if I name them in public they will incur some sort of disbenefit. That shows the sort of mentality that people get into when they are desperately poor and do not know where the next penny to buy a loaf of bread will come from. They fear to raise their cases because of the sort of people who make up this Government.

Mrs. S, a widow on a pension, will have to find an extra £49·60 a month to pay rent and rates. I know of two couples who are losing their higher pension premium on benefit supplements. One of those couples used to be on invalidity benefit. They changed to the old-age pension, so they are denied the higher pension premium and will be worse off by £48 a month. Another couple, have lost their housing benefit supplement and two chronic sickness allowances. They will be worse off to the tune of £37·80 a month. These people are already on very low incomes. There are pensioners in my constituency who are losing anything from £17·36 a month to £66·20 a month—not the £7 or £8 a week of which a Conservative Member spoke earlier.

One man had a distinguished war service. He proudly showed me the commendation with which he left the Army at the end of the second world war. He loses £38 a month. He told me—he could hardly control his voice because he was shaking with anger and very upset—that this was the reward he got for serving his country and being a hero years ago. Now he was being treated like this.

The Government talk about pensioners who have savings over the limit. One couple have a whole £3,000—a fortune. That is nothing to many Conservative Members, who have their profits from the City and from other businesses on top of their salaries as Members of Parliament. This couple received the £3,000 as a lump sum after a recent retirement. They will have to find an extra £23.60 a month.

I shall now give some examples drawn from the single unemployed. One such person, on income support, is a private tenant in the much vaunted private sector, with a private landlord. He used to receive a sizeable housing benefit but now finds he has much more to pay. He will have to find another £70 a month merely to keep his private landlord in the better standard of living to which he is accustomed.

A single pregnant unemployed woman will lose the transitional protection following the birth of her child, and will have £10 a week extra with which to bring up the baby. As was said earlier, that is the price of a small round in the Bar of the House, and it is the amount with which she will have to bring up her child.

Let us consider the mentally ill and handicapped. There are people in a housing association in my constituency which is especially intended for the mentally handicapped. They will lose benefit because the extra services no longer count towards housing benefit.

I could multiply these examples, but I also want to mention people who have been in receipt of industrial injury benefit. A disabled pensioner had an accident at work and could no longer be employed. He will have to find an extra £74·80 a month. A widow of a man who was injured at work and who eventually died from his injuries now finds that she will have to pay £99·07 more a month. The worst case of all that has come to my attention is that of a man who is disabled and retired following an accident at work. He will have to find an extra £102·36 a month——

Mr. Greg Knight (Derby, North): Will the hon. Lady give way?

Mrs. Fyfe: I will not give way; but I will tell the hon. Gentleman something. I am not here to engage in a polite debate, as if this were university debating club. I am here to speak for my constituents, who have no voice of their own—but it will be heard today. I urge my hon. Friends not to make fine speeches—they are wasted on Conservative Members. They should just list case after case of the kind of hardship that people are suffering. They should give the House the facts. The Government keep on saying that there must be balances, that some will benefit and some lose. We are listing case after case of those who lose——

Mr. Knight: Will the hon. Lady give way?

Mrs. Fyfe: I shall not. I have no time for the likes of people who can do this to the poorest among us. They can go and make their own speeches.

If all these people are losing, who gains? We should all speak for our constituents who have no voice of their own. El Dorado? That bunch on the Conservative Benches must be joking. It is far from that: it is a living hell for the people we are talking about.

5.48 pm

Ms. Diane Abbott (Hackney, North and Stoke Newington): Conservative Members have tried to justify the changes in the social security system, particularly the changes in the payment of housing benefit, by complaining that one in three households get housing benefit. When we point out to them that almost one in two households get mortgage tax relief, they have nothing to say. It is entirely characteristic of the Government that when the poor get money it is a problem, but when the rich do, it is a political advance. If the problem is so serious—if it is an ipso facto problem—why have the Government nothing to say about the arrangements for paying mortgage tax relief?

A Conservative Member bravely said—it may have been an attempt at a pun—that the Government would reap long-term benefit from the changes. I do not know about that, but on the evidence of the hundreds of people who have written to me or seen me in my surgery I think that people in Hackney will reap long-term proverty from the changes—in many cases, ill-deserved poverty.

Many of those who come to see me are pensioners. We have heard many sneering remarks about the poor from Conservative Members, but many of the people who have suffered under these housing benefit changes are pensioners who have contributed all their lives to occupational pensions and who now find themselves, despite all the brave words about transitional protection, having to pay £5, £6 or £7 a week more out of incomes as tiny as £30 or £40. What long-term benefit will accrue to

them? It is as if 50 or 60 years of work, service and contributions count for nothing. They speak of paying in for many years and now having the money taken away from them.

I should like to put some questions on behalf of those people mentioned by my hon Friend the Member for Glasgow, Maryhill (Mrs. Fyfe)—people who cannot speak for themselves. Exactly how many staff are in post in the unit in Glasgow? When can the people who have applied up to the end of this month expect to be paid? People in Hackney want to know the detail about the operation of the transitional unit. While the Government are making press statements and statements in the House, people in my constituency are running up rent arrears, and now they cannot pay. Old people are terrified by the threat of eviction. They do not want to know about the Government's press release but about how the unit is working and how soon they can expect to get their money.

I should like to know exactly how long the transitional rent arrangements will apply. That is another question put to me by people in Hackney. I understand that there was a recent announcement about new protection under the arrangements for people on income support. Who will be able to claim protection? There is a great deal of confusion about that.

In my constituency, 5,000 people have lost over £5 in their heating allowances because in the past Hackney used its discretion and was quite generous to old people in its heating payments. What will be the cost of newspaper advertising and the printing of the forms for these arrangements? Presumably the announcement means that the forms will have to be reprinted and new advertisements placed. Would that money not be better spent on housing benefit? Do the Government propose to repeat their advertising campaign?

It is all very well for Conservative Members to talk in generalities and to speak about incentives to go out to work. They talk in high-arching terms of the enterprise culture. Hackney is one of the poorest areas in Britain and I cannot talk in generalities, in wide-ranging terms or in the abstract. I can only talk about the hundreds of cases of real loss and poverty and about the fears that I deal with as a result of the Government's change in housing benefit. I want specific answers to specific questions, because public relations rhetoric will not put food on the tables of my pensioners in Hackney.

5.53 pm

Mr. Neil Hamilton (Tatton): I am sorry that the hon. Member for Ashfield (Mr. Haynes) introduced an unfortunate party political note into the debate, when he sought to advance the proposition that, because very few of us were in the Chamber to listen to the debate Conservative Members did not care about the poor. I apologise to the House for having to pop in and out of the Chamber. That was because constituents and others had come to see me about a variety of matters, basically to do with the Barlow Clowes affair, and I felt that it was right to see them. I should like to correct the record. A majority of Conservative Members are in the Chamber at the moment, and to advance propositions such as that advanced by the hon. Gentleman does not help us to understand the problems of poverty or to cure the inefficiencies of the social security system. We have a long way to go to achieve that.

I am sorry that the hon. Member for Glasgow, Maryhill (Mrs. Fyfe) did not allow my hon. Friend the Member for Derby, North (Mr. Knight) to intervene in her speech. We are not here just to make set speeches into microphones. The hon. Lady should seek membership of inferior assemblies, such as the one in Strasbourg, if she wishes to operate in that way. My hon. Friend wanted to put a point to her and she refused to allow him to do so. If we all took that attitude it would mean the end of parliamentary debate.

I listened to the cases that the hon. Lady described and would have liked to ask her how many of those cases have been reconsidered in the light of the transitional arrangements that have been announced. It seems likely that the transitional arrangements will cover a great many of them.

Mr. William McKelvey (Kilmarnock and Loudoun): A great many people in Scotland applied for transitional benefits, but encountered difficulties because no forms were available. Eventually they got the forms, and two weeks ago I asked a Scottish Minister to name one person who had received a transitional payment, which, after all, is to relieve hardship. He could not supply one name. I put down a parliamentary question asking for the names or the numbers of those in Scotland who had received transitional benefit. The Minister wrote to me saying that he could not do so at the time and that he would reply further at the earliest opportunity. He has failed to do so. May I assume that no one in Scotland has received transitional benefit and that people are suffering hardship because of massive reductions in benefit? Perhaps the hon. Gentleman can answer that question.

Mr. Hamilton: I do not know whether the hon. Gentleman is criticising the public sector and thinks that we would do better to contract out or privatise. It may well be that he is correct. I am not in possession of the facts, and I am not sure whether he is. I am not prepared to attempt to answer the question that he asked without hearing the other side from the Minister concerned.

It is extraordinary that, when speaking about the effect of the housing benefit reforms, Opposition Members are unable to agree that the social security reviews have bestowed significant advantages on people. Nobody denies that under these reforms there are losers. Constituents have come to me with problems similar to those described by Opposition Members. I am not unaware of the problems of poverty, as Opposition Members seek to say.

When we look at the overall effect of the reforms, the whole package—and that is the only fair way to look at it—we see that nearly nine out of 10 people on benefit are now receiving the same amount as before, or are getting more money. Even after taking account of inflation, 57 per cent. of those on income-related benefits, such as housing benefit, are better off, or no worse off, including 81 per cent. of sick and disabled people, 77 per cent. of couples with children and 60 per cent. of single parents. Although there have been losers, there are significant gainers, and they outnumber those who have lost.

Mr. Tony Banks: No doubt the hon. Gentleman accepts that we have not made up these examples. We are only responding to people who come to us and say that they are worse off. We take no pleasure from giving these examples. Will the hon. Gentleman tell me why anyone previously on supplementary benefit should be made worse off? Even if

[Mr. Tony Banks]

there were only one, that would be grounds for complaint. He knows that many thousands are worse off. Why should anyone be worse off?

Mr. Hamilton: I shall come to that later in my speech. My hon. Friend the Member for Ipswich (Mr. Irvine) gave cogent examples of cases where, under the old rules, it could hardly be fairly stated that all recipients of benefit were justified in claiming it. I am not saying that individual examples should be quoted across the Chamber, but some people might be described as deserving cases. In any big reform of the social security system, if we guarantee that no recipient will lose, we will not be able to make sensible reforms that introduce more accurate targeting according to need. Unless we face the problems that the Government have at least partially faced, we shall not be able to sustain the system of social security that has been built up over the years in an ad hoc way without any centralised thought behind it and with very little rationale.

Mr. Robert Hayward (Kingswood): Does my hon. Friend agree that the changes to which he is referring emanate from a level of expenditure by the state that is dramatically higher than the level that we inherited in 1978-79? When we are talking about the changes, we must bear in mind the massive improvements that the Government have introduced over the past few years.

Mr. Hamilton: I entirely agree. Opposition Members talk of savage cuts in the social security budget, but they must be totally unaware that this year the social security budget is in excess of £50,000 million. Even after the changes that have been announced, although we are saving about £600 million on housing benefit, £650 million extra is being spent on family credit and income support. We are seeking—no one is saying that we shall succeed in every case—to target the expenditure more accurately on those who are most in need.

Mrs. Beckett: With respect to the hon. Gentleman and his hon. Friend the Member for Kingswood (Mr. Hayward), if they go back to the Whips Office they will find that they have been given the brief for the debates that we had last year and the year before, not the brief for the speeches that they should be making today.

Let me correct the figures given by the hon. Member for Tatton (Mr. Hamilton), which are completely inaccurate. There is no way in which there are more gainers than losers from the so-called reforms. Even the figures given by the hon. Gentleman for people who stand still are inaccurate, although I accept that they are Government figures, so I do not altogether blame the hon. Gentleman for that. However, his figures for increased expenditure on family credit assume, for example, a vastly greater take-up of family credit. That is not money being spent now; that is money that the Government say will be spent. In fact, the take-up of family credit is running at half what the Government expected, so all the hon Gentleman's figures for increased spending are totally illusory and flawed. I suggest that he goes back to his hon. Friends in the Whips' Office and has a word with them about the Trade Descriptions Act.

Mr. Hamilton: I cannot accept what the hon. Lady says, because the Government have laid down a planning total that is available for spending on social security benefits if those who are entitled to them take them up. I fully accept that in the past the take-up rate on many social security benefits has been inadequate. That has been one of the products of the complexity of the system. People simply could not understand the benefits to which they were entitled. That has been one of the primary causes of poverty. It is not that Governments of all persuasions have not wanted to assuage poverty, but that the huge, conglomerate social security system that has grown up ad hoc over the years has become far too complex for ordinary people to understand. They are intimidated by it.

Mr. Greg Knight: Is there not another point at issue, which the hon. Member for Glasgow, Maryhill (Mrs. Fyfe) did not address, namely, that some of the examples given to the House tonight have been of people with savings? Will my hon. Friend tell the House why someone who has substantial savings in excess of £8000 should look to the taxpayer before using his or her own resources?

Mr. Hamilton: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend. I confess some astonishment at the remarks of the hon. Member for Hackney, North and Stoke Newington (Ms Abbott) in that respect, because the proposition that she appeared to be advancing was that, regardless of the level of savings, a person should be entitled to housing benefit and there should be no withdrawal rates or tapers of any kind. If ever there was an anti-Socialist proposition, it seems to me that that is it. I would welcome the hon. Lady to our side of the House with pleasure, but it appears to me rather peculiar for somebody of her political persuasion to imply that if a person has savings he or she would still qualify for the benefit when there are people on low incomes with no capital who are inadequately provided for at the moment.

Ms. Abbott: Will the hon. Gentleman accept two points? First, no Opposition Member is saying that there is no level of savings at which a person's housing benefit should be reviewed. We are drawing the Government's attention to the failings of the taper currently in operation. That is not a party political point. All the interested voluntary organisations have made similar representations to the Government.

Secondly, will the hon. Gentleman use his imagination and consider the state of mind of people in their 60s and 70s who, all their lives, have been taught that they must save against a rainy day? They are now faced with a Government who tell them that they have no option but to run down their pittance of a saving. If the hon. Gentleman has not met those terrified old people, I have. It makes no sense for a Government who make a virtue of thrift and acquisition above all other virtues to tell people in their 70s, who hold that virtue dear, that they must run down their savings to nothing.

Mr. Hamilton: I vibrate to the hon. Lady's theme, but I am sure that she would not be able to be more specific about the level of savings that she would take as the point at which withdrawals would begin and about what the tapers would be. Although she agrees with my general proposition that there should be a point at which benefits should be withdrawn, she has not been candid enough with the House to confess what the figure should be.

The rent and rate tapers that we are debating today are a significant improvement on what they were before. As the hon. Lady will know, the rent taper has been changed

from 33 to 65 per cent., and the rate taper from 13 to 20 per cent. The starting point for calculating benefit under the new scheme is 100 per cent. of rents and 80 per cent. of rates, rather than 60 per cent. as it was before. That is a significant improvement for people on low incomes with small amounts of capital.

Similarly, to answer the hon. Lady's charge that the Government are introducing a disincentive to save, I should say that we are liberalising the capital rules. Previously, any interest that was received over and above the income on a capital sum of £3,000 was subjected to the withdrawals and tapers. We have now introduced a scheme whereby the interest on the first £3,000 is disregarded entirely, and a person does not lose the benefit entirely, until the sum of £8,000 is reached. That is far more reasonable, because the rate of interest that is assumed on a sum of between £3,000 and £3,250 is 1·6 per cent. No one in this country in his right mind is investing his money and receiving only 1·6 per cent. interest on it. Even on the figures that the Government have chosen to take for the withdrawal of benefit, we are being generous to people and taking only a small portion of the income that they receive as the cause of the reduction in their benefit.

All those are compromises. We can all make claims for different figures, capital limits, tapers and withdrawals. An argument could be constructed for any of them, but it is disingenuous of Opposition Members to criticise the figures that we have chosen, without providing figures of their own in return so that we can subject them to the same criticism that they throw at us. That is the weakness of the Opposition. They will not come clean with us in the way that we, as a Government, have come clean with them.

I welcome the housing benefit review and the changes that have been announced. I welcome also the transitional arrangements, because it is wrong for significant alterations in people's expectations to occur in too sharp a way. That is why I thought it was wrong when Sir Keith Joseph, now Lord Joseph, introduced changes in student grant entitlements in 1985. People had not been able to build into their expectations the changes that were announced. Although I am in favour of making the changes on a long-term basis, there should be a period when we can work ourselves into the new system. That is only fair and just, and therefore I welcome the Government's desire to make the changes that we are debating.

Mr. Tony Banks: How long will that period last?

Mr. Hamilton: We can argue about that. It is much better to take the view that we should monitor how the system works, the take-up levels and how great the need is, and then adjust the system in the light of experience, rather than take a theoretical view at the start and make hard and fast decisions that may turn out to be wrong.

Mr. Winnick: I echo all the views put forward by my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, North and Stoke Newington (Ms. Abbott) about the hardship and misery that has been caused by the change in the housing benefit regulations. Does the hon. Gentleman receive tax relief on his mortgage interest, or has he decided to refund that sum to the Exchequer? Surely on his income, which, as I understand it, is not exclusively parliamentary, he does not require any such financial assistance.

Mr. Hamilton: I have a mortgage and I claim tax relief on the maximum amount allowed of £30,000. Is the implication of the hon. Gentleman's remark that the Labour party is now in favour of the abolition of mortgage interest relief? Again, the hon. Gentleman—whom I would dearly love to see on the Opposition Front Bench; I cannot think why he has not been promoted, nor why I have not been promoted, because we could make a double act of this—makes a disingenuous point. If we were starting from scratch, we would not introduce mortgage interest relief. It is an anomaly in the tax system that has existed for a long time. However, for practical reasons, neither party——

Mr. Haynes: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The hon. Member for Tatton (Mr. Hamilton) has taken 17 minutes up to now. He knows that there is not enough time for every hon. Member who wishes to speak. Other hon. Members have been present throughout the debate, but he walked in after it had begun and is making a long speech because no other Conservative Members wish to speak. It is completely unfair.

Mr. Hamilton: It is undesirable that Opposition Front-Bench Members should attack their Back-Bench colleagues for intervening in my speech and so protracting it. I am always delighted to give way, because that is what true debate is all about, rather than simply moving from Front-Bench spokesman to Back Bencher bawling out views that add nothing to the debate. The exchanges that we have had across the Floor have brought a great deal of light to the debate, unlike the hon. Gentleman, who merely adds heat and noise, which gets us nowhere.

Mr. Haynes: That is not true. Now sit down.

Mr. Hamilton: As the hon. Gentleman knows, I am always keen to support our democratic parliamentary institutions and to debate, calmly and rationally, matters such as this, which are of great importance to our constituents. I only wish that many more Labour Members took the same view. If they did, I am sure that their party would do much better in the country. I am certainly not attempting to filibuster. I have made most of the points that I wanted to make in an orderly way in a somewhat disorderly way as a result of the interventions of Opposition Members.

Mr. Tom Clarke (Monklands, West): Further to the point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am sure that the House wishes to assist you in having a genuine debate. Surely it is unreasonable, as well as unfair, for an hon. Member who has not heard all the debate to keep waiting other hon. Members, including my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Battle), who have heard all the debate and are anxious to speak.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): I hope that the hon. Member for Tatton (Mr. Hamilton) will have regard to the points of order that have been raised.

Mr. Hamilton: I do not wish to be unreasonable. Nothing is further from my thoughts, and I shall sit down shortly. I have been in a similar situation on many previous occasions when Opposition Members have spoken at inordinate length without adding as much light to the debate as my speech has done. I feel for them, and I shall observe the points that have been made.

All I would say about the system that we are defending here today is that we are introducing a simplified system

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that will add to the understanding or ordinary people, for whom the system is constructed. It is fairer than the old system. It deals partly with the problems of the poverty trap and it targets more accurately the benefits that are available under our social security system. Therefore, I have no hesitation in supporting the Government's amendment to the Opposition's motion. Conservative Members are prepared honestly to face the problems of the social security system, whereas the Opposition are prepared only to make generalised assertions, without telling us what their proposals would be. They are prepared to attack us without giving us the opportunity to attack them.

6.14 pm

Mr. John Battle (Leeds, West): Government Back Benchers have expressed confusion about particular points that have been made, and that confusion extends to the Government Front Bench. I am glad to see the hon. Member for Fareham (Mr. Lloyd) on the Government Front Bench. The hon. Gentleman has inherited the post of Under-Secretary of State from the fastest moving Minister, as he has been described in the press today, who has moved on to other things.

As we have been reminded, we have said goodbye to paragraphs in the manual and we have now said goodbye to the Under-Secretary of State. However, he has left behind the remains of the debate on housing benefit that I attended, as I have attended every minute of this debate, late at night on 19 July. The Under-Secretary of State might like to recall his colleague to answer a point that arises from something that he said during that debate or ask his Department for a clear answer, because people need to know.

The then Under-Secretary of State was pressed by my hon. Friend the Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) about the transitional arrangements. He said:

"The transitional protection will run from the beginning of April until 31 July for those who apply after 31 July. The date of 31 July is not a cut-off point for the receipt of applications. I hope that I have made that point clear."

Some of us were surprised by that remark, and when I pressed the Minister further he said:

"We have given that undertaking several times. I said in my introductory remarks that the 31 July date is not a deadline for applications. It is a deadline for transitional protection, which can be paid only up to that date, but applications will be welcome beyond that time."—[*Official Report*, 19 July 1988; Vol. 137, c. 1051-61.]

I am advised that if members of the public telephone the DSS to ask about that reply, they are told that it was wrong. I hope that the Minister will assure the House that it was not wrong. I hope that he will clarify that point, because people do not know what the transitional arrangements are. People may not be put off from applying, but will those who apply after 31 July receive transitional protection only from the date of application and not from 1 April? That could make a world of difference, particularly if the transitional payments cannot be processed until months later, because that will mean that such people are applying after the period of transitional protection so they will not be entitled to that relief. If that reference simply disappears from *Hansard*, it will be a case of Government by Tipp-Ex—rubbing out the inconvenient bits rather than putting before us policies that can be clearly explained to the people whom we represent.

There are only five days to go before the 31 July deadline. Conservative Members do not seem to be aware of the scale of what they simply refer to as anomalies. Leeds has 60,000 council tenants on benefits and 17,000 private tenants, of whom 10,000 receive income support. Originally, the transitional protection did not extend to those who did not receive income support—in other words, 25,000 of those 60,000. Then the Government extended the scheme to those who receive income support, but not to those who receive over 80 per cent. help with their rates, which is the vast majority of that group, nor those who have lost less than £2·50 a week. In other words, they have not lost enough to be cushioned against the changes.

In effect, only 25,000 in Leeds may receive help. According to anybody's arithmetic, there are clearly many more losers than gainers. As I said last week, elderly people are now arriving at my advice surgeries in tears asking why their benefits have been cut for the first time in their lives. They cannot understand the Government's policies.

Mr. Greg Knight: I have been listening carefully to the hon. Gentleman. Will he explain why, if things are as bad as he makes out, on an Opposition day only five Labour Back Benchers are in the Chamber? Is that not a disgrace?

Mr. Battle: I am growing used to the Government's tactics in this Chamber. When Conservative Members do not have an argument to make, they try to slide in a little abuse to keep the debate going.

Mr. Tom Clarke: My hon. Friend was referring to the elderly, but does he accept that the problems he outlines, which are common to most constituencies, suggest that the Government's policies have struck a blow at community care? Is he not surprised that, although the Griffiths report was published the day after the Budget, there has still been no Government statement, no debate, and no understanding of the Government's view of it?

Mr. Battle: Someone has already commented that it seems as though the Government's social security policy is made up day by day. That may now change because the Department has been divided, but we are still looking for clear policies to help people, rather than accepting the fictitious impression given by the Government, which has been reinforced by Conservative Members restating it, that people are being supported. That still does not explain to my constituents where they stand. Before 1 April, they paid £13·60 rent out of their pensions, but then they found that it had been increased to £22·11. It can be argued that the capital rules have changed and that those pensioners will get their money back. However, those repayments will only be backdated to 30 May, not 1 April, which means that such pensioners will lose two months' money at the rate of £8·51 per week. Where do they stand? Why must they lose as a result of the Government changing their mind over a period of three weeks since the original rent regulations came before Parliament?

Leeds city council is currently running a programme to identify cases eligible for transitional protection. However, that programme will be ready only at the end of this week, which coincidentally matches the very date of the scheme's

closure. It seems to many of us that the Government are making up the rules as they fumble along. They produced form RR4, which claimants must obtain and complete before returning it to the Glasgow unit. That unit then sends those details to each local authority, and they in turn fill in form TP3 and return it to Glasgow. Glasgow then sends the claimant a declaration, which must be signed before any payment can be made.

There are two problems with that process. First, form RR4, having barely been distributed, is already out of date because its first draft did not include those who are on income support, but it does now because the rules have been changed. Secondly—and more disastrous for the people whom we represent—claimants are forced to borrow money at high rates of interest so that they may pay their rent while they wait to learn whether or not they will get their money back. As was said by my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook), the scheme certainly hits the erosion factor.

In a question for written answer, I asked the Minister whether any account had been taken in the calculations of housing benefit for next year of the rent increases that will result from the implementation of the Housing Act in September. His answer was crystal clear—that housing benefit would not be there to match the rent increases accruing as a result of the introduction of the Housing Act this autumn.

That will mean that in future, the poor in society—I note that the hon. Member for Tatton (Mr. Hamilton), who spoke for so long, does not have the courtesy to listen to the speeches following his, which I assumed was a custom of the House—will have to pay more than one third of their income on housing, which places them in an impossible situation. Those on low incomes will be left with absolutely no margin. There is no question of any problem in implementing increases or extra resources, as has been suggested.

The housing benefit proposals were crystal clear in the Green Paper, "The Reform of Social Security." When the whole process of reform began, the Labour party and many of my hon. Friends pressed for the figures. It was clear from one figure that housing benefit would have to be cut back. That was presented very much in the terms used by the hon. Member for Ipswich (Mr. Irvine), who suggested that people ought not to receive housing benefit, and that, if they did not have a job, the need to get the money to pay their rent will provide them with the incentive to obtain one. The cut in housing benefit—and the Government cannot get out of it now—has come home to roost on the Dispatch Box, and the Minister must answer for that cut, no matter how much he may argue that other changes have made life easier for claimants.

As one pensioner put it to me, the people who will pay the price of those changes can do the arithmetic. Their question to the Government is, "Why can't you do the arithmetic? Why are you spending more on telling the public about Sid or on advertising the 1992 Euromarket than you are on supporting and informing people who are on benefits?"

Mrs. Audrey Wise (Preston): A diabetic constituent of mine, who is aged 75, and his wife will lose £5 per week. He said to me, "This cannot be right." I had to tell him that it is correct in the Government's terms, but certainly it is not right in moral terms. Does my hon. Friend agree?

Mr. Battle: I agree absolutely. The public at large understand that one cannot take money from the poor and give it to the rich, and then claim that one is on the high moral ground. People openly see and acknowledge the injustice of doing so. I would only add this rider to my hon. Friend's observation. Although we present case after case to the Government, they are shrugged off as anomalies or as individual instances, whereas they hallmark a fault in the structure of the changes. It is the structure that is wrong, and we shall continue to challenge and expose it.

Mr. Tony Banks: A whole group of people will not benefit, and I have many instances of them in my own constituency. I refer, for example, to young single people in low-paid work. I could not elicit an answer from the Minister, but what does my hon. Friend think of a single man of 19, having a gross weekly income of £52·56, losing about £14 per week because of housing benefit changes? What am I to say to such a constituent? Should I tell him, "Don't worry, because someone else will benefit from them."? The Minister would not tell me how I should reply, so perhaps my hon. Friend will give me a clue as to what I should say about this vicious and evil Government.

Mr. Battle: What strikes me about my hon. Friend's remark is that I remember that in one of the first weeks of this Parliament, nearly one year ago, a Conservative Member suggested that perhaps the whole social security system ought to be reformed. He did not seem to realise that that process had been going on for years and that the Government set out to reform the system to achieve precisely what some Conservative Back Benchers suggest —a cut in the social security budget, regardless of who pays the price. We all know that those who will pay the price are at the bottom of society. Sadly, we are left to explain to our constituents that that reform is not bettering people but is taking money from the worst-off for redistribution not only in the social security system but also through the tax system to ensure that the best-off in our society benefit from it. That is the difficulty.

I ask the Minister to give a clear and unequivocal statement about the transitional arrangements. Will he assure the House that paragraphs in *Hansard* of the last housing benefits debate will not be rubbed out as a mistake at the Dispatch Box by the former Minister, who has now moved on to another Department? Will the Minister stand by what was said then, or will he tell the House what is the latest situation? Unless those matters are clarified, of course people will remain anxious about whether or not they will receive transitional payments. It is not simply that people have had money taken away from them, but that the Government's proposals to do something even about the margins of that problem are seriously in question.

Let me drive home to the Government a point made to me by a pensioner. The people who pay the price can do the arithmetic. I hope that the Minister is getting his Department to do the arithmetic about all the cases that the Opposition have mentioned this afternoon. Conservative Members who refuse to sit and listen to the debate and who write off our examples—as my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) has said—as if we had invented fictitious characters, should listen to us rather than go into the Lobby tonight to vote against us ostrich-like with their heads in the sand. If they do that, they will be seen to be

[Mr. Battle]

deliberately and blindly voting down the poor into the margins of our society, and they should be held to account in every constituency in the country.

6.30 pm

Mr. Michael Jack (Fylde): I have sat and listened to the debate from the start, and I have paid close attention to the argument by the hon. Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Battle) in his moving address. I acknowledge that he and many of his hon. Friends have considerable knowledge of the subject, and that they have put with passion and care their arguments about the way in which the changes in social security, and particularly in housing benefit, have affected their constituents.

I hope, however, that the hon. Member for Leeds, West does not think that he and his hon. Friends have a monopoly in their handling of these issues, or that Conservative Members are entirely hard-hearted. The present Government have at least had the courage to get hold of the social security system and to recognise the inescapable underlying fact of a decreasing working base and an increasing number of people who are dependent for part of their lives on some form of state benefit.

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): What about mortgage relief?

Mr. Jack: Part of the Government's policy has been to reduce the standard rate of income tax, and the value of mortgage relief has been falling over a period. Let us put mortgage relief to one side. It may be a way out—*[Interruption.]* If the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) would like to make a proper intervention, I shall sit down, but sedentary interventions that have not been thought out are not helpful at this stage. The hon. Gentleman has clearly not thought out his intervention, so I shall continue.

I have paid tribute to my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Department of Social Security for his appreciation of some of the problems that followed the changes in social security. I hope that my hon. Friends will not mind my mentioning what happened when a number of us got together with my hon. Friend the Minister and told him how we saw the first stab at the subject of housing benefit. My hon. Friend listened carefully to what was said, moving quickly and arguing his case well in Government to bring forward the transitional arrangements. It is often said that once Government have decided what they want to do there is no way which they can be moved. It is a tribute to my hon. Friend's powers of advocacy that we are here tonight debating the arrangements.

Let us examine some salient points. According to a Library research note, it is estimated that in the financial year 1988-89 some 3·4 million people will still receive a rebate in connection with rent, and that 5·8 million will receive rate rebates. Despite all that has been said, the Government will be spending some £5·4 billion. That is a good deal of public money. Opposition Members do not often take into account when chastising my hon. Friends on the Front Bench the fact that someone has to pay for it all, and many taxpayers are glad that the Government have had the courage to address the problem.

Mr. Gerry Steinberg (City of Durham): Does the hon. Gentleman accept—or perhaps advocate—that an 86-year-old widow in my constituency, who receives £44 a week in pension, £35 a month in National Coal Board pension and £4·50 a week in concessionary coal allowance in lieu of coal, should now find that the Government no longer allow concessionary coal allowance money to be counted in housing benefit? She must now pay £8 a week extra. Does the hon. Gentleman believe that that old lady should help to pay for the concessions that the Government have supposedly given, or does he think that she should receive transitional help as well?

Mr. Jack: In an earlier debate my hon. Friend the Minister said that he would monitor carefully the way in which the new arrangements were to be phased in, and it is barely six months since he gave us that assurance. I am sure that he will have noted the technical point about the way in which the regulations operate.

When people came to my advice bureau, I observed that much of their confusion was due to the effects not only of increased council rents but of large rate increases. People in Lancashire have suffered from an 18·5 per cent. rate increase. Some of the background details explain why people are complaining about the cost of housing. There is a way out of some of the problems put to us by Opposition Members: to run housing more efficiently and to reduce the costs of local government.

One group has been rather missed out in this debate —the people who bought their own homes and were affected by the £6,000 capital rule. I am pleased that my hon. Friend the Minister decided to change that, because many of those people are now able to gain some benefit. I have been struck by the negative tone of the debate, in which no one has considered whether there are other ways if increasing people's income rather than expecting them to turn to the state for some form of handout. Will my hon. Friend use his Department's considerable powers to see whether there are ways of helping people who have an asset in their homes to unlock it and generate income, so that they can be freed from the dependency culture and given an added impetus?

Will my hon. Friend talk to his hon. Friends in the Treasury? I asked a parliamentary question about the number of people receiving housing benefit who also happened to be taxpayers. Will my hon. Friend ask the Treasury to tip the balance slightly to help such people to stop being taxpayers? The Conservative party has done much to reduce the standard rate of tax and increase allowances, but a little push from my hon. Friend might remove those people's need for housing benefit, thus freeing resources that could then be applied—through my hon. Friend's skills—to deal with some of the cases put to us with such compassion by Opposition Members.

Conservative Members too are compassionate; we are concerned about the factors that lead people to need housing benefit. But we also recognise the need for the social security changes, and we shall support them in the Lobby.

6.38 pm

Mrs. Margaret Beckett (Derby, South): It is right that now, before the summer recess, we should look at what is happening and will be happening to many of our constituents during and after that period. It is also right that we should remember—as my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) said at the outset—that the cut of £650 million from housing benefit payments made in

April is not a mistake, a miscalculation or a misunderstanding, but, as the Secretary of State courteously informed us, a deliberate act of Government policy.

The Minister of State gave us a long list of all the things to which the Government said goodbye in April, but I should like to remind him of an item that he omitted. They said goodbye to 1 million people who were no longer entitled to housing benefit of any kind. The act of taking that money from housing benefit was deliberately and specifically supported by the vast majority of Government Back Benchers, with a few honourable exceptions. I am pleased that so many Conservative Members have defended their Government's policy. They put their names, necks and reputations on the line and said that the Government are right to take this money from people who are suffering.

The Government have alleged that this is a more generous scheme. They say that it costs more now than it did in 1979. There are a number of reasons for that. The number of people who have retired has increased. That is a demographic change. There has been an increase in the number of unemployed people. There have been increases in rents and rates following the cuts in housing support and the rate support grant. For which of those reasons do the Government seek praise in their amendment? They have reiterated that housing benefit is paid too far up the income scale, even though some of the Ministers who have passed before us in dizzy progression at the Dispatch Box knew that the right to housing benefit was lost at far below average earnings, unless rent or rates were exceptionally high.

The next bit of the script, delivered in hushed tones, was that housing benefit went to one in three households. That always worked. It would be unkind to speculate on whether the Government Whips Office holds training sessions for Back Benchers so that it is sure that there will always be cries of "Shame," or other noises off. They were a little more subdued today than they had been in the past.

Finally, it has perhaps begun to dawn on Conservative Members that if one household in three is receiving housing benefit, many of them must be in their constituencies. It is notable that those who cried, "Forward," when they heard that magic statistic in the past soon cried, "Back," when they realised how many of the losers live in their own constituencies.

The Minister of State accused us of scouring the country looking for victims, but they came to us. I am confident that all my hon. Friends and even Conservative Members remember at least one of those who stepped forward—a pensioner who did not understand why the cuts had been made. Nobody had told her. The Prime Minister was utterly shocked and dismayed to discover at her constituency advice bureau that pensioners in her constituency were losing large sums of money.

The Government say that three years of meticulous planning went into the changes and that they were all carried out under the eagle eye of the woman who misses nothing. It looks as though the Prime Minister suffered from a severe case of unpredictable memory loss. Such memory losses are always triggered by serious Government difficulties. It is a form of anxiety neurosis for which the right hon. Lady should seek medical advice. Either the Prime Minister was incompetent because she did not know what the Government were doing, or her staff failed to warn her that this issue would cause her the most difficulty.

There is another possible explanation. Perhaps the Prime Minister hoped that her constituents would blame the local council in whose name the bad news would be sent forth. It has worked often enough in the past. Up and down the land, councils of all political colours have carried the can for cuts dictated by the Government. As with major crimes, the police nail the small fry but the bigger culprit continues to enjoy unscathed his large house and fat income. That explanation fits the evidence.

For three years, while the Opposition and a few very honourable Conservative Members, as well as housing and social security experts across the country predicted the losses that people would experience, the Government remained utterly indifferent. Even in the week after the cuts were made, the Government did nothing and said that they would continue to do nothing. It was only when they realised that they were getting stuck with the blame for their actions that they panicked and rushed through the emergency package.

Ever since, they have loudly congratulated themselves on their wisdom and generosity. Was it wisdom to give back £100 million that they should never have taken in the first place from the most vulnerable groups in the community? The Minister of State said that he thought that the Government ought to be given credit for giving back a bit of what they had taken away. Were the Government generous to keep the other £550 million? Would the Minister be grateful to a mugger who gave him the bus fare home?

Even with this much vaunted transitional protection, the scheme is still in something of a mess. My hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Battle) referred to the complicated system that local councils and the transitional payment unit have to follow. My hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, North and Stoke Newington (Ms. Abbott) referred to a recent answer to a parliamentary question about people on income support who had been given transitional protection for some of the losses that they might otherwise have faced. She referred to confusion. My hon. Friend is entirely right: many local authorities are confused. Despite the parliamentary answer, they have not been told officially of these concessions. Confusion also exists at Richmond house. When guidance was sought about the changes, all knowledge of them was denied. We are still experiencing substantial difficulties.

My hon. Friend referred to the very considerable rent arrears that are already building up in local authorities. They will be a problem for local authorities. They will be a problem for local authorities. But what frightens me about the cases that have been identified is that the people who are building up rent arrears are doing so because they believe and understand, based on Government propaganda, that they will receive transitional protection for all losses of over £2·50. I shudder to think what will happen when they realise that their enormous debts may not be paid.

It does not seem to have sunk into the minds of Conservative Members who echoed the Minister of State's self-congratulation that even if we take the Government's defence of their package face value it is still, at best, transitional protection. It escaped the hon. Member for Tatton (Mr. Hamilton) who chided my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Maryhill (Mrs. Fyfe) for giving

[Mrs. Margaret Beckett]

various case histories. Even if they are eligible for transitional protection—and it is doubtful whether all of them will be eligible—their losses will be phased in and they will lose that money. It is just a question of how fast they lose it.

Mr. Neil Hamilton: Will the hon. Lady let us into a secret? Ought there to be a needs assessment for housing benefit purposes? If so, what are the capital limits and the tapers that she would apply to the withdrawal of benefit? Furthermore, what is the estimated cost to public funds of her proposal?

Mrs. Beckett: As usual, the hon. Gentleman dwells on the capital limit. The capital limit will result in very few losses. In this day and age, a capital limit of £10,000 might be just. Most of the losers lose because of the taper, and the loss is extremely severe.

Whatever happens, the transitional protection that we are debating will be whittled away as time goes on, as rents and rates rise and as only last year's income is available to meet next year's prices. It is suggested that that process will not be fast enough for the Government. They might decide that next year the so-called acceptable loss should be £3·50 and that the year after that it should be £4·50. That loss, which is acceptable to the Government, will be on top of next year's rent and rates rises. An income of less than this year's income will have to meet next year's price increases.

Next year's rent increases, as my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, West said, will be substantial, if the Secretary of State for the Environment has his way. They will almost certainly be enough to wipe out the transitional protection that is provided for most of those who receive it. It will leave them, as the Government intended from the first, much worse off than they were in March 1988.

It may not take as long for the scheme to disappear as many Government Back Benchers fondly hope—that is, not before the villains have left the scene and the public have forgotten the names of the guilty parties. It may be next year or the year after, because the point of transitional protection is not to prevent hardship but to break people more slowly into hardship—and I use the word "break" advisedly.

Soon, other voices will be heard—the voices of the newly unemployed, the newly disabled, the newly separated and the newly retired, who are expected to manage on incomes below, in some cases far below, those that they would have received if only they had had the forethought to be 65, or jobless, or sick last year rather than this. The Government have not yet abolished the welfare state, but they are steadily eroding its foundations.

At my weekend advice bureau, I met an extremely intelligent, competent and sensible woman who has worked all her life and is proud of it and who is extremely independent. She has been unlucky. Her marriage failed after many years and she has become afflicted with arthritis. She has only a small occupational pension in addition to the state pension. She receives no other help or support. She is precisely one of those to whom so many Conservative Members have referred in the debate, who are not in sufficient need to deserve help under this Government. She is a sensible person and has no extravagances, but she tells me that she cannot live on her income. She has been fortunate enough to get some part-time work but it is not easy for her to do it because of her arthritis. She asks me what she is to do and how she will manage when she is no longer fit to work, and I do not know what to tell her.

What would the Minister tell her? There is no doubt that her income will drop substantially if she has to cease work. Would the Minister tell her that the country cannot afford any more because we must give priority to those who are already among the wealthiest? Should I tell her that the Government believe that it is wrong to withdraw income from the wealthy at more than 40p in every extra pound, but that it is right to take 80p to 95p from the poor?

The Government have justified the cuts and praised themselves for phasing them in by saying over and over again that we must not help people who do not need help and that we must liberate them from dependency. The Government define the people who really need help as those who are already wealthy. They define those who do not need help as those who are on low incomes. They use the stick for the poor and the carrot for the wealthy.

It is not even true that the Government set their face against dependency. Through the regulations and guidelines, they are telling people to depend on friends and relatives and to scrounge from them. The Government demand that people ask for charity—anything, as long as they do not ask for their rights in a fair society. That would be too independent by half.

The history of the transitional protection scheme is shabby and sordid. The scheme is inadequate, short-term, short-sighted and a sop to public concern. One could call it the figleaf to cover the Government's shame, except that this Government have no shame and show no justice.

6.53 pm

Mr. Scott: I take the opportunity—the last, I imagine—with the leave of the House, not to reassert the reasons why we introduced the housing benefit scheme in its present form or why we were convinced by rational argument of the need for transitional protection, but to allay some of the anxieties that have been raised during the debate and to answer a number of points that have been made.

I shall first take the opportunity utterly to refute the point made by the hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett), that the Government have in any sense embarked on undermining the welfare state or the social security system. Our budget for social security is now about £50 billion a year. It is the largest single programme of the Government, and it is larger now than it has ever been. I cannot accept the hon. Lady's strictures. If we are to be criticised simply because we want to ensure that the money is spent as effectively as possible, she has chosen the wrong target.

It is important to answer some of the points that have been raised, not least because there are people outside the House who may have been made anxious by some of the comments made by Opposition Members.

Mr. Tony Banks *rose*——

Mr. Scott: I shall deal first with the numbers and statistics involved in the introduction of the transitional protection system, because I was criticised for not dealing with them in my opening speech. Opposition Members have had a great deal of fun with the 68 payments made so far.

Mr. Robin Cook: It is right.

Mr. Scott: Of course it is right: the hon. Gentleman announced the figure and I did not challenge the assertion that that is the number of payments that have been made.

Mr. Tony Banks *rose*——

Mr. Scott: Much more significant for the people who are awaiting help from the transitional protection system that we have introduced are the following figures: first, some 4 million application forms have been issued by the Government and the unit; 119,000 and over have been received back; nearly 50,000 have been sent out to local authorities, asking them for information so that the applications can be processed; nearly 8,000 of those have come back; and more than 1,700 people have been told that they will receive payment.

Those figures show that, whatever fun can be had with the 68 payments, the system of transitional protection is now on stream to provide the help that we intend to provide for those who need it. I understand why there was an element of impatience, but it was right to introduce the system with trained staff and properly thought out arrangements.

Mr. Tony Banks *rose*——

Mr. Scott: I cannot resist the impatience of the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Tony Banks: I assure the Minister that I can resist him with no great difficulty. Why can he not give local authorities more resources—at the moment they receive only about £5 per form—so that they make their checks that much more quickly? Demands are being placed on local authorities that many of them are not in a position to meet.

Mr. Scott: There were negotiations between the Department and the local authorities, and satisfactory arrangements were made to compensate local authorities for their work. I am sure that the vast majority of them will show as much commitment and enthusiasm in helping us to operate the transitional protection as they did in bringing the housing benefits scheme itself into operation.

We estimate that the scheme that we have introduced will help more than 300,000 people, at a cost of £65 million. Opposition Members had fun with projections about the length of time that it would take to process applications. The information that I obtained on my trip to Glasgow yesterday was that some applications are being dealt with in two to three weeks. The maximum time that the processing takes is about eight weeks, and as the staff become more and more familiar with the operation of the scheme, so we hope that the average time will be consistently reduced.

We are anxious to provide the help as quickly as possible to those whose claims are successful. I was immensely impressed yesterday to hear staff answering the freephone and analysing claimants' circumstances so as to give quick and clear advice as to whether they qualified and, if so, how they could apply for help.

Opposition Members were worried about the date of 31 July. I should make it clear that 31 July is the date applying only to those affected by the change in the capital rule from £6,000 to £8,000. Bearing in mind the publicity associated with the introduction of the scheme, I should have thought that three months would have been ample for someone discovering that he had capital of between £6,000 and £8,000 to apply for transitional protection. Even if people fail to do that, however, an adjusted form of transitional protection will be available to them. In any case, the 31 July date does not apply to help under transitional protection in general, and no one should worry about his ability to obtain help if he applies beyond that date for ordinary transitional protection.

The hon. Member for Livingston urged me to make an announcement about the way in which the transitional protection would be eroded, as he put it. The important announcement about transitional protection has already been made. I made it at the Dispatch Box, and other Ministers have reiterated it. Transitional payments will continue as necessary into future years. The exact arrangements will depend on the extent of the loss and the pace at which people's benefits and other income changes in the years ahead. Increasing prosperity in our strong economy may well affect that.

We will come forward with detailed arrangements before the end of the year, but it is important for us to be able to establish, before announcing those details, a clear idea of the extent of successful claims for transitional protection and the average payments that are being made.

I welcome back the hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye (Mr. Kennedy) and whichever party he is representing this month. I can understand him missing some of our advertising in *The Sun* or the *News of the World*, but I cannot understand him missing the advertisements which appeared in the Scottish newspapers. We spent some £265,000 on that advertising campaign, and we are about to spend rather more on the second stage of our advertising. I believe that, when we have completed that, there will be no excuse at all for anyone not being aware of the availability of the scheme, which will bring real help to those who need it. I commend the amendment to the House, and I ask my right hon. and hon. Friends to support it in the Lobby.

Question put, That the original words stand part of the Question:

The House divided: Ayes 210, Noes 279.

Division No. 445] **[7.00 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Allen, Graham
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank

Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
John, Brynmor
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kilfedder, James
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
Macdonald, Calum A.
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Richardson, Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerry
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Nigel Griffiths.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amess, David
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Body, Sir Richard
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl'ls)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carrington, Matthew
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Durant, Tony
Emery, Sir Peter
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fishburn, Dudley
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*

Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Sir Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Sir Charles
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertfordshire N)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Walden, George
Waller, Gary
Wallers, Sir Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Noes:

Mr. David Lightbown and
Mr. Kenneth Carlisle.

Question accordingly negatived.

Question, That the proposed words be there added, *put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 30 (Questions on amendments), and agreed to.*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *forthwith declared the main Question, as amended, to be agreed to.*

Resolved,

That this House applauds the Government's recent reforms of social security; notes that these will result in more taxpayers' money being spent this year than if the old system had continued, and spent in a way better targeted towards those in most need; recognises that the coverage of housing benefit had become too broad; notes that after the reforms housing benefit will still be received by more households than in 1979 and at greater real cost to the taxpayer; welcomes the Government's announcement of 27th April that some transitional protection for losses in housing benefit is to be made available to people in vulnerable groups; commends the Government for the speed with which the unit to administer these payments has been set up; and congratulates it on meeting its stated target of making the first payments in July.

Transport Policies

7.14 pm

Mr. Robert Hughes (Aberdeen, North): I beg to move,

That this House condemns the Government's irresponsible transport polices which are careless of the social and economic needs of individuals and communities, have failed the travelling public, put lives at risk and caused great hardship and inconvenience; and calls upon Her Majesty's Government to introduce transport polices which give proper priority to people's needs for safety and service.

Hon. Members who are regular attenders of transport debates have a feeling of deja vu. It seems that almost every transport debate is preceded by a ministerial reshuffle. Therefore, my first duty is to congratulate the Secretary of State on having survived this time. My second duty is to pass on my congratultions to the hon. Member for Enfield, Southgate (Mr. Portillo) on his promotion to Minister of State, Department of Transport.

There will be general and genuine regret at the departure of the hon. Member for Hampshire, North-West (Sir D. Mitchell). Yesterday was a good news-bad news day for him. The good news was that he was offered a knighthood, and the bad news was that he had to go to the Government Back Benches to get it. Quite frankly, he deserves more than that. He vigorously defended successive policies with successive Secretaries of State. I am glad to see him in his place. All hon. Members look forward to his further contributions to our transport debates—all the more so now that he is free of the shackles of ministerial responsibility.

One wonders at the unreality of the Government's amendment. They seem to live in a totally different world from that of ordinary mortals. A cursory glance at press headlines over the past few weeks will enable one to see the story of traffic chaos on the roads, and of the Government being under attack for their failure to preserve their road maintenance programme and being behind with their by-pass programme. There is astonishing chaos at airports, and stories of sit-downs in the middle of Luton airport runway because of great dissatisfaction with what has been happening. Yet the Government seem to pretend that everything is all right.

Our motion sets out the truth. The Government are obsessed with deregulation, privatisation and cost cutting. Quite frankly, that attitude pushes safety and the well-being of the public to the back of the minds of those who run the transport system. One of the most chilling statements to come from the King's Cross disaster inquiry was made by one witness, who said:

"We thought of fire in relation to damage to property and not as a hazard to passengers."

That is a most chilling report, and it was made because of the Government's obsession with deregulation, privatisation and cost cutting. It puts a dead hand on the initiative of those who seek to serve public industries. There is no doubt that the people in British Rail who want to plan for a better future find themselves stifled by constant references to bringing in private capital.

I fully understand why the Government are embarrassed at their philosophical inadequacies and the way in which they have been exposed by recent events. I appreciate that they sought to divert people from the real problems that face them by having a question planted and by giving a response to the North committee report. It was an attempt to divert the attention of the general public from what is happening. Having had a copy of the Minister's reply placed on the board at 6.30 this evening, I cannot be expected to comment on it in full or in any great depth. At a quick glance, I see that there is a lot of sense in it. I particularly welcome traffic light monitoring to stop people steaming through intersections long after the lights have changed to red. It is an extremely dangerous practice.

High technology is mentioned in the North report and in the Minister's response, but there is no mention of who is to pay for it. If it is to be the local authorities, it will be no use asking hard-pressed rate-capped authorities in London—where much of the problem of traffic congestion arises—to find the money to pay for that sort of technology. The Minister must be a lot more positive about where the finance will come from.

The Minister ducked the controversial issue of random breath testing. Frankly, I support it, and I believe that it is an additional arm of enforcement that the police need —unlike the Under-Secretary, who appears to believe that it is a substitute for current enforcement procedures. Perhaps the Under-Secretary will explain the difference between random breath testing and discretionary testing. Discretionary testing would appear to be as unconnected as random testing with the commission of an offence. I hope that he is not trying to smuggle in the sus law in another form—"You look a likely candidate for testing" —because that may cause a problem.

We are concerned about the Government's shortcomings, especially in relation to air traffic control and holiday traffic. We have heard all the old, tired and familiar excuses. It is always someone else's fault. It is the greedy holiday company, the strikes of foreign traffic controllers or the Civil Aviation Authority—anybody or everybody is to blame except the Government. However, the Government have accepted responsibility. A few weeks ago they began to see the writing on the wall, so they asked the Civil Aviation Authority to provide, by September, some plans to prevent the chaos next year. They cannot have it both ways; either they have responsibility or they do not.

We have been worried about air traffic control and safety for a very long time. There are no Ministers left at the Department of Transport who were in office when the Airports Act, which privatised British airports, was considered, but officials will remember that when that measure was going through its various stages we moved amendments to regulate the hours and the conditions of service of air traffic controllers. We were concerned about fatigue, and the amount of work carried out, but the Government steadfastly refused to have anything to do with it. We argued that if pilots had regulated hours of work, so should air traffic controllers. The Government, however, assured us that everything was all right.

Flow control has now been introduced because of a spate of near-misses. It was public outcry and concern about what was happening that brought about flow control. The Civil Aviation Authority and the Government between them bungled the whole issue, because none of this was unexpected. The amount of traffic was expected. As late as 14 July, the Under-Secretary told me that in March the Government had been assured by the Civil Aviation Authority that there would be some restriction on the number of planes flying. I am not quite sure what the sentence means, but it says that the National Air Traffic Services

"anticipated an increase compared to the average delay of 10 to 15 minutes experienced in 1987."—[*Official Report*, 18 July 1988; Vol. 137, c. 339.]

I am not sure whether the Minister was saying that the average was 10 to 15 minutes in 1987 or whether he was expecting an increase of 10 to 15 minutes this year. If it was the latter, it was clearly a misprint, because it should be 10 to 15 hours, which is what has been happening.

The problem has not been caused by an increase in traffic. The amount of charter traffic has gone up only by 2 to 3 per cent. That figure is confirmed in a brief which I am sure many hon. Members will have received from Britannia Airways. Britannia Airways claims that its experience is that by using bigger aircraft, it is running 25 to 30 fewer flights weekly than it was in 1987. There has not been a failure in terms of air traffic control and there has certainly not been insufficient runway capacity. There is plenty of that. It is not inefficient management of the current air space; it is simply that, with the equipment available, the best efficiency will not allow any more traffic to fly.

There are two sorts of solutions to the problem of the long-suffering public whose holidays are being ruined by long waits at terminals and the whole experience of flying. In the short term, we must look for solutions other than those so far proposed by the Secretary of State.

I reject night flights. They are an imposition; they transfer the agony from inside the airport terminals to those people living under the flight path. I venture to suggest that the short-term relaxation on night flights will result in permanent night flights next year. The best solution is to transfer some of the existing air space——

Mr. Toby Jessel (Twickenham): It sounds as if the hon. Gentleman does not know that, since the relaxation on night flights, only two extra flights have gone through Heathrow instead of through Gatwick, neither of which was at night. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State listened to the representations made on behalf of the people living around Heathrow.

Mr. Hughes: I have heard extravagant claims in my life, but that takes the biscuit. The hon. Gentleman knows that night flights have not so far expanded because airlines claim that, if they fly at night, they cannot get in at the other end. It has nothing to do with his representations; it is a fact of life. I suggest that once airlines get used to the idea of flying at night, changes will be made.

We should transfer some of the space permanently reserved for military aircraft to civilian use. I believe that will provide the space needed greatly to ease the problem. That is not a novel suggestion. In West Germany, they have opened up five new air corridors because of demand. I do not see any reason why that cannot be done as a temporary measure here.

In the longer term, the tragedy is that the CAA is way behind with its investment programme. It became infected by the Government's drive for cost-cutting and it now admits that it should have asked for more money some time ago. At least it has now been converted and is willing to ask for more money. Much more money is needed, and quickly, to speed up the present computer strategy.

Mr. Keith Mans (Wyre): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Hughes: No, I think not, because time is moving on very fast.

The CAA must start to bring forward its plans for expansion of the system, which it does not envisage coming into operation until the year 2000. Much must be done also to train new air traffic controllers by the use of radar simulators. I am horrified to discover that those simulators were called for as long ago as 1964, but there is still none in place.

The Government must move away from the impression that it is said they have given to the charter and airline companies: "Just take the customers' money. It does not matter what you do once you have it. Take it and expand the business, and who cares what happens after that."

I want to refer briefly—perhaps too briefly because of the importance that it warrants—to P and O's safety record. During the whole period of the P and O dispute we vigorously expressed our anxiety about the potential damage to safety because of the company's proposals. Regrettably, since P and O has been sailing its vessels again, our concern has been justified. There have been far too numerous reports about safety codes being breached and, although the Minister has said that those breaches will be examined, many people believe that they will not be examined properly.

Is the Minister aware that on 17 July there was a report in *The Observer* about a fire on the P and O vessel European Clearway? Is he further aware that Mr. John Douglas Ball has sought the permission of the Attorney-General to take out a private prosecution because he is so dissatisfied with the Department of Transport's lack of action? As further information is coming forward every day, would the Minister be prepared to meet seafarers with direct recent experience of P and O to ensure that all complaints are thoroughly investigated? That has to be done to allay the fears.

The prime example of the dead hand of Marsham street stifling initiative is the report by British Rail on the Channel tunnel rail services south of London.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Has my hon. Friend read the full report about John Ball and the European Clearway, which stated that the breaches of safety were so numerous that John Ball referred to them as a horrifying catalogue of breaches of safety by P and O? When there was an oil leak on the ship five weeks ago, which he reported, the people in charge said, "Stick a bucket underneath and catch the oil." A similar incident resulted in a fire. When he reported the problem, he was so disgusted that no action was taken—although a serious fire had occurred, it was dowsed—that he rejoined the strike. Is it not time that the Government wrenched themselves clear from Jeffrey Sterling and P and O, even though he handed over £100,000 for the general election campaign, and sorted out some British justice for once?

Mr. Hughes: I hear clearly what my hon. Friend says. [HON. MEMBERS: "It is rubbish."] Well, I did hear it. If my hon. Friend the Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd) catches your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he will no doubt mention P and O in more detail.

I found the British Rail report on the possibility of dedicated lines south of London to the tunnel apathetic and timid in the extreme. The report illustrates the true extent of British Rail's demoralisation. There is no sense of urgency or initiative, and no projection that increased business can be obtained by aggressive marketing. It is all passive and reactive. It mentions the Martin Vorhiees

[Mr. Hughes]

Associates report and the SETEC report—SETC being a French group of consultants for Eurotunnel. The report says that, in certain circumstances, this will happen and that, in others, something else will happen. There is no decision about which set of forecasts it believes to be true. It ignores Eurotunnel's forecasts.

The hon. Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley) is showing me his pamphlet, but he will do his own puff on it when the time comes. BR's report ignores the Eurotunnel statistics on the grounds that they are not sufficiently detailed for reliable use. It forecasts that there might be additional growth in traffic as a result of the tunnel. The other reports say that there may be some change in business, depending on economic growth.

Having looked at all the figures, British Rail decides that it will provide for only 80 per cent. of capacity. That means that there will be 55 days when the first choice train will not be available and 28 days when there will be unsatisfied demand. That period just happens to be when we would be trying to get traffic. British Rail is already planning for overcrowding. That makes no sense, and it ought to do something about it.

If British Rail cannot bring itself to consider the matter with some inspiration, what hope is there for the future? Under the heading "Financial Evaluations," at paragraph 13.3 of its report British Rail says:

"The results of the financial evaluations indicate that:—
(a) There is no financial case for providing extra route or terminal capacity in association with the MVA forecasts until well into the twenty-first century."

If BR does not have the initiative, gumption and go to see what is happening south of London, what hope is there for those of us who saw the Channel tunnel as an engine for regeneration of economies in the north of England and Scotland? None at all. On the same day as the report is published, we are blandly told in a press release that there will be another 18 months of consultation with local authorities to see what might be done for services to the north.

It is time that BR stopped being so negative and acquiescent to Government policies without so much as a whimper of protest. Of course, the Secretary of State will say that the picture is not all bad. I can see forming in his mind the words "Heathrow rail link", because he thinks that that is a good one to bring out. The Secretary of State may be preening himself on approving BR's participation in a joint venture with the British Airports Authority for a fast, direct link and glorying in the attraction of private capital.

The press release gives the impression that it is all the result of an independent study by consultants and that the right hon. Gentleman is accepting proposals, but that impression is not the whole truth. The report—the "Heathrow Access Study"—by Howard Humphreys and Partners in association with others, gives the game away, on page 64, when it says:

"The most favourable option of those considered during the final stage of this Study ultimately depends on the Government's objectives. If the sole objective were financial viability, it is fair that any of the schemes considered could be chosen, at a suitable fare level. If the object were to improve travelling times and conditions for all users of public rail transport to the airport, the LUL solution is the only one that meets that condition . . . But the analysis we have performed . . . demonstrates clearly that, if what is required is a scheme which:
— is financially viable;
— is attractive to providers of private capital;
— increases consumer choice;
— benefits the maximum number of people and attracts passengers off the roads".

But there is a contradiction. The report states clearly that the best solution to the general travelling public is that of London Underground Ltd. The report continues:

"then the option which seems substantially the best"—

not the best—

"is the proposal which BR/BAA have developed. On the basis of our own understanding of the Government's objectives we would therefore recommend that this proposal is the one that should be taken forward."

It is not the best. The recommendation is made on the basis of what the consultants think the Government want. That is the problem—the Government are not interested in service or objective criteria. They are interested in sheer dogma. The only solution is that which attracts private capital. Nothing else matters. As long as that is what determines the service that is provided, the public will suffer delays and hardship and, ultimately, I believe that their safety will be imperilled as well.

7.37 pm

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Paul Channon): I beg to move, to leave out from "House" to the end of the Question and to add instead thereof:

'congratulates the Government on its success in developing and implementing policies to provide the public and industry with an efficient transport system, giving both value for money and an improved quality of service; welcomes the increased investment in transport infrastructure which is accompanying a reduction in the burden on the taxpayer; applauds the increasing involvement of the private sector in transport projects; and reaffirms the Government's overriding commitment to the safety of travellers.'.

Although there was not much with which I agreed in the speech made by the hon. Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hughes), there were two things. The first is that I also would like to thank my hon. Friend the Member for Hampshire, North-West (Sir. D. Mitchell) for his magnificent services to the Department of Transport and to the Government. I am grateful to the hon. Member for Aberdeen, North for his comments at the beginning of his speech. The only thing about which I should like to correct the hon. Gentleman is that my hon. Friend left for private reasons. We would have loved to keep him for a great deal longer. He will be sorely missed.

The second respect in which I agree with the hon. Member for Aberdeen, North is that I also would like to welcome my hon. Friend the Member for Enfield, Southgate (Mr. Portillo) as Minister of State. Since I have been in the House, all hon. Members from Southgate have been close personal friends. I think that my hon. Friend will make a magnificent contribution to the Department.

Mr. Skinner: Watch him—he will stab the right hon. Gentleman in the back.

Mr. Channon: This concern for me is very kind.

In our previous debate, the hon. Member for Aberdeen, North said that I would last 173 days. I have lasted a little more than that, but we shall see how we get on.

The motion asks us to condemn what it calls

"the Government's irresponsible transport policies".

I do not think that it is irresponsible to start, as the Government do, with a clear understanding of what constitutes a good transport system—one which is affordable, reliable, efficient and convenient. It must be designed, built and operated with proper respect for the environment, and, above all, it must be safe.

Nor is it irresponsible to draw a clear distinction between those features of a good transport system which are the proper concern of the Government and those which are not. I think that it is the job of Government to set standards of matters of safety and the environment. It is our job to ensure that the nation has a proper transport infrastructure, but that does not mean that every new project has to be funded by the taxpayer and approved in Whitehall. It is our job to ensure that there is free and fair competition between transport operators. After that, it is up to operators to provide the service that the public want, at a price that the public are prepared to pay.

I understand that Opposition Members may not like such an approach to transport policy. They hanker after the old days of interventionism, central planning, state finance, monopolies, and regulation of this and that—in fact, all the old stuff that we had in the past.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West) *rose*——

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South) *rose*——

Mr. Channon: Here they are: regulators every one, subsidisers the lot. I cannot give way to both hon. Gentlemen, so I shall give way to the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks).

Mr. Banks: Will the Secretary of State accept that where transport operators are competing for finite

Mr. Channon: I shall deal with roads in a moment. Before I finish, I want to deal also with rail investment and with investment in the Underground which, when the hon. Gentleman was one of the leaders of the Greater London council, he was so scandalously incapable of providing —*[Laughter.]*

Mr. Banks: Come outside and I will take you all on.

Mr. Channon: You may have to regulate the hon. Gentleman, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Robert Adley (Christchurch): My right hon. Friend has laid down as the criteria for public transport, what the public want and what they are prepared to pay. Does he agree that there is another factor in the equation—provided that that transport does not have detrimental effects on other members of the public?

Mr. Channon: My hon. Friend will recall that I said earlier that environment was a crucial factor. I agree with my hon. Friend and I suspect that I know what he is getting at. I strongly recommend the House to read my hon. Friend's booklet, which should be required reading for every hon. Member. We may have an exam later.

I turn first to the Opposition motion. At least the part relating to maintaining safety standards will be common ground between us. The House must face up to the fact that the most serious safety problem that we have to tackle is road transport. Let us consider the facts. Over 5,000 people were killed on Britain's roads last year. Compared with air travel, motorists run 16 times the risk of being killed; cyclists run 170 times the risk; and motor cyclists about 440 times the risk. It is true that Britain's roads are among the safest in Europe, but I do not derive all that much comfort from that. There are far too many avoidable accidents on our roads and their economic cost and cost in terms of human suffering is unacceptable.

Therefore, we have set ourselves the firm target of reducing the number of deaths and injuries on Britain's roads from 300,000 per year to 200,000 per year by the end of the century. We are taking action on several fronts to achieve that. We are putting emphasis on bypasses and orbital routes to divert traffic around towns which are where 70 per cent. of all road accidents take place. We are working with local authorities to improve road layouts in towns and are diverting more effort into research into the causes of accidents and how to prevent them.

Mr. Richard Holt (Langbaurgh) *rose*——

Mr. Channon: I shall give way to my hon. Friend, but this is the last time, because I must get on.

Mr. Holt: Does my right hon. Friend not agree that one of the most dangerous roads in this country is the A1 north from Doncaster? There is no major motorway to the north-east of England. If my right hon. Friend is seriously interested in cutting deaths, he should give us the motorway for which every political party and every local authority in the north of England is asking.

Mr. Channon: I understand my hon. Friend's concern, which he has often expressed to me. Naturally, we shall consider any representations that he makes and we certainly wish to improve the roads in his part of England. I take note of his representations on that important matter.

We have been accused today of being irresponsible about safety. At this very moment, our current motorway safety campaign is in operation. The police are dealing severely with motorway accidents caused by bad driving and are deeply concerned about their prevention. Our main task must be to ensure that we have the right laws and that they are being obeyed. Today we published our interim response to the 137 recommendations of the North report on road traffic law. We accept the conclusion that the offence of reckless driving should be redefined. We agree that drinking drivers who cause fatal accidents must be punished appropriately. We agree that the penalty points system needs rethinking and we agree in principle to the use of video cameras to detect speeding and traffic light offences. We are pursuing the question of insurance policies against disqualification. We shall now consult the police and other interested parties, and I shall publish our final conclusions as soon as I can.

I turn now to a point which the hon. Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hughes) specifically raised—the question of ferry safety. Mr. Justice Sheen's report made a number of recommendations which we are putting into effect——

Mr. John Prescott (Kingston upon Hull, East): As regulations?

Mr. Channon: Yes, as regulations. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman wants to support us—*[Interruption.]* Thank you very much. I am most grateful, and I am glad to hear it.

Regulations are already in place, dealing with some of the key issues raised in the Sheen report—including the

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procedures to be followed to ensure that ferries do not sail with loading doors open. Other regulations have been drafted and will be brought forward. I am determined that the regulations should be right and I am sure that the House will agree that ill-thought-out regulations will benefit no one——

Mr. Skinner: The Secretary of State is in Sterling's pocket.

Mr. Channon: The hon. Gentleman always says that. I shall ask him who the treasurer of the Labour party is. I suppose that the hon. Gentleman is in the pocket of the treasurer of the Labour party—*[Interruption.]*—and not only in the pocket, but in the flat of the treasurer of the Labour party——

Mr. Skinner: In case the Secretary of State wants reasonable, proper and precise information, I can inform him that I am one of the people who has nominated somebody to oppose the treasurer of the Labour party —namely, my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, East (Mr. Strang).

Mr. Channon: I never thought that gratitude was the hon. Gentleman's most conspicuous quality.

Opposition Members have repeated various allegations that the ferries are being operated unsafely. That is simply not so.

Mr. Terry Fields (Liverpool, Broadgreen): It is true.

Mr. Channon: It is not. Marine surveyors have inspected each P and O ferry before its return to service and have made random spot checks thereafter. They have always found the vessels to be carrying a full complement of properly qualified seafarers. Opposition Members are themselves guilty of irresponsibility in this. During our last debate, the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) made numerous allegations about safety matters. None of them has been followed up.

Our approach is the responsible one. Where necessary, we will certainly prosecute if offences are committed. I am already prosecuting in the case of the Horsa. I am not prepared to join the Opposition in a mud-slinging session in furtherance of an industrial dispute with people who pretend to be impartial, but are fresh from their triumphs, campaigning on the picket lines as the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott) was this morning. If offences are committed, we shall certainly prosecute. If there are not—*[Interruption.]* Yes, I am prosecuting the Horsa at present.

Mr. Tony Lloyd (Stretford): What about the Herald of Free Enterprise?

Mr. Channon: The hon. Gentleman entirely misunderstands the situation, and I believe that he does so wilfully. It is for the Director of Public Prosecutions to decide.

Mr. Lloyd: Ah.

Mr. Channon: The hon. Gentleman can go on saying, "Ah", until he is blue—or should I say red?—in the face.

I repeat what I have told the House on many occasions. We shall not hesitate to tackle any offences that are brought to our attention, and reasonable Opposition Members know that to be the case.

I turn now to air safety, which is a major issue, which I want to put in its proper perspective *[Interruption.]* Surely the House is interested in air safety. I want to quote some statistics—*[Interruption.]* Well, not as quick as the hon. Gentleman's hon. Friend.

Over the 10 years from 1978 to 1987, there was one death for every 3·6 billion passenger kilometres flown on British aircraft. That record compares favourably with any other form of transport. I want to quote the statistics, although they are bound to be taken by some as evidence of complacency, which they are not. Complacency would be a sign of real irresponsibility, but it is just as irresponsible to sow unnecessary alarm among the travelling public. Therefore, I want to give the exact facts.

Reports of risk-bearing air misses have dropped from 45 in 1977 to 13 in 1987. Of course there is an element of subjective judgment, but the reporting criteria have not changed and the trend is clear. It is not only a British experience but a worldwide one. I am sure that the House would want to reassure the travelling public, and our main task is to ensure that the air safety trend is sustained. Improvements in aircraft design will probably be the major contributing factor, but the European Community harmonisation of airworthiness certificates will be a significant step forward.

The Civil Aviation Authority plans to introduce a ground-based "conflict alert" system by next summer covering all aircraft flying above 25,000 ft, and it is starting trials on airborne collision avoidance systems this year. In all of that, the CAA has the support of my Department and I am determined to support its efforts to improve air safety. For that reason, last year the CAA introduced the system of flow control in response to growing demands on air space. It is extremely important that the House appreciates that demand.

I see no reason why air safety should not continue to improve, but we must not cut corners on safety to relieve congestion at airports.

Mr. Spearing *rose*——

Mr. Channon: I am sorry, but I must press on.

The House will be aware that air transport has increased in recent years by an enormous amount. Increases in demand were anticipated and catered for by Governments and operators. However, the rapid growth on some routes, especially to Greece and Spain, took every European aviation authority by surprise.

There is no overall shortage of capacity at airports or among airlines. Europe's air traffic control system can accommodate normal traffic levels easily enough. They can even handle the abnormally high traffic levels that are experienced on the most popular routes at peak periods. However, there is little capacity to spare if something goes wrong.

European countries are dependent on each other's air traffic control systems. A problem in one system, whether caused by an industrial dispute or a technical hitch, has an immediate impact on other systems. In recent weeks, we have seen the consequences of that all too clearly.

Everyone understands the frustrations caused by long delays at airports. No one saves up to spend their holidays at Gatwick or Luton; they want to get off to Greece, Spain or wherever. We shall do all we can to help, but there are a number of things that we cannot do. We cannot sort out other countries' strikes, nor must we subject people living

near airports to a night flights free-for-all. I was grateful to the hon. Member for Aberdeen, North for his remarks about that. Above all, we cannot compromise on safety. Within those constraints, we are doing everything possible to alleviate congestion.

As a first step—my hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham (Mr. Jessel) referred to this a moment ago—I have changed the traffic distribution rules so that charter operators can take advantage of spare capacity at Heathrow, on a temporary basis, to help holidaymakers who face hardship. That has already happened.

I have also asked the CAA to report to me on various matters relating to airport use and capacity. I have asked for an interim report in the autumn, when the Select Committee's report should also be available, followed by a full report later. Among the issues on which the CAA will have to report to me are sectorisation, discrimination against general aviation and the priority given to larger aircraft. They are difficult issues.

In the long term, we must increase our air traffic control capacity. The CAA plans to implement its new central control system by the mid-1990s, as part of its £250 million investment programme. It has the Government's full support in that—we have never yet blocked any CAA investment. However, it takes time to phase in a new system, while maintaining a 24-hour service that must be perfect all the time.

Air congestion is not a purely, or even primarily, a British problem. It is a European problem, to which we must find European solutions. The CAA took the lead in establishing a "hotline" that will help Europe's air traffic controllers to improve traffic flows. We have made British equipment available to our German colleagues to help them to participate. We have used our presidency of the Commission to move Eurocontrol into more effective action. To be truly effective, however, Eurocontrol needs to bring together all the nations concerned. Greece has just taken the decision to join Eurocontrol and last week I wrote to Transport Ministers in Denmark, Italy and Spain urging them to do likewise. I have also spoken this morning to my German counterpart about ways of improving co-operation between us.

The Government and the CAA are working together to find practical solutions to the problem of congestion. Airspace is, in the last analysis, a finite resource, but I am convinced that we could make much better use of it than we do at present. We must get much better co-ordination between the air traffic control authorities of Europe. In the next few weeks, I shall devote a great deal of attention to that.

Sir Anthony Grant (Cambridgeshire, South-West): Will my right hon. Friend discuss with Defence Ministers, and possibly his European colleagues, whether there is a possibility of European military using rather less space and making more available for civilian purposes?

Mr. Channon: I have discussed that with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence. My hon. Friend will be aware that one of the advantages of our system is that it is a joint one operating between military and civilian aircraft for the control of air traffic space. That gives us certain advantages that are not available to some other countries.

The hon. Member for Aberdeen, North has criticised us for having an irresponsible transport policy, but we have done more for transport infrastructure than any other Government in our history. Since 1979, we have added nearly 800 miles of new trunk roads and motorways.

Mr. Tony Banks: Why not repair the ones that we have?

Mr. Channon: We are going to do that too. When the Labour party left office, it left a terrible legacy of backlogs in road repairs and Underground repairs and improvements. That was the "Banks legacy".

The schemes that we have undertaken cover the whole range of improvement, from short stretches of bypass to the construction of motorways. We have increased expenditure on road building by 30 per cent. in real terms and expenditure on road maintenance has doubled.

The hon. Member for Aberdeen, North, in an extravagant turn of phrase, said that British Rail morale was low, but British Rail has never done better than under this Government—[HON. MEMBERS: "Come on!"] That certainly is true. British Rail has undertaken major projects such as the electrification of the east coast main line. It has carried forward its programme of modernising rolling stock and, since 1983, it has opened or reopened some 80 stations. British Rail has invested nearly £2 billion since 1983 and it plans to spend about £4 billion more in the next five years. We have undertaken a far larger programme of investment in real terms in British Rail than that carried out by the Labour party when it was in office. It pays lip service to the railways when it is in office, but its investment programme in BR was negligible.

Mr. Peter Snape (West Bromwich, East): The same old story.

Mr. Channon: It is a jolly good story, and it is true and accurate.

We have secured the increase in capital investment by keeping a tight rein on current expenditure. We insist on value for money, particularly in the roads programme. Nowadays, contractors complete their work within budget and ahead of time—something that was virtually unheard of in the bad old days. We are no longer in the business of doling out grants for this and subsidies for that. Privatisation, which the hon. Member for Aberdeen, North has laughed at, has led to enormous savings. Industries that used to be dependent on the taxpayer are now paying their own way—and prospering, as the employee shareholders of Associated British Ports and the National Freight Consortium can testify.

In recent years, we have seen imaginative new solutions to long-standing transport problems. Within a few miles of this House is London's flourishing docklands community, represented by the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing). It is served by the Docklands light railway, by the Thamesline riverbus and by the City airport.

Mr. Spearing: The Secretary of State will be aware that the City airport had some problems with the CAA. Is he also aware that my hon. Friends the Members for Newham, North-East (Mr. Leighton) and for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) and myself regarded the tests that were conducted at the weekend as invalid? The loads involved were not the same as those that would pertain when the aircraft are operating. That airport was imposed upon us by the unelected London Docklands development corporation. In the cause of safety, will the right hon. Gentleman assure the House that there will be a public

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inquiry into all aspects of safety, particularly as the runway is close to large centres of population and projected shopping centres?

Mr. Channon: I have no application before me for any change in the present procedures. If there were any they would have to follow the normal planning procedures as the hon. Gentleman is well aware.

All the examples that I have given illustrate another important point—coming up with solutions to transport problems is no longer the exclusive preserve of the public sector. The private sector is playing a much more active role than it has done for many years. The hon. Member for Aberdeen, North has already referred to the largest example of private sector finance, the Channel tunnel. That is the most significant transport project in Europe and it is being funded by £6 billion of private capital. There are other examples, and there will be more to come.

Last week I announced the new rail link to Heathrow —unlike the hon. Member for Aberdeen, North, I believe that that is the right solution. It will be largely privately financed and will provide an excellent service for those who wish to travel to the airport. Next week I shall be attending the Dartford tunnel handover, paving the way for another major private sector transport project. When such projects are brought into the reckoning, alongside Government-funded schemes, it is clear that we are seeing an unprecedented regeneration of the nation's transport infrastructure.

What a contrast there is between the picture painted by the hon. Member for Aberdeen, North and Conservative party policy. The Opposition do not have a transport policy—at any rate none has been published yet——

Mr. Robert Hughes: Yes, we do.

Mr. Channon: Where is it? I looked at the Labour policy review—I spent a weary hour reading it—but there was not a word about transport policy. Transport and defence are too difficult for the Opposition to handle. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman should have lunch with the *Independent*; then we will know his transport policy.

The Government have a clear policy based on clear principles: value for money, efficiency, investment and, above all, safety. We are taking the decisions to put that policy into practice and developing a transport network fit for the next century. The hon. Member for Aberdeen, North and his hon. Friends are living in the past. They have nothing to do with their time but criticise. They have nothing constructive to say. I hope that the House will support our amendment.

8.1 pm

Mrs. Gwynneth Dunwoody (Crewe and Nantwich): I always enjoy watching Conservative Ministers sliding out from under the burden of their transport policies. They bear a strong resemblance to break dancers. The trouble is that their facility, always worth looking at, is not always terribly admirable.

Conservative party transport policy has resulted in making it difficult to get from anywhere to anywhere. That does not apply only to people sitting in airports, but to those who try to use the motorways and the train services. Tonight I shall speak briefly about two important results of Conservative policy of the past nine years. No matter how often they reel off vast numbers of statistics, the Government have no basic transport policy. They have made it clear over a number of years that they have no airport policy, either. In due course the Select Committee will report on that lack of policy. It was clear even from the Minister's speech tonight that the Conservatives are not prepared to plan to make radical plans for the numbers of people using the airports. They are even prepared to try to ignore the immediate results of their inability to face the facts.

There is a real problem with air traffic control. The Minister spoke of flow control and the difficulties at Maastricht. He spoke about the inability of all the other European nations to work together. He did not mention the inability of the Conservative Government to support European control policies, even if that was what they wanted to do. He did not point out that flow policies can at best be only a form of crisis management and were never intended to be the usual day-to-day way of organising traffic into and out of important airports. They were intended as temporary measures and, like a great many other such measures, they are turning out to be all too permanent. When the Select Committee reports, I know that it will have a great deal to say about those aspects of Government policy.

I shall deal first with the deregulation of the buses. My constituency provides a classic case of what happens when basic transport services are entered in a haphazard game of chance. When the National Bus Company was divided up, members of Cheshire county council went to the Secretary of State for Transport and told him that they had evidence that one of the main bidders—indeed, the one most likely to be selected—for Crossville Motor Vehicles Co. had a bad record of managing previous companies. The council members did not make up that information. It was based on decisions taken by the north-west traffic commissioners. When the company had operated in other parts of the north-west it had frequently had its licence to operate reduced in considerable numbers. The Minister listened to all that and said that it was not a matter for him but was the responsibility of the National Bus Company.

It became clear from answers to questions that I asked subsequently, when ATL holdings bought Crossville Motor Vehicles Co., that any problems with the reliability of that company were regarded as the responsibility of the NBC. That is the marvellous double bind. Assets can be sold in any way that people like, and if there is a problem the Minister will say it is not his fault but that of the National Bus Company, which by then no longer exists. So when we want to argue about the quality of ministerial decisions that allow such sales to go ahead, we are told that everything is the National Bus Company's responsibility.

What happened in Crewe was simple and uncomplicated. The company is doing there exactly what it has done before. First, it ran down the number of maintenance engineers. Then it sold off the maintenance garage. Thirdly, it decided to get rid of the central bus station and offer an alternative somewhere outside the centre of town. In other words, that was a classic example of asset-stripping, and that was what we said it would be before these people were allowed to bid for the assets. We predicted what would happen when the legislation went through the House—and that sort of thing has happened again and again.

The safety of passengers is of no concern to the company. If it were, it would not have been before the

traffic commissioners and had its licences reduced as often as it has done. The interests of the people of Crewe and Nantwich are of no concern to the company, either, or it would not have sold off the only town centre bus station that was capable of handling the constituency's needs. Furthermore, the relationship between bus transport and other forms of transport is of no interest to the company. It is not prepared to discuss interlinking or the planning of joint services. The company is one of those that move in, buy up assets, take away as much as they can carry in both hands and then apologise for being unable to comply with the undertakings that were asked for originally, because they cannot—a classic case of the results of Conservative transport policy.

Such problems are not restricted to the buses. The other important employer in Crewe is the railway industry. Time and again we have witnessed the effects of Government policy on the railways. The railways are not important to the Government. The Secretary of State gave us statistics to prove that he had offered the railways whatever investment they wanted, but he never points out that, because the railway services must comply with wholly unrealistic financial targets, basic services are deteriorating at such a speed that most passengers experience difficulties every day——

Mr. Michael Jack (Fylde): Does the hon. Lady agree that the introduction of new electric locomotives on the west coast main line will enhance the service to her constituency?

Mrs. Dunwoody: I have no difficulty in encouraging the building of new locomotives. I trust that the jobs that are involved will not be handed to foreign companies—such as the Americans—or to any other companies that submit interesting but not necessarily 100 per cent. accurate estimates of cost.

When asked to examine what is happening to rail traffic in this country, an independent consultant made it clear that British Rail is planning to turn away 3 per cent. of its customers and that it is running its services in a way that is grossly unacceptable to its customers. The independent consultant NERA, working for the Rail Federation, found numerous examples of overloading and suggested, for example, that between Carlisle and Crewe the overloading factor was 200 per cent. That means expensive seats for passengers—if they are lucky. More often than not they find it impossible to travel in comfort, and they are constantly faced with rising fares and falling standards. Yet we are told not to worry because British Rail is prepared to invest a great deal.

The Channel tunnel shows the quality of planning under the Government. I went to the chairman of British Rail and pointed out that in the Crewe and Nantwich area we have an ideal site for a Customs and Excise facility and for the transhipment of goods. We were told that BR was prepared to look enthusiastically at any plans put before it. There has been no real response by British Rail to the immediate difficulties that will arise when the Channel tunnel is in operation. No decisions have been made. As far as British Rail can see, running times between London and the coast seem to be all right as long as the whole journey is within three hours.

French railways have put an enormous amount of money and effort into providing a first-class service between Paris and the coast. It will be possible to run trains through the tunnel at great speed, but when those trains reach the British coast they will have to slow down to little more than 26 or 28 mph. It seems to be difficult for British Rail to understand that passengers might not be too delighted at that. Even the plans now being suggested by British Rail do not make it clear that it is prepared to move at the speed and with the urgency that will make the difference.

I have heard that the amount of money that the French railways are prepared to invest would ensure that French trains could run as far as Ashford, at which point French railways expect that freight and people would be put on the road. That is not an unrealistic assessment, and it will begin to happen if British Rail is not prepared to improve facilities and to update running times and the provision of rolling stock and locomotives on this line. I see no signs from British Rail that it even understands the implications of this measure.

Mr. Irvine Patnick (Sheffield, Hallam): Having looked at the corporate plan for British Rail I see that it is spending £180 million on new traction and rolling stock on the east coast line. It is also spending money on the west coast main line. To say that it is not spending money is twisting the facts.

Mrs. Dunwoody: If the hon. Gentleman reads what I said, he may understand the point. We know that no matter what British Rail says, it intends to balance the books by getting rid of thousands of railwaymen. That can hardly contribute to the safety and comfort of passengers. it also intends to balance the books in such a way that even the improvement of rolling stock will not be carried out in British Rail workshops, but will be used as a means of offering support and jobs to other countries.

To the Government, transport is way down the line in terms of investment and policies. The passenger is the last person that they are prepared to think about. Whether one travels from Manchester on the Shuttle that cannot get into London airport, or on a train that goes through Crewe and on which first-class passengers, let alone standard passengers, are not able to find seats, the reality of Conservative transport policy is less for more and under more difficult circumstances. It is not a policy of which the Government can be proud.

8.13 pm

Mr. Peter Fry (Wellingborough): I have a great regard for the hon. Member for Crewe and Nantwich (Mrs. Dunwoody) who said that she could not get to where she wanted to go. Much is now clear to me. She is obviously emulating the lady in the music hall song:

"Oh, Mr. Porter, what shall I do?
I want to go to Birmingham,
But I ended up in Crewe."

That is a slight digression. I shall not follow the line taken by the hon. Lady. This is a short debate and it can cover everything from air misses to the quality of tea on British Rail. All that any of us can do is pick one or two subjects and try to air them. I shall restrict myself to the subject of air congestion and the need of the travelling public for an adequate transport infrastructure.

The Select Committee on Transport, of which I have been a member since its inception, is currently investigating air safety and runway capacity, especially in the south-east. I cannot anticipate our report, nor can I reveal any of the information because it is not generally

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made public at this stage. However, I must comment on the debate that is now raging on who is to be blamed for the congestion and delays experienced by so many people, particularly those who want to go on holiday.

I should make it quite clear that the blame is most definitely not to be laid at the door of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport. It is his duty to respond to the advice given to him by the Civil Aviation Authority and it is the duty of the CAA so to advise. As he said, he recently requested an early response from the CAA on its suggestions about how the present situation may be eased. He had to ask for that response, and that is significant. Clearly, before the crisis that built up this summer, he did not have the advice that he needs, and that is why he had to ask for it.

Secondly, and perhaps surprisingly to some people, the problems are not the sole fault of the present chairman of the CAA—*[Interruption.]* I said, not the sole fault of the chairman of the CAA. Mistakes have been made in the past, and as he is the current front man he has to take the criticism. In due course the Select Committee may pronounce on the CAA's share of the responsibility. However, it is worth quoting to the House at least two of its defences. First, the CAA is not responsible for the actions of foreign air traffic controllers and, secondly, it does not arrange the schedules of the various airlines.

It is also untrue to say that no responsibility at all should be attached to any airline for the present congestion. The schedule set by some operators of four or five return flights per day by one plane would be testing enough at any time of the year. Given the kind of congestion that occurs in the summer peaks, some airline scheduling has been more than optimistic and on the verge of being foolhardy. This problem has not been uniformly shared because delays have arisen with some companies far more than with others. When the CAA and the Government come to consider solutions to alleviate problems that may arise next year and in the ensuing years, tight scheduling must be investigated.

The main reason for congestion at our airports is simply the increase in demand about which my right hon. Friend spoke. It is not true to say that the rise in demand was clearly seen by all the airlines even last year. We must ask why the increase has taken place. It is simply because more of our people are better off and more of them can afford to fly, often more than once a year. Therefore, the problem is of economic success and widespread affluence —not the kind of picture of the United Kingdom in 1988 that the Opposition try to paint. This picture of affluence applies throughout transport. That is why 2·3 million new vehicles took to the roads in 1987 and why projections show that by the year 2000 car ownership will increase by about 20 per cent. to 25 million. Traffic could increase even more as people use their vehicles more regularly.

Congestion on our roads raises the question of road safety. I shall insert a caveat here, because, while it is absolutely legitimate for us to be anxious about this matter, we must put it in perspective. Road deaths today are only 13 per cent. higher than they were in 1926 and we have 10 times the number of vehicles on our roads. Even in the past 12 years road deaths have been reduced by 20 per cent., while vehicles have increased by 22 per cent. One reason for the improved record on our roads is that we have a far better motorway network than for many years. That brings me to my main point.

The increased demand for transport that we are experiencing will mean that a better and more sophisticated infrastructure is needed. An inadequate infrastructure will only lead to more accidents. Accidents on our roads are often due to the sheer frustration that many motorists experience after being in long traffic jams or to being unable to overtake on inadequate roads.

Mr. Skinner: Give us some infrastructure.

Mr. Fry: Of course, there will be those who say that the road safety measures that we have at the moment still need tightening up. Perhaps they are right,; such measures are an inadequate answer to the congestion that we are facing and to the frustration being experienced by some road users.

I say to my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State, who I understand will reply to the debate—I hope he will take my remarks as well-intentioned—that sometimes, when he is quoted in the media, his comments suggest that road safety measures can, perhaps achieve rather more than they can, and the main obligation to provide more roads sometimes tends to be lost. That is why some people perhaps criticise him rather unfairly.

Greater road safety alone cannot be a sufficient answer. Of course we can say that lower speeds will reduce accidents. We can produce statistics to show that a speed limit of 50 miles per hour will produce fewer accidents than a speed limit of 70 miles per hour, but we could reduce that argument to an absurd level. A traffic speed of one mile per hour would produce very few accidents. On the other hand, the effect upon our economy would undoubtedly be disastrous. We cannot all go by train, because the trains do not always go where we want to go. That is sometimes forgotten by protagonists in this area.

Our journeys today are becoming increasingly diverse and sophisticated. The sheer congestion on the roads is opening up great opportunities for rail, and light rail, and that challenge is to be met by British Rail and local authorities in the immediate future.

I am not convinced that random breath testing will be approved by those who experience it, quite apart from the people who answer opinion polls on the subject.

Mr. Skinner: Said he, with first-hand experience.

Mr. Fry: Let me tell the hon. Gentleman that I have been breath-tested on the motorway and was found to be totally clear; but it is not a pleasant experience to go through, and many innocent motorists will reject random testing on the ground that it is an intrusion into their personal liberties.

If the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) wishes to make a speech, perhaps he can catch your eye, Madam Deputy Speaker, in the normal way. I am sure that if I sat and spoke to him while he was speaking, the House would not think that that was the way to conduct its affairs.

Mr. Skinner: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Fry: I would not give the hon. Gentleman anything, even the time of the day.

Mr. Skinner: Very droll.

Mr. Fry: I hope that the Government, despite the pressure from some sources of the media and other lobbies, will not allow completely random testing.

The traveller's safety does not depend on road safety measures alone. Much depends, whether we travel by road, rail or air, on an adequate infrastructure. Our people will travel more, and more often. They can afford it, and it is the Government's responsibility to assist them. I praise the efforts of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State because he has clearly seen the need for the better service that is being demanded. To his great credit, he has clearly seen that it is unlikely that the Treasury will provide sufficient public funds to provide that infrastructure in full. That is why I applaud his efforts to encourage people to talk and to become involved in the private funding of various transport projects. The Channel tunnel, the Dartford bridge, the City airport and the new Heathrow railroad are all excellent, but we must regard them only as a start.

Mr. David Tredinnick (Bosworth): Is my hon. Friend aware that many of my constituents and many people living in Leicestershire hope that private funding can be found to electrify the midland main line to Sheffield?

Mr. Fry: My hon. Friend knows that I am a joint Chairman of the all-party Committee concerned with that subject, and that the Committee shares his view.

Mr. Skinner: Speak for the midland main line electrification.

Mr. Fry: We shall try to avoid the hon. Gentleman's constituency.

The public are demanding a higher standard of service and the Government are finding it increasingly difficult to finance it entirely from state funds. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has my full support in examining every possible scheme for the involvement of private money and private risk-taking. We should look beyond just building new bridges or new airports by private finance, because we must consider how we shall obtain better public transport in our cities, better through communications and more motorways, by-passes and access roads.

Not all the schemes put forward will be financially viable, but many urban roads will give much better access and open up areas of redevelopment, which will be highly profitable to developers. Surely those same developers who will make the profit should therefore be expected to make a greater contribution to new road building. Similarly, it is essential that the Treasury's Ryrie rules, which reduce the Department of Transport's spending budget by the amount of the mixed public-private investment, must be revised and probably changed.

My right hon. Friend is entirely right to think the unthinkable in terms of transport provision, whether it be toll roads or privately funded rail extensions. He, at least, is a man of strong vision and energy, as well as being a realist. It is the Opposition's thinking on transport which appears to be stuck in a 1950s time warp, where subsidy is the sole answer. The Secretary of State is prepared to look to the future and to find any means to secure greater safety and services for the travelling public. I shall have no hesitation in supporting him in the Lobby tonight.

8.27 pm

Mrs. Ray Michie (Argyll and Bute): First, I congratulate the hon. Member for Enfield, Southgate (Mr. Portillo) on joining the Department of Transport. I congratulate also the hon. Member for Hampshire, North-West (Sir D. Mitchell) on his recent honour. I am sorry to see him leave the Department of Transport. In my short time in the House I found him to be a Minister who was prepared to listen. He was always kind, courteous and helpful. I wish him well on the Back Benches.

I welcome this opportunity to take part in the debate. It is right that we should consider safety and the service to the travelling public. The condition of the urban environment has worsened during the past decade. There is greater traffic congestion—none more so than in the City of London—more air pollution and a poorer, but more expensive public transport system. Many of the deficiencies have been catalogued, such as the sight of holidaymakers stuck for hours at airports or on a motorway for two hours negotiating a three-mile contraflow. Traffic is increasing by 13 per cent. every year and the roads and motorways can no longer cope.

It is a costly and dangerous situation. We have suffered from a lack of planning, vision, foresight and political will, and successive Governments must share the blame. *[Interruption.]* Fundamental errors were made by cutting road maintenance programmes—*[Interruption.]*

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Order. I am having some difficulty in hearing the hon. Lady.

Mrs. Michie: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Fundamental errors were made by cutting road maintenance programmes in the 1970s, slashing the railway network from 17,000 to 10,000 miles, and even withdrawing the trams from our cities. What complete folly that was.

Mr. Tony Banks: I agree with the hon. Lady. Trams were one of London's great transport boons. She may not have heard, but a Conservative Member said from a sedentary position that the withdrawal of trams was a Socialist policy. The last tram journey, on which I had the great honour to travel as a babe in arms, was in 1953, when we had a Conservative Government. I just remind the hon. Lady of that because she is obviously too young to remember herself.

Mrs. Michie: I wonder who was the younger travelling on the trams. Trams were also withdrawn from Aberdeen, Glasgow and Edinburgh, and that was a terrible mistake.

City transport is a focus for employment, education, retailing, leisure and health care. Cities must depend on transport to function, for the movement of goods and people. This vital service has a considerable impact on the quality of life of those living in the cities. Surely the challenge is to find a compromise between competing demands for mobility and a decent environment. There is no doubt that the urban environment has worsened during the last decade. As I said, there is greater traffic congestion, more air pollution and a poorer, but more expensive, public transport system. Pedestrians in particular have had a raw deal. Abused by motorists and intoxicated by exhaust fumes, they need standards of Olympian fitness, or the mentality of moles, if they are to use some of the pedestrian bridges or subways.

[Mrs. Michie]

The result is that our environment has deteriorated and our standard of living has suffered accordingly. Nowhere is that more true than on the streets where we live. It is our children who have suffered most as a consequence. Because of the dangers of excessive traffic, which is often allowed to travel far to fast, children no longer have the freedom to visit their neighbours without being escorted by an adult, let alone the freedom to play in the streets or cycle to school, and it is often only the street that they can play in because of the lack of playground facilities.

Let me say a quick word about the railways. We have never made the best use of our railways. The cuts and the colossal lack of investment have been a huge mistake. Financially British Rail may say that it is doing better, but at what cost? There is surely room now in which to improve the service to the public. The great mistake that was made was the lack of co-ordination between rail and road transport. There was no co-ordination of freight, and that was one of the failures of nationalisation. It is terrible that freight is carried up and down our roads on huge juggernauts. It should be taken by rail to freight depots spotted all over the country, and thereafter the containers taken to wherever they are required. If containers can be taken on and off ferries, they can be taken on and off trains. That is not a problem.

We have referred to the loss of trams. I hope that the Minister will encourage the expansion of the light rail transit system, to improve safety and reduce congestion —we are looking for that in the midland metro light rail transit system—to relieve pollution, to allow motorists to park and ride and to allow people to shop in a traffic-free environment. The Government talk about privatisation and the private money that must accompany it, but I want to hear how that will help the integration of our transport services.

Mr. David Clelland (Tyne Bridge): The hon. Lady may be aware that Tyne and Wear did have such integration between the light railway system and the buses, but that that has been destroyed by the Government's privatisation policy. The Government have destroyed integration and the promotion of co-ordination. Their privatisation policies led, first, to duplication, and eventually to the elimination of transport systems for the general public.

Mrs. Michie: I accept what the hon. Gentleman says. The Government must not turn their back on integration. That means planning a variety of public transport services to meet identified transport needs in such a way that passenger transfer between services is helped. Passengers should not have to wait a long time between buses, between a bus and a train or between trains. Such changes should be convenient and the ticket should be valid on both services.

However, integration alone is not a panacea. Considerable investment is required to make up for years of neglect of the public transport system. The numbers of maintenance and running staff employed need to be increased if service reliability, cleanliness and passenger safety are to be restored to acceptable levels. We are looking for a better quality service.

We have talked about holidaymakers, but I hope that Ministers and others involved will also think about the ordinary domestic travellers. I should like to see much more traffic going out of airports in the regions of England and the nation of Scotland—from Glasgow, Edinburgh and Prestwick. I hope that the Minister understands that the Scots hate having to travel to London before going on to——

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster): So do the Mancunians.

Mrs. Michie: I am talking about the Scots, not about the Mancunians.

In order to understand what the general public have to put up with, Ministers, and, indeed, the Prime Minister, should give up their ministerial cars for three weeks and move 400 or 500 miles away from the House and then travel here and back twice a week. They should see how they get on with trains that leave and arrive an hour late, and aeroplanes that leave Glasgow half an hour late and circle over Heathrow for 25 minutes. The situation is diabolical. My goodness, no wonder we want a Scottish Parliament, so that we do not have to do that twice a week. I believe that the Government's amendment is very bland.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: It is a terrible amendment, not bland.

Mrs. Michie: I hope that the Government will answer many of the points that have been raised, particularly that about integrating the transport services.

8.39 pm

Mr. Terence Higgins (Worthing): This motion takes no account of the tremendous success of the Government's transport policy in allocating massive amounts to additional infrastructure in every form of transport and in using resources more efficiently by eliminating wasteful subsidies. It is important to start from that point. I join the hon. Member for Argyll and Bute (Mrs. Michie) and other hon. Members who have congratulated my hon. Friend for Enfield, Southgate (Mr. Portillo) on his new appointment. We certainly wish him well.

I also join those who have congratulated my hon. Friend the Member for Hampshire, North-West (Sir D. Mitchell), who has every reason to be pleased with and proud of his ministerial career. We have known each other for a long time. We were both selected as parliamentary candidates in the same week, and whereas I failed to get on the short list for his constituency, he got on the short list for mine. Ever since, I have noted with great interest the tremendous contribution that he has made to the House both from the Back Benches and as a Minister. I feel sure that he will continue to make a very important contribution.

I wish to concentrate on road and air transport. I begin by stressing the importance of the Government's commitment that through traffic should be taken away from towns, and I do so for important constituency reasons. The Government recently appointed a firm of consultants to look into the future route of the A27 in the Worthing area, and their proposals would effectively cut the town in two. What we need is a real bypass. At constituency meetings in recent days attended by 400, 900 and well over 1,000 people, there have been strong protests against the consultants' proposals. I hope that my right hon. and hon. Friends will take that feeling into account and ensure that Worthing is given a real bypass, in the same way that every town and almost every village of any

size on the south coast has been provided with a bypass along what will clearly be, in view of the Channel tunnel, the main east-west route for the south.

Other aspects of road transport that require particular attention concern both London and the inner cities, and motorways. The Government are doing far less then they could to facilitate road transport both in the cities and on the motorways. The present policy in London in particular needs to be carefully reviewed in respect of coaches and bus lanes. I am convinced that in many places, if not all, bus lanes seriously slow down traffic flow, and as my right hon. Friend will know, the way in which coaches are allowed to park all over the place and to interfere with traffic flow—not least disgorging passengers in the centre of Westminster bridge, with great risk of loss of life—should be carefully examined. Other proposals for improving traffic flow have proved to be disastrous—such as the Aldwych, which was the GLC's final kick before it——

Mr. Tony Banks *rose*——

Mr. Higgins: No, I shall not give way.

The GLC, in its final kick, introduced a system at Aldwych that has totally fouled up the traffic every day ever since. I hope that the Government will reinstate the original arrangement at the Aldwych, which was much better than the present one. It is important that the Government take action. I feel sure that London's traffic flow can be improved, and I am glad that my right hon. Friend is establishing a specific study to examine the matter.

As to motorway traffic, I welcome the acceptance of the idea that 70 mph signs, rather than signs taking the form only of white circles with a black diagonal, should be erected on motorways, to remind motorists using them of the real speed limit. I hope that that experiment will be successful and helpful in ensuring that the speed regulations, which I believe are set at the right limits, are observed more rigorously than they are at present.

What really concerns me are the appalling hold-ups that occur on motorways because steps have not been taken to divert traffic away from a blockage. A few weeks ago, as my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State will know, I suffered an appalling experience when I had to wait about 50 minutes at the junction of the M25 and the M23. That was because a machine was apparently being used to test the road surface at a time when there was a massive amount of traffic on the motorway. All that was needed was one sign at the junction warning of the blockage and directing traffic to another route. I do not believe that the delegation of authority from the Department to county councils takes any account of the need to improve motorway traffic flow, when just a little advanced planning and concentration of thought could make a tremendous difference.

I hope that my right hon. and hon. Friends on the Front Bench will seriously consider setting up a small unit within the Department of Transport that will be notified of all likely major hold-ups and then make sure that action is taken to divert traffic. The waste of resources that currently results from such confusion is often wholly avoidable. That is something on which the Government could reasonably take effective action. Having said that, it must also be recognised that the Government's road building programme is making considerable progress, and I trust that it will continue.

The other point I wish to stress concerns air traffic control. The chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority has been most unfairly criticised over situations that developed as the combined result of several industrial disputes in other countries and the extremely tight schedules set by charter operators, whereby any minor disruption of their programme results in considerable disruption. That combination was the crux of many recent problems and there was nothing that either the CAA or the Government could reasonably have done, given the situation that had been created before the present difficulties arose.

However, it is important that we should not give way to those pressure groups that argue that there should be more night flights. It would be wrong for huge numbers of people to be seriously inconvenienced by an extension of night flight schedules. We tend to express too much concern about aircraft take-offs while ignoring landings. In my constituency, I constantly receive complaints about the level of night noise. The Government have done something to divert certain routes to less populous areas, with the result that there has been an improvement.

I hope that my right hon. Friend will stand firm against those who argue for an extension of night take-offs and will also look carefully at what appear to be completely unnecessary landings at, for example, Heathrow. They disturb many people at something like 5.20 in the morning. There is no need for large numbers of people to be inconvenienced for the sake of a few hundreds' convenience.

The Government have constantly claimed—I believe this is true—that it is not lack of resources that has resulted in air traffic control problems. However, we must carefully consider whether the Government's proposals for central control functions, which are designed to help in the future, cannot be brought forward from 1995. That time horizon surely ought to be shortened, and I cannot believe that the changes envisaged are such that they need to be introduced over that length of time. We are all aware of the considerable difficulties being experienced with that part of the programme, but everything possible must be done to ensure its implementation without the kind of delay that is envisaged.

There are many other subjects on which I might be tempted to speak; in particular, in declaring my interest as a council member of the Institute of Advanced Motorists —totally unpaid, I might add. It is important that we should encourage people to engage in better training after they have passed the present test, which is not sufficiently thorough to ensure that drivers are capable of driving safely in all conditions.

I am tempted also to discuss trams, which were referred to a moment ago. I once had the pleasure of successfully moving an amendment that secured the perpetuation of trams in Blackpool. The main advantage of London trams seemed to me that they were operated by members of a different union from those who operated the buses, which meant that they did not both strike at the same time.

The Government are putting in vastly more resources than before, and many aspects of their policy are now extremely successful. I hope very much that the House will reject the Opposition motion, which is superficial and partisan and the sort of thing that we might expect at this time of year.

8.50 pm

Mr. Ted Leadbitter (Hartlepool): One of the fundamental factors in any consideration of the state of transport must involve the public's view. The public appear to have little say in what happens, yet by any reasonable test of the conditions of our present transport system the number of public complaints is higher than ever, and the House should take serious account of that.

I think that for our present purpose we can ignore the transport experts, many of whom have been indifferent to public opinion. They know best. Members of Parliament are often frustrated when presenting a case involving their reaction to a legitimate public complaint. What we get is an exciting stir of indifference in the Department of Transport. When the right hon. Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins) talks of more resources being spent on transport than ever before, I cannot disagree, except to suggest that after eight years of Conservative government, the Secretary of State's excuse that he has been dealing with conditions inherited by the present Administration is beginning to wear a little thin. The public are not convinced by that kind of political observation, and it wastes time in the House. While we have perhaps improved the allocation of resources, the concern of the public about the inconvenience caused to them suggests that we have done too little, often too late.

Towards the end of his speech, the Secretary of State said that this was an excellent story. He presented the House with an excessive degree of heavy breathing. It is not an excellent story at all. Let us look at one of the four considerations in his approach to transport—safety. It is a remarkable habit of the House and indeed the country to become more keenly concerned about safety after an accident. We organise inquiries promptly, without hesitation; we wait for some months for their reports; then, as time passes, we seem to wait for the next accident.

Is the Secretary of State really satisfied with safety levels? Will he not admit that the Department has not once taken on board a semblance of responsibility for the conditions that led up to the ferry accident at Zeebrugge? We know where the real culprit is, but the Department has procrastinated. It has been lethargic about pinpointing responsibility. As I recall, most of the blame was placed on two individuals, but where does the real responsibility lie? Despite assurances in the House that something would be done about the conditions that led to the accident, we hear reports from the crews of other ferries that the same laxity prevails. One ferry went about its business, albeit within the port, with the doors open at the front where vehicles are loaded.

Is it enough to say that safety is one of our main considerations? What about the responsible reports of people who have spent a lifetime on the airways? Are the pilots wrong about near misses, or are the official reports wrong? Of whom should we take notice—the pilots who experienced a near-mishap, or the reports churned out by a tiresome bureaucracy with no personal involvement? The country is becoming involved, entirely unprofessionally, in passing the buck.

How does the House feel about roads? Last year I travelled in Europe for some 4,000 miles and never saw a single roadworks. I returned to this country and was soon sick and tired of being stopped. We want large sums to be spent on roadworks, but we have built road systems to be unable to deal with the developing traffic circumstances. When travelling to my constituency—if I travel within the law, as I suppose I must—I can get pretty far up the road to the north-east until I come across those wonderful inhuman things called cones, or Daleks. I am stuck there until I am fed up to the back teeth. Such conditions can promote accidents, and a good deal needs to be spent to put them right.

If, however, I decide to travel by rail, what happens? I get to Darlington—as I may tomorrow evening if sensible people on both sides of the House ensure that the vote is before 7 o'clock—but I then cannot get a train to take me the 21 miles to my constituency. I can afford to pay for a taxi, but what about the dear old lady or the young wife with her bairns? Taxis are costly. They have to catch a bus. To reach the bus stop they have to walk for over a mile and when they catch the bus it goes in and out of little villages and they have a very long ride.

This country has lost a great opportunity to integrate its transport system to meet the requirements of the public—not the requirements of politicians who have allowances and who can ride in their cars. We are not meeting the requirements of the public, because we have never measured up to the great economic benefits that an integrated transport system would provide. We had such a system in Tynemouth. We could get on and off the metro, using the same ticket. Because the bus system was integrated, people could move quickly within the area and, better still, get home quickly. That was stopped. Obeying the orders of the House, I had to chair the Committee on the Bill that led to the deregulation of transport. The result is that even in the smallest towns, six or seven buses are now fighting for customers.

Mr. Clelland: When I put that point to the Secretary f State for the Environment, he replied that deregulation had led to buses queuing for people instead of people queuing for buses. If that is the Secretary of State's view of efficiency, it is no wonder that our transport system is in such a mess.

Mr. Leadbitter: I can think of no better way to round off my contribution than with my hon. Friend's intervention. I had decided to speak only for a short while. I look at the clock and, out of respect for other hon. Members, both before me and behind me, I shall sit down.

9.1 pm

Mr. Nicholas Soames (Crawley): I agree with the point that the hon. Member for Hartlepool (Mr. Leadbitter) made about safety. Concern about safety should always be at the forefront of our minds. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman agrees with me that no Secretary of State for Transport, or his Ministers, could operate a successful transport policy without having the needs of the public at the forefront of their minds. I agree with the hon. Gentleman that it is disappointing that safety matters are not aired in this House as often as they should be and that they are always aired after a sad and tragic event. We have had our bellyful of such events this year.

I join in the paean of praise to my hon. Friend the Member for Hampshire, North-West (Sir D. Mitchell). He always took the trouble to listen to what hon. Members on both sides of the House had to say about transport matters. He dealt with us all with great courtesy and

effectiveness. The Government will be the poorer without him. However, the Department of Transport will be greatly enriched by the presence of my hon. Friend the Member for Enfield, Southgate (Mr. Portillo). Within a short period he brought a unique distinction to his ministerial office. We congratulate him and wish him success in his new office.

The quite exceptional growth in the economy and the real earnings that have gone with it have enabled more people to travel—and a very good thing, too. However, considering the history of economic growth in this country, it is hardly surprising that the Department of Transport and other Departments with responsibility for forecasting traffic growth have not got their sums right. Because of the very heavy burdens that he has recently had to bear, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State of Transport will be more aware than anybody else of the fact that the forecasting errors that have been made in the past of traffic on the roads and in the air are unacceptable and must never be allowed to happen again, in so far as it is possible to prevent them.

I intend to deal with two separate transport matters —aviation and roads. The British aviation industry is one of our great economic success stories. The transformation of British Airways under the exceptional leadership of Lord King and Sir Colin Marshall, the remarkable efforts of people such as Michael Bishop of British Midland Airways Ltd., of Harry Goodman of Air Europe, of Peter Villa of British Island Airways and of Britannia, Dan-Air and many others, has resulted in an explosion of activity. It has provided much employment and prosperity for people all over the country. Long may it continue, and broader may it spread.

The people who run the airlines and the people who work in them must realise that the great, substantial and happy successes must be balanced with crucial environmental considerations, which are of the greatest importance to people who live near airports. The British Airports Authority, under Sir Norman Payne, has made a brilliant start in the private sector and has confounded all the horror stories that those of us who served—I shall not say, had the fun of serving—on the Standing Committee that considered the Airports Bill heard forecast for it. The BAA has gone from strength to strength. Heathrow and Gatwick are now the two busiest international airports in the world and the BAA team runs a successful and splendid enterprise, which is expanding its interests handsomely and successfully overseas.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and his colleagues have more than done their bit. They have done a remarkable job in liberating air transport, both domestically and internationally, and they have done an excellent job in trying to achieve that important balance between environmental concerns and commercial success.

We are now in substantial and considerable difficulties. The problems of growth in this area, as in so many others dealt with by the Government today, are proving even harder and more intractable to manage than were the problems of decline before 1979. There is very serious congestion at airports and there are unsatisfactory delays for passengers, which are quite unacceptable. Many of the reasons for those delays are entirely unconnected with this country. The Greeks, Spaniards and French have all done their best to ruin holiday travel for our people. It is a Europewide problem, as my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has said. The problem must be addressed on a European scale because it is not simply a British problem.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State must ensure that the directors of each international air traffic control system have their heads collectively banged together until there is a unified system over western Europe. As sure as eggs are eggs, 1992 will bring a greater demand for travel and that must be dealt with before the impact of the open market.

The remarks made by some hon. Members about the Civil Aviation Authority and its chairman and management two weeks ago were, frankly, disgraceful. I am ashamed to say that the rent-a-crowd on the Conservative Benches were largely responsible. I want to place on record my unreserved admiration for the way in which the chairman of the CAA and Keith Mack, the head of air traffic control, are coping with particularly intransigent and difficult problems. I visited the air traffic controllers in my constituency the other day and I was exhausted by watching them. They do a brilliant and highly complex job under very demanding conditions, and the most onerous and appalling responsibilities rest on their shoulders. A great deal needs to be done to improve working practices in that organisation, but huge investments have been, are being and will continue to be made in air traffic control equipment, as I am assured by the Government.

All that is happening after the horse is almost out of the box. What can be done? My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is already dealing with the problem in the European dimension. I suggest that he gets hold of his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence and that he shakes from that appalling sink of waste every inch of military air space that he can prise from it. It is ridiculous that in 1988, when the most modern facilities for controlling air traffic exist, the military should insist on retaining in so many areas of this country vast acres of air space that are completely unnecessary for their own requirements and would greatly assist my right hon. Friend's problems.

Decisions in respect of future licences, runways, terminals and technical investments must be made, as they have been in the past, but particularly from now on, in the context of a national and international strategy for air transport.

I now turn briefly to roads. No one can deny the Government's right to claim credit for a very handsome increase in spending on the roads programme since 1979. But that is self-evidently not enough. My constituents and millions of others are daily deeply frustrated and greatly angered by road chaos. On this, as on so many matters in relation to infrastructure spending, we can and must do better.

Finally, I wish to make two key points. The public transport services require, first and foremost, far more effective direction and use of those who work in them and the resources for which they are trustees. Services must adapt to the requirements of the travelling public. My final point to my right hon. Friend is that efficiency is about doing what is right, but effectiveness, which is the true management task, is about doing the right things, as Peter Drucker said.

We must continue to invest at ever-increasing levels in the transport infrastructure of this nation if we are to begin to keep up with our continental neighbours.

9.12 pm

Mr. David Marshall (Glasgow, Shettleston): The question that has to be posed is: do the Government have an overall policy for adequate transportation systems to meet the present and future needs of the nation, taking into account convenience, cost, safety and service? It is patently obvious that they do not. I wonder whether it is the Government's desire to encourage everyone to stay at home, as it is becoming very difficult to travel anywhere without experiencing considerable discomfort, frustration, strain, stress and worry travelling by road, rail, sea or air.

I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hughes) on securing the debate as half of the Opposition Supply day debate today. Were it left to the Government, we would never have a transport debate in the House. My hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) boasted about travelling as a baby on the last London tram in 1953. I believe that I can go one better, having worked for two years as a tram conductor in Glasgow until the last tram ran there in 1962.

I congratulate the hon. Member for Hampshire, North-West (Sir D. Mitchell) on securing his knighthood, and the hon. Member for Enfield, Southgate (Mr. Portillo) on his appointment to the Ministry of Transport. I sincerely hope that he will prove to be a good Minister, particularly in relation to public transport.

I declare an interest as a Member sponsored by the Transport and General Workers Union and also as the Chairman of the House of Commons Select Committee on Transport. As the House is aware, at present the Select Committee is in the middle of an inquiry into air traffic control safety and runway capacity. Therefore, I feel that it would be most improper for me to make any comment on those matters. Suffice it to say that I hope our report will be published in December, or very early in 1989. I sincerely hope that, as usual, it will contain a number of helpful and meaningful recommendations and possible solutions that the Government may see fit to accept.

As an individual hon. Member, I believe that the Select Committee was perfectly right to conduct such an inquiry, and it would have been failing in its duty had it not done so. The concern of hon. Members and of the general public is very well known, and we must always guard against complacency whenever and wherever it arises, especially in matters of safety.

There is a very strong link between congestion and safety, whether it be in the skies, on a crowded ferry boat, in a train, an underground train or on the roads and motorways of our country. Motorways are grossly overcrowded, yet astonishingly, as far as I am aware, the Government have no plans for a new motorway network to meet the expected increase in traffic on our roads in years to come. They should be ashamed of themselves, and even more ashamed that they opened the M25 with no service area facilities for motorists. They seem also to be unwilling to provide, or to encourage someone else to provide, proper facilities for HGV lorries, and long-distance coaches. Drivers and passengers need sufficient, decent places to stop for rest and refreshment.

Facilities for the disabled traveller are also a disgrace. For example, a recent Automobile Association survey found that, at six service areas, disabled people could not rely on getting access to any facilities. Perhaps not enough profit can be made out of the disabled traveller.

I make no apology for again referring to the A74 and to the Government's repeated failure to honour their election pledge to upgrade that road to motorway status along its entire length from Carlisle to Glasgow. It has a horrific accident record and is well known as a killer road. How many lives must be lost on the A74 before the Government do something about it?

Drunk driving is one of the most serious problems facing us today. When will the Government finally get their act together and do something about it? Call it random breath testing, discretionary testing, unrestricted testing—call it what one likes—but the public want action, and they want action now. In making the case against random breath testing, the Under-Secretary of State for Transport, the hon. Member for Eltham (Mr. Bottomley) said that, in other countries, only one in 200 drivers stopped is over the limit. That is a powerful argument for random tests. It suggests that people are unlikely to take a chance if they fear that there is a real risk that they will be caught.

One matter that greatly concerns me relates to motor cyclists and the terrible toll of deaths and serious injuries suffered by young bikers. Has the Secretary of State seen the admirable campaign that was recently waged by the Scottish *Daily Record*, which called for compulsory training before riders are even allowed on to our roads? The Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, the hon. Member for Edinburgh, West (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton), supports the campaign. Will the Secretary of State do the same, and do the sensible thing and introduce the necessary legislation as soon as possible?

The Secretary of State should also consider a publicity campaign along the "clunk-click" campaign lines, to get all drivers to use their indicators properly. He should again consider making motorway driving a part of the driving test, and providing more resources to ensure a high-profile, marked police presence on our roads. Nothing is more effective in making us better drivers than to see a police car on the same road. He should also provide much more of the £14 billion that is derived from road users than the £3 billion provided at present. Research, maintenance and construction are all in need of substantially increased funding. The wonder is not the number of accidents that take place on our roads, but that the figures are not substantially greater.

Despite the Secretary of State's claim about investment, there are no signs of any new railway lines being built, yet the present network is greatly overcrowded in many areas and could not meet an increased demand. No serious efforts have been made to transfer traffic or passengers from road to rail. Staff shortages in the south-east mean constant gaps in services and a lack of service. Overcrowding, especially on underground trains in London, must be a safety hazard and make commuting unbearable.

Why do the Government not give British Rail all the necessary resources to tackle the problems in a proper, responsible manner, thereby benefiting the nation, industry, the travelling public and employees? The Government put profits before people. One of the saddest features of all is the short-sightedness of a Government who are not prepared to invest in long-term safety. They will long stand condemned for that fact alone.

9.18 pm

Sir Anthony Grant (Cambridgeshire, South-West): In the short time available I should like to deal with air and road travel. I declare an interest as president of the Guild of Experienced Motorists and as an adviser to the Guild of Business Travel Agents, which is responsible for four out of five business flights out of the United Kingdom.

A top priority for both means of travel is safety. The difference between the two methods of travel is stark. There is almost hysterical excitement and anxiety when a jumbo jet has a near miss—there is wide coverage in the press and great terror—but the equivalent of a jumbo jet crashing, with total loss of life, takes place every month of every year on our roads and receives nothing like the same publicity. There are 35 road casualties every hour. There have been 100 road casualties in the time that we have been debating this matter. It is no consolation to people who have suffered the misery and horror of a road accident to be told that the statistics are better than those for France or, as my hon. Friend the Member for Wellingborough (Mr. Fry) said, because there are so many cars on the road, the proportion of accidents is smaller.

It is essential to concentrate on road safety, despite what my hon. Friend the Member for Wellingborough said, and I congratulate my hon. Friend the Minister on his work and his attention to this matter. He has emphasised the number of deaths and misery caused by drunken driving. He always states that one in five road accidents are caused by drink, but we should not forget that four out of five are not caused by drink. So what are they caused by? In that respect I welcome the Government's support for the North report, which reviewed road traffic law.

It is right to emphasise the need for more and better roads. As my hon. Friend always says, one is safer on a motorway than on the small urban roads. I know that that is true of my constituency, where ghastly accidents occur, not on the motorways, but on the smaller roads in rural areas. The call for roads to be built is interesting. My hon. Friend the Secretary of State accused the Opposition of being big spenders, of wanting to spend big money and to subsidise, but what did they do when they were in office? They halved the road programme. Therefore, we can dismiss their view. Indeed, the whole of the motion is party political claptrap. The subject deserves much more serious debate.

There are many items in the North report that are important. First, the report is right to emphasise the distinction between major and minor road offences, which at present is somewhat blurred. The offence of recklessness is always difficult to prove in court. The muddles and the wheeler deals, in which I used to be involved when I was involved in the law, were in many ways bringing the law into disrepute. The police would throw in two charges, dangerous and careless driving, and a deal would be struck: "All right, I will plead guilty to careless driving if the dangerous driving charge is withdrawn." I am glad that the North report recommends changes that will differentiate between those two offences, because a diminution of the respect shown for the police has been encouraged by our traffic laws.

I hope that in future, the police will be able to make greater use of warnings and explanations to motorists of what has gone wrong. That would be good public relations and would be helpful to the motorist. I understand that the police can have videos in their cars, and it would be valuable if an offender could be shown on the video what he did wrong, in the hope that he would not do it again.

I am glad that there is to be greater use of technological advances, which I know my hon. Friend is studying. In Japan, heavy goods vehicles have lights that illuminate when they are travelling too fast, and that makes them easily identifiable. The greatest curse of our motorways is the wretched practice of driving too close to the vehicle in front for the conditions on the road. I am advised that it is possible to have a technological gadget—for example a light—that will show clearly that one is driving too close behind the other vehicle for the speed at which one is travelling. The Opposition have asked who will pay for that. The answer is simple. If we are sensible we will ensure, as we did with seat belts, that such gadgets are fitted to vehicles before they are put on the road. That is what must happen if we are to deal with the mayhem.

The magistrates bench is often feeble about disqualification for very bad driving, and I should like greater use to be made of the power to order the forfeiture of the vehicle. I know that it is said that most people do not drive their own vehicles, but I do not believe that that matters. There are many companies which are irresponsible about who they give a car to. They do not check whether the person to whom they are giving the keys is a good driver or sensible. It would be a salutary experience for companies if their vehicles were forfeited and they had to pay a substantial sum to get them back. They might then ensure that their drivers drove more carefully. It is, after all, commercial travellers belting about in other people's cars who are a major cause of mayhem on the roads.

I hope that appropriate measures will be applied strictly to heavy goods vehicles and coaches.

Mr. Terry Dicks (Hayes and Harlington): Especially coaches.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman: Particularly when they are in the outside lane.

Sir Anthony Grant: I entirely agree with my hon. Friends. There are excellent drivers of HGVs and coaches, but, as those vehicles are much more dangerous than anything else, the drivers of them must maintain higher standards.

I entirely support what my hon. Friend the Member for Crawley (Mr. Soames) said about the Civil Aviation Authority. Its chairman, Mr. Christopher Tugendhat, is an old friend and a former colleague of ours. He is a man of great integrity and ability. It is wrong to blame him for what has happened with our air traffic control. There is no doubt that we were all caught out badly in our estimate of the increase in the amount of air travel. It is rather like the M25. It is an excellent concept, but the number of users has far outstripped the number anticipated when the wretched thing was built. For air traffic, we are stuck with a problem that will be with us for a long time.

The CAA is to spend £250 million during the next five years. My view, which I am told is shared by some airlines, is that that is inadequate. I also believe that resolution of the problem, which is predicted for 1995, is likely to slip to 1997. There will be more temporary measures, such as moving charters to Heathrow. Despite what my right hon. Friend the Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins) said, I think it is unavoidable that some extra night flights will be used. That is regrettable.

[Sir Anthony Grant]

I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Crawley about the use of military airspace. I am told that the regulations that affect military airspace were laid down a long time ago, and in different circumstances. I ask my hon. Friend the Minister to consult our right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence, who may be able to raise the subject in NATO circles, to see whether some military airspace can be released. That would make a big difference.

Mr. Mans: Will my hon. Friend explain how the release of military airspace will solve congestion on civilian airways?

Sir Anthony Grant: The point was put to me powerfully at a meeting that I had with British Airways air traffic people. They think that if military airspace in Europe were reduced, much more would be available for civilian aeroplanes. Their view is shared by some of their European counterparts.

We are all sorry for the holidaymakers, because it is wretched for them to have their holidays ruined. However, we must remember the other important travellers who have to travel by air all year round, not just at holiday times. I am referring to the business traveller, the person who is concerned with trade for Britain and about our exports as a trading nation. He does not travel for pleasure. He has to travel day in, day out, in all circumstances to trade for Britain. Such travellers should not be inconvenienced or suffer in any way because of the failure to arrange our affairs in such a manner that scheduled flights can take priority over charters. I ask my right hon. Friends to have careful regard to maintaining the scheduled services at all costs, because they are important for the business traveller and the British economy.

The Department of Transport is often regarded as a Cinderella, but I believe that it does a first-class job. It is in the front line when there are difficulties and what it does touches on the activities of all our citizens. It has done a first-class job and I wish it well. I hope that my hon. Friend the Member for Eltham (Mr. Bottomley) who is to reply to the debate, will have close dealings with the Department of the Environment and that there will not be any conflict with the new Under-Secretary of State for the Environment, the hon. Member for Surrey, South-West (Mrs. Bottomley).

9.31 pm

Mr. Tony Lloyd (Stretford): I should like to join the assembled welcome for the hon. Member for Enfield, Southgate (Mr. Portillo) and to add my commiserations to the hon. Member for Hampshire, North-West (Sir D. Mitchell), who I shall miss because of the way in which he took part in the debates that we shared, with me doing the talking and him doing the listening. He did that well for the most part.

If I could give some advice to the hon. Member for Southgate, it would be to read carefully the Government's amendment to our motion and then ignore every single word in it because it is absolute nonsense, as has been borne out by speeches of hon. Members of all parties.

If things are so good, why are they so bad? Why, for example, has the road system in the City of London almost collapsed, so that the London ambulance service has now had to reduce from 95 per cent. to as low as 90 per cent. the number of calls that it expects to make within 14 minutes? That is a terrible indictment of the congestion on London's roads and of the Government's total inability to get to grips with the situation.

I remind the House that it is not that long ago that London Regional Transport was striving to attract traffic off the roads—and succeeding—that the number of accidents on London's roads fell by 3,000 per year, and that the number of cars on London's roads also decreased. That was because at that time London Regional Transport was receiving that terrible thing, a subsidy from the Greater London council and from the Treasury. Because of that subsidy, it could offer the unusual combination of a decent fare structure and passengers attracted back to public transport.

If everything is so good, why did the Audit Commission state in its recent report that since 1980 roads throughout the country have been deteriorating and that their condition is now worse than in 1977? If things are so good under this Government, why are the travelling public throughout the country totally fed up with the motorways being coned off and with being unable to travel from one part of the country to another, and why have those who used to travel on public transport deserted it? Following the great emphasis on deregulation, fewer people use public transport after deregulation than used it before.

The most important item in the Opposition motion is the part that concentrates on safety and the most damning indictment of this Government's record is their record on safety. Although this has been a wide-ranging debate, I believe that it is important to consider safety.

London Regional Transport enjoyed phenomenal success under the Greater London council when, partly in co-operation with the Labour Government and even with the Conservative Government in their early years, low fares made a real change to the fortunes of transport in London. The Government have now withdrawn the subsidy to LRT, and the 1988-89 LRT business plan admits that the London Underground and the London transport system are seriously overloaded.

In April of this year, LRT also announced that new investment, far from coming from the public to satisfy the needs of the public through taxation and other mechanisms, would lead inevitably and inexorably towards higher fares. The inevitable result will be fewer passengers travelling on the transport system—except for those forced off by the congestion on our roads.

Although the Government boast in their amendment to the motion of

"the increased investment in transport",

there are now fewer railway cars on LRT railways than there were in 1979. There is less seating capacity on the Underground than there was in 1979. Basically, the public are being given a shabby deal as a result of lack of Government investment.

The Secretary of State always makes great play of the "caring Government" and of what they have done to improve safety. However, the right hon. Gentleman and his predecessors have neglected safety on London Underground since the day they took it over from the GLC.

One of the first tasks of the new Minister for Public Transport—poor sucker—was to answer a written question from my hon. Friend the Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson). My hon. Friend asked

"on what date his Department received London fire brigade inspection reports on the London Underground deep underground stations in 1987, and in each of the preceding five years."

The answer that came back said:

"None were received in 1987."—

or in 1986, 1985 or 1984—

"The last report received from the London fire brigade . . . was dated 10 May 1983".

Surely the Department of Transport and the Secretary of State, or his predecessors, must have realised, when those reports from the fire brigade did not come through, that something had gone wrong. Surely, having nationalised London Underground, the Government appreciated that they had responsibility for safety. Once that transport system had been nationalised, the Government took away any adequate safety regime. The sure and inexorable result has been that the management, pressed to deliver cost savings and profit achievements, has ended up with poor safety conditions. That has led directly to the King's Cross fire and that is a charge that the Government will not be allowed to evade.

There have been previous fires on London Underground, at Oxford Circus and at Green Park. The reports on the inquiries into those fires were available, yet, despite its importance, no steps were taken to ensure the safety of the travelling public in London. That should have been the Government's prime concern and that is a charge that I am levelling against the Government. It is the greatest hypocrisy for the Government to argue that safety is at the forefront of their decision-making.

The most important concern relates to the safety of the ferries that ply between our coastal ports and France—that is a growing sore. The charge that such ferries are unacceptably vulnerable to capsize has been made by people with professional competence and of the highest international repute. That warning has come from the Royal Institution of Naval Architects, from those who suffered a bereavement as a result of the sinking of the Herald of Free Enterprise, and from the Herald Families Association. On each occasion, the Government's response has been that they have taken all kinds of measures to introduce regulations for ferries. They have at no time addressed the basic problem—the ability of such ferries to capsize.

During the passage of the Merchant Shipping Bill, my hon. Friend the Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott) and I pointed out the problems of fatigue. In every comparable industry, whether the air service or road haulage industry, there are specific limits on the hours of work that can be undertaken by or allowed for any operative. We pointed out that navigation at sea was an exception in that respect and that the Government had already committed themselves to bringing in legislation on fatigue.

We were told by the then Minister of State, and again on Report, that the Government intended to do nothing about bringing in maximum permitted hours of work for the merchant marine. We did not twig why—that it was a prelude to the introduction of new working conditions by P and O and that if the Government had brought in those acceptable hours of work they would have ruled out the introduction of the new blue book regime which was brought in by P and O and which has done so much damage to the ferry industry——

Mr. David Shaw (Dover): The final terms were red book, not blue book, terms.

Mr. Lloyd: The hon. Gentleman stood before the House some months ago and described how P and O had listened to people like him and had brought in the red book to amend the blue book—but it has ratted on that agreement and brought in the blue book. There are people on its ferries who operate under blue book conditions.

I want to quote some interesting comments made by personnel of P and O, the kind-hearted company whose only aim is to make an honest buck and to ensure the safety of it passengers. The company was described by Lord Justice Sheen thus:

"From top to bottom the body corporate was infected with the disease of sloppiness."

So much has changed that the Dover personnel manager of P and O European Ferries, a Mr. Chaston, was observed by members of NUMAST in negotiation with him to say:

"P and O cannot be seen as putting forward any reduction in manning. Any such changes must come from the union as the company cannot afford to be held responsible for accidents."

He was not saying that the company did not want reductions in manning; he was happy to have them. But he was saying P and O would not accept responsibility for any more accidents caused by what he knew—so much is implicit in his comments—were unsafe manning levels. That is what P and O is up to.

This is the same P and O which, as we have already heard this evening in the case of the vessel European Clearway, allowed operating conditions that defy categorisation as acceptable. P and O has denied none of these charges yet. The Secretary of State told us that he was prepared to prosecute in the event of unacceptable conditions at sea, but that the Herald of Free Enterprise is unfortunately out of his hands. Will he give a guarantee that, if the charges about the European Clearway made by motorman John Ball are proven, rather than allowing him to pursue a private prosecution, he will take all possible steps to ensure that Jeffrey Sterling and his company are brought before the courts to answer for the unacceptable safety standards on their vessels?

Will the right hon. Gentleman consider the position of the European Trader? I have already raised this matter with him. On the night when there was a fire on board the European Trader, an exchange took place between the vessel and the coastguard, who said:

"Please listen to me on Channel 80 and Channel 16."

The vessel's radio operator replied:

"We do not have enough men to monitor on both channels."

The Secretary of State is not an able seaman—no more am I—but we both know that it is vital in such an emergency that monitoring should take place on both channels. On that occasion it did not, because there were not enough men on board. The right hon. Gentleman's departmental inspectors allowed that to happen. I can provide—I have provided—the Secretary of State with the names of witnesses; will he guarantee that if the charge is proven he will prosecute P and O for that?

Will the Secretary of State, through the Under-Secretary, tell us about the charge that surfaced this

[Mr. Lloyd]

morning about the European Trader? On the night when the fire was raging and the crew went in to put it out, they were issued with gear to prevent them from being burned, and with breathing masks. They found that the oxygen cylinders for the breathing masks were empty, so they had to depart and find substitutes before going back to fight the blaze. Any observer would recognise that that delay might have caused a major tragedy which fortunately—no thanks to P and O or the Government—did not take place. Will the Secretary of State guarantee that charges will be laid against P and O if that incident is proven? I invite the Under-Secretary of State to respond to that, because clearly the Secretary of State does not intend to move.

The Government often claim that they are the victims of the success of their policies. That success is reflected in airports that have people lying all over the place and in traffic queued up for miles on our motorways and in the streets of London. The real victims of the Government's success are those who died on the Herald of Free Enterprise and at King's Cross. The Opposition will not allow the Government, who claim that they care for safety standards, to escape responsibility for those victims.

9.45 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Peter Bottomley):

"Every day people lose husbands, wives, parents, children and friends they have loved, whose loss reduces every perspective to dullness, misery and pain. In many cases they carry the pain around with them for the rest of their lives. At moments like this, one realises that under the surface of polite society there is a great well of sadness and bereavement, an aspect of the human condition which is as inescapable as it is seldom remarked, yet looming larger in many people's lives than any of the things they pretend to think important. The only excuse for allowing my own howl of anguish to be heard is to give those yet unbereaved a glimpse into the hellish blackness lying under the surface of their lives before they sensibly turn away and think of something else."

These words are Auberon Waugh's from the *Spectator* of 15 February 1986.

The House will acknowledge that this is an important debate with many aspects. It is regrettable that it draws about as much press attention as our most boring debates. The House knows that for a debate about capital punishment, which might affect the lives of about six or 60 people a year, the Press and Strangers' Galleries would have been full and there would have been newspaper attention throughout the debate. I am not criticising the press; and I shall later deal with what it has achieved.

While not in any way obscuring some of the terrible tragedies that have occurred, I can tell the House that in every category of transport the accident rate for the last available year is lower than it was in 1979. Of course, it should be. We should be able to get rid of avoidable crashes and to reduce the risk of disaster—*[Interruption.]* When disasters occur we should learn the lessons. One of the important things to recognise is that if we spent more time listening rather than speaking, we could work together to reduce the number of crashes.

Some hon. Members spoke about the King's Cross fire. I think that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I were two of the few Members of Parliament who were there. I pay tribute to those who at that disaster and in other disasters clear up the consequences of human error. On the roads, 95 per cent. of deaths and injuries are caused in part or in full by human error.

While we wait for the report of the Fennell inquiry, let us recognise that, because of the increased number of passengers who used the London Underground this year, between 25 and 30 lives have been saved. Seventy per cent. more people now use London Underground than in 1982, when it came away from the GLC. Without that increase in passengers, we would have expected at least 250 serious casualties and 1,000 slight casualties extra on the roads. If the underground passenger miles had been travelled in cars, on motor cycles and pedal cycles the saving would not have been so great.

Those who have managed to promote London Regional Transport so that it is more attractive to passengers have saved lives. By holding fares roughly steady, London Regional Transport has got so many extra passengers that it can proceed to an investment programme of £1 million a day. Capital investment in London Regional Transport is over three times the rate of investment on national roads in London. That should be welcomed rather than criticised by the Opposition if they believe their own rhetoric. People should have a choice about how they move around. They should make their own decisions rather than have them made by the Government or by the Opposition.

I also wish to mention one of the more vulnerable groups—motor cyclists. The House will be aware that over 40 per cent. of injuries to motor cyclists occur to those who are very young. In 1982, which is a useful comparative year—let us not bring party politics into the matter by taking 1979—a motor cyclist between the ages of 16 and 19 was 20 times more likely to be involved in a crash or collision for every mile travelled than a motor cyclist aged 25 or over. That ratio of 20:1 is horrifying, and the House rightly acted in a number of ways.

I am also glad that many people in motor cycling, including the British Motorcyclists Federation and many retailers, have promoted training. The ratio of danger for a young motor cyclist compared with that of a 25-year-old or older motor cyclist has fallen to 13:1. That is a significant improvement, especially when we reckon that between 600 and 700 motor cyclists die each year.

We intend to continue working with people in the motor cycling industry. When they have their rally on Saturday or Sunday, I hope that they will recognise the value of their approval of comprehensive training for young motor cyclists. At present, only 30 per cent. of motor cyclists receive any training before they take to the road.

Mr. David Marshall: If voluntary training has achieved such a substantial reduction in the number of accidents, why not make it compulsory and achieve an even greater reduction?

Mr. Bottomley: We will. We announced our intention to do so, with the approval of the motor cycling world, a few months ago. I pay tribute to the hon. Gentleman, the Chairman of the Select Committee on Transport, who, in a broad speech, covered a number of areas to which the House will want to return.

This has been one of our better debates. We were reminded that the hon. Member for Crewe and Nantwich (Mrs. Dunwoody), who said that she could not move

around the country, managed to move from Exeter to Crewe while a Tory Government were in power. I am indebted to my hon. Friend the Member for Kingswood (Mr. Hayward) for reminding us of that and for pointing out that, when the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) said that he was a babe in arms in 1953, his mother must have been quite some person because he was aged 10 at the time, having been born in 1943.

Mr. Tony Banks: I was a child who loved my mother.

Mr. Bottomley: The hon. Member for Argyll and Bute (Mrs. Michie) told us how the urban environment has worsened. I am not sure that she is right. As I go round the country, meeting the 107 highway authorities in England —my road responsibilities stop at the border—I find that the urban environment is improving and that there are more through roads for through traffic. The bypass programme carried forward by the Government allows more people to move around their local roads and allows traffic-calming measures to be introduced. It is interesting to note that, although the hon. Lady's party supports bypasses, there are many areas where local supporters of her party spend their time complaining about road schemes. We recognise the difficulty. We had the same problem with the Channel tunnel when the Liberal spokesman supported the Channel tunnel and the Liberals in Folkestone were spending all their time saying that they opposed it.

The points made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins) are well known to me. I hope to send him a letter in response to those that he has sent me. Perhaps he can then distribute copies of the letter to his constituents who are keenly interested in the road that we cannot call the Worthing bypass, but must call the Worthing relief road. It is controversial. That is why I delayed putting forward what appeared to be the most realistic view of where the road could go. I recognise that this is a disappointment. As one of my ex-constituents now lives on the proposed route for the new road, I realise how strongly my right hon. Friend's other constituents feel about it. My right hon. Friend also made some points about air travel. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has dealt with those very effectively.

Mr. Michael Shersby (Uxbridge): My hon. Friend quoted a figure for deaths of motor cyclists of 600. Did he mean in a year?

Mr. Bottomley: Yes.

The hon. Member for Hartlepool (Mr. Leadbitter) made a discursive speech. He talked about travel within the law. It is important to realise how schizophrenic we are about road casualties. On Friday I was looking at red-light jumping with a television crew. That is one of the habits that is getting worse—*[Interruption.]* Forty per cent. of the traffic—*[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Glasgow, Shettleston (Mr. Marshall) referred to being a Member sponsored by the TGWU; I stand here as a Member not sponsored by the TGWU—*[Interruption.]* Three years ago on "Any Questions" the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott) said that he would give up insulting for the new year.

Mr. John Prescott (Kingston upon Hull, East): I did not.

Mr. Bottomley: The hon. Gentleman is now denying it, but it is true. If he cannot be consistent from one year to the next, I would not vote for him as Deputy Leader.

Going across traffic lights which the car should not do —*[Interruption.]*—red-light jumping, as I described it— was watched by a television camera. The producer asked how to obscure the registration plates of those cars that broke the law. We would not try to obscure the faces of people filmed breaking out of a building society with all the money. No other form of crime kills so many people as driving offences. Driving too close to another vehicle, drinking and driving and many other things that people do are somehow looked on—or used to be—as a game, in which one should have a chance to avoid detection. Would we not tell a good friend not to drink and drive?

It is important to recognise what happens when people drink and drive—one of the biggest single killers on the road. My hon. Friend the Member for Cambridgeshire, South-West (Sir Anthony Grant), the president of the Guild of Experienced Motorists, was speaking for many when he reminded us that two thirds of deaths on the road come from sober road users. The one third caused by motorists and road users who have been drinking have the biggest single cause.

It has been reported in no more than one newspaper that the crime of driving over the legal limit, when people are two, five or 20 times more likely to be involved in a crash or collision, appears to have been halved in the last year and a half. The rate of the crime that has led to 1,000 people a year dying—that is probably an underestimate —has been halved. That is a matter of which the House should be aware and we should recognise how it has happened.

That has not happened as a result of a change in law, although the Government do not rule out change of law in future. It has not happened as a result of a change in sentencing. As has been said, there has not been a change in sentencing, and some people regret that. I can offer no view because I do not comment on the courts' decisions. It has not happened as a result of a change in the amount of money that has been spent. It has changed because the media have treated drinking and driving as news and current affairs. That has helped. It has come about because the brewers have promoted non-alcoholic drinks. Now, 95 per cent. of pubs and clubs have non-alcoholic or low-alcohol beer available. Drink-driving has been 90 per cent. a pub problem, 90 per cent. a beer problem.

It is also worth recognising that the only change that would come with full discretionary testing would be that the police would be able to test people whom they believed had not been drinking. We look forward to receiving a detailed submission from the police on what change they would like in addition to a restatement of the existing law.

I make a plea to people inside and outside the House. Instead of debating random breath testing, they should make it plain that to cut transport casualties people should not drink and drive, offer alcohol to drivers or accept lifts from drinking drivers.

If we reduce those figures as fast as we have reduced those for crashes and risks in the air, on the underground and on the railways, we shall be able to move around Britain more safely. The figures for air misses are going down and the situation on the railways and the roads is improving. We have much of which to be proud. I ask the House to reject the Opposition's motion and to support the Government's amendment.

Question put, That the original words stand part of the Question:—

The House divided: Ayes 201, Noes 262.

Division No. 445] **[9.59 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Allen, Graham
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beggs, Roy
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
Macdonald, Calum A.
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Neillist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Prescott, John
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Richardson, Jo
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerry
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Ken Eastham and
Mr. Ray Powell.

NOES

Amess, David
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Aspinwall, Jack
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Bigga-Davison, Sir John
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Burt, Alistair
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Colvin, Michael
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Emery, Sir Peter
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fishburn, Dudley
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John

Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Sir Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Sir Charles
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Riddick, Graham
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Walden, George
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. David Lightbown and
Mr. Kenneth Carlisle.

Question accordingly negatived.

Question, That the proposed words be there added, *put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 30 (Questions on amendments), and agreed to.*

MR. SPEAKER *forthwith declared the main Question, as amended, to be agreed to.*

Resolved,

"That this House congratulates the Government on its success in developing and implementing policies to provide the public and industry with an efficient transport system, giving both value for money and an improved quality of service; welcomes the increased investment in transport infrastructure which is accompanying a reduction in the burden on the taxpayer; applaudes the increasing involvement of the private sector in transport projects; and reaffirms the Government's overriding commitment to the safety of travellers,".

Orders of the Day

Education Reform Bill

Lords amendment in lieu of a Lords amendment disagreed to by the Commons considered.

Mr. Speaker: I draw attention to a misprint in the Lords amendment. In the bold cross-heading, the reference should be to clause 117, not to clause 115. I have selected the amendment to the Lords amendment in lieu, in the names of the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) and others.

Clause 117

THE FUNDING COUNCILS: SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS

Lords amendment: In page 115, line 34, at end insert—

"(3A) Before exercising their discretion under section 115(6) or (as the case may be) section 116(7)(a) of this Act with respect to the terms and conditions to be imposed in relation to any grants each of the Funding Councils shall consult such of the following bodies as it appears to the Council to be appropriate to consult in the circumstances, that is to say—

(a) such bodies representing the interests of relevant institutions as appear to the Council to be concerned; and

(b) the governing body of any particular relevant institution which appears to the Council to be concerned.

(3B) References in subsection (3A) above to relevant institutions are references—

(a) in relation to consultations required to be carried out by the Universities Funding Council, to universities; and

(b) in relation to consultations required to be carried out by the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council, to institutions within the PCFC funding sector."

Read a Second time.

10.16 pm

Mr. Jack Straw (Blackburn): I beg to move, as an amendment to the Lords amendment in lieu, at end of subsection (3A) insert—

'(c) such organisations representing staff as appear to the Council to be concerned, and

(d) in relation to consultations to be carried out by the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council, such local authorities or their associations, as appear to the Council to be concerned.'.

We all thought that we had had our last debate on the Education Reform Bill last Tuesday, but some of us at least are happy to be back again.

I was very sorry—as, I am sure, many other hon. Members were—to learn yesterday evening of the departure of the hon. Member for Dartford (Mr. Dunn) from the post of Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science. I should like to place on record our tribute to his unfailing courtesy and good humour throughout the passage of the Bill.

I offer the Secretary of State and his ministerial colleagues my commiserations for having had wished on them—without consultation or agreement, I understand—the hon. Member for Coventry, South-West (Mr. Butcher). I only hope that his strike record in offering advice to his senior Ministers is slightly better in future than it was at the Department of Trade and Industry. I have a cutting from *The Times* in which, only a few months ago, the hon. Gentleman was reported as having promised:

"Extra cash may be made available for the HOTOL space plane project."

One can be wrong sometimes. In the case of the hon. Gentleman, one can be wrong most of the time. He wrote in *The Times* on one occasion:

"I'm no deadbeat, and you can quote me."

The Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. Kenneth Baker): I thank the hon. Gentleman for his kind words about my hon. Friend the Member for Dartford. I should like to echo his words, because my hon. Friend has made a signal contribution to the work of the Department and to the formation of the Bill and its passage through the House.

The hon. Gentleman's comments about my hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, South-West are absurd. I am pleased to welcome my hon. Friend aboard. He worked for me some years ago at the Department of Trade and Industry on improving technological education. If one thinks of the rather lacklustre and humdrum performance of the Opposition team during the passage of the Education Reform Bill, it seems that it is not only the Government Benches "that need a reshuffle" but the Opposition Benches as well.

Mr. Straw: That was poor, even by the standards of the Secretary of State. I was going on to say that part of the problem of the hon. Member for Dartford was that he mocked the excessive bureaucracy in the Secretary of State's Bill. He mocked the national curriculum and called it a three-wheeled bicycle and a fairy tricycle, and he paid the price for that. His departure serves to remind the House of something which is central to the issues raised by the amendment—the transient nature of Ministers.

Throughout the proceedings on the Bill, when we have suggested the powers of the Bill could be misused, the Secretary of State has stood up and said, "Trust us." Some of us may be willing to take the Secretary of State, or even the Under-Secretary of State, at his word, but the problem that we all face is that Ministers are transient.

That point was made by Lord Swann in the other place, when he explained the importance of amendments that have now been accepted in the other place requiring consultation. He said that the Secretary of State

"is to be congratulated on those promises; they have gone down very well. But—and we believe it is a serious 'but'—Secretaries of State do not last forever; far from it. Their words are not binding on their successors. Therefore, while higher education can feel more confident about the immediate future, there can be no certainty whatever about what will happen as the years go by. Ministers, Governments and financial crises will no doubt come and go. Bureaucracy has an alarming tendency of escalating without anyone realising what is going on except its victims."—[*Official Report, House of Lords*, 25 July 1988; Vol. 500, c. 36.]

Mr. James Pawsey (Rugby and Kenilworth): Will the hon. Gentleman note that the Education Reform Bill has gone through, after nine months or so, virtually unamended? Does he put that down either to the inspiring quality of the legislation or his uninspiring leadership of the Opposition?

Mr. Straw: In so far as the legislation is unamended, I put that down to the bone-headedness of Conservative Members, and I express my commiseration to the hon.

Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey) for the fact that he was not offered preferment in the reshuffle yesterday.

Mr. Pawsey: At least I do not wear white jackets.

Mr. Straw: At least mine is clean, unlike that of the Secretary of State.

Mr. Paddy Ashdown (Yeovil): While we are on the subject of amendments, I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will recall that, far from the Bill being unamended, as the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey) suggested, I believe that 500 amendments were tabled by the Government alone.

Mr. Straw: The hon. Gentleman is exactly right. There were 569 amendments made in the House of Lords, and, as we all recall, hundreds were made in the House of Commons because, as I have explained, the Secretary of State fails to think things through or to think ahead. There are a whole series of time bombs within the Bill. Again, we commiserate with the Secretary of State that he was not offered a chance to escape in the reshuffle.

The importance of the amendment is to tie down the Secretary of State and the funding councils to ensure that there is proper consultation. Paragraphs (a) and (b) require that the consultation should take place with

"such bodies representing the interests of relevant institutions as appear to the Council to be concerned; and . . . the governing body of any particular relevant institutions which appear to the Council to be concerned."

Obviously, that can include the council and the senate of the university or the governing body of the polytechnic and their representative national bodies, the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals and the Committee of Directors of Polytechnics.

The amendment is unexceptionally worded, so I hope that the Under-Secretary will accept it. It seeks to add a requirement that the trade unions or other staff organisations be consulted. I make it clear to the House and to the Under-Secretary that that is at the discretion of the council. It is to ensure that there is a clear limit, obviously to the extent of consultation as is relevant, and, in relation to consultations carried out by the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council, to such local authorities or their associations as appear to the council to be concerned.

The consultations take place in circumstances in which terms and conditions are imposed upon the award of grant by the relevant funding councils. Such terms and conditions have not before been imposed within a statutory framework. Local authorities do and will continue to have an interest in what polytechnics are doing, even though polytechnics may no longer be part of their estate. There is a clear relationship between the courses that will be offered in many local authority colleges, the way in which local authorities have been planning provision at further and higher education level, and what polytechnics are doing. Therefore, it is important that there should be laid down a requirement for consultation with local authorities and their associations, but only in respect of polytechnics.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. Robert Jackson): This debate represents what will be the last work in the parliamentary debate about the Education Reform Bill. It is entirely in keeping with the way in which they have conducted themselves throughout the debates that Opposition Members should have made their last word the whimsical persiflage of personalities of the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw). I do not bear the hon. Gentleman any ill will. We are all grateful to him for the way in which he and his colleagues have let us off so lightly. It is entirely in keeping with the whole tenor of the Opposition's policy, or lack of it, that the hon. Gentleman's words should have fallen so far below the level of the issue.

The issue is whether the new higher education funding councils, in consulting as they think appropriate, should be obliged to consider consultation not only with institutions in their respective sectors and their representative bodies but with trade unions and, in the case of the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council, local education authorities.

I have two observations to make about the proposals. First, as a matter of course, there will be widespread consultation between funding councils and all relevant bodies. Indeed, one could say that consultation is inscribed by definition in the idea of contract funding, which is necessarily reciprocal in character. To meet the concerns that were expressed in another place, the Government have amended the Bill to give explicit recognition to the inevitable necessity of consultation. To do so, we must define the bodies with which consultation must necessarily be considered, but to include some bodies by mentioning them in the Bill does not mean the exclusion of others by failing to mention them.

Therefore, the Opposition's amendments are unnecessary, and are based on a logical fallacy. Moreover, it could be said that they are not only unnecessary but damaging to the interests that Opposition Members have at heart. The longer the list of bodies that the list specifies must be considered, the greater is any presumption that bodies that are not mentioned should not be consulted.

Mr. Straw: The Under-Secretary of State must know that that argument simply cannot wash in circumstances in which he and the Secretary of State have already agreed to two categories of bodies. His observation is nonsense. Does he agree with the purpose of the amendment, which is to ensure that it is clear that the two bodies should be under an obligation to consult, among others, trade union staff associations and, in the case of the PCFC, such local authorities or their associations as appear to the relevant councils to be concerned?

Mr. Jackson: No, I do not accept the hon. Gentleman's proposition, and I am about to explain why. The proposition and the amendment are typically ill-conceived and backward-looking. Hon. Members should note how ill-conceived is the idea of an obligation on funding councils to consider consulting unions. I wonder whether the hon. Gentleman and his colleagues have considered, even for a moment, the implications for the autonomy and self-direction of our higher education institutions if funding councils consider themselves obliged to intervene directly in their internal affairs and to establish direct contacts, bypassing the constitutional structure of the institutions, with selected interests inside that institution. That is the problem raised by the first branch of the Opposition amendment. It is a thoroughly ill-considered proposal. The only excuse for it is that we know from the Opposition's form throughout the debates on the Bill that it was probably hardly considered at all.

[Mr. Jackson]

10.30 pm

Then there is the backward-looking flavour of the Opposition proposal to oblige the PCFC to consider consultations with the local authorities and their associations. This shows that Opposition Members have not come to terms with the reality of what is happening in the polytechnics and colleges. These institutions have outgrown the tutelage of the local education authorities.

We owe a debt of gratitude to the local authorities for what they have done to bring the polytechnics and colleges to maturity, but they have grown up now, and the Opposition's emphasis on local authority interest in this matter is thoroughly out of date.

Ms. Hilary Armstrong (Durham, North-West): Does the Minister acknowledge that the local education authorities will continue to have an important role to play in adult education, that the polytechnics will be a crucial part of that, and that consultation, if only at that level, will be essential to achieve the flexible arrangements that we discussed at length in Committee?

Mr. Jackson: There is no need to make extra provision for that, because consultation is specified in the legislation at various points in the circumstances mentioned by the hon. Lady.

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): In the past, local authorities have had to sanction even the smallest appointments—for example, for colleges of higher education. We need a clean break from that system, which tied the colleges absurdly closely to the local authorities. The Bill will provide that change, and that is to be welcomed.

Mr. Jackson: My hon. Friend describes accurately the sort of world Opposition Members hanker after. It is the world they wish to restore. It is the world from which we are breaking by this Bill.

As this is almost the Government's last word in the parliamentary debates on the measure, I will make a few comments which try to aspire to the level which is appropriate to this historic piece of legislation.

Mr. Pawsey: Would my hon. Friend agree that the Bill can truly be called great and that it will take its place——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. We are debating a narrow amendment about consultation. Let us stick to that.

Mr. Jackson: My hon. Friend is right, in that the philosophy of this measure has throughout been to release new energies and a new dynamism in our public education by devolving power and by calling in interests to which not enough weight has been attached in the past.

Whether in our schools or in our institutions of higher education, the philosophy is the same—to strengthen choice and competition and enhance institutional self-determination on the basis of wider accountability. History will recognise, as have both Houses, the seriousness and significance of these commitments on the part of the Government and embodied in the Bill.

Mr. George Walden (Buckingham): My hon. Friend the Minister has left me little to say, but there is something to add—in a way to contradict him—because the tone of the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) was appropriate to the subject, so I would not upbraid him as my hon. Friend did. I detected a tone of levity in the hon. Gentleman's speech which spilled over into the amendment. It is not entirely serious of him to introduce such an amendment now.

It is inconceivable, although the hon. Member for Blackburn may contradict me, that he has consulted the directors of polytechnics or that he has gained a majority of their support for the proposal that local authorities should be consulted according to statute. I say that not out of primitive hostility to local authorities but because polytechnic directors to whom I have spoken realise that their institutions will remain in the middle of local communities. We all know what that implies commercially.

Directors will continue to be rational men and women and to have such contact as is necessary with local authorities to ensure that their policies coincide with local interests. It is indeed rather backward-looking to try to force the PCFC into a duty which directors of newly freed polytechnics will carry out of their own accord.

The hon. Member for Blackburn is wearing a white jacket. He is appropriately attired to take himself, and the amendment, away.

Mr. Ashdown: I had not intended to speak, but——

Mr. Patrick McLoughlin (Derbyshire, West): But the hon. Gentleman just could not resist it.

Mr. Ashdown: The hon. Gentleman may be right—or perhaps the sheer bankruptcy of the arguments advanced by the hon. Member for Buckingham (Mr. Walden) and the Minister have induced me to speak.

As has been the case throughout——

Mr. Walden: Where was the hon. Gentleman last week?

Mr. Ashdown: The record will show that I was here last week. The hon. Gentleman's absence and his ignorance on these matters are betrayed by his comment.

Mr. Walden: I wish to pick the hon. Gentleman up on a substantive point. He says that he was here last week. If he had been here last week, he would have heard his colleague contradict him on an absolutely fundamental matter in this Bill—tenure. I wonder what the hon. Gentleman has to say about that——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I hope that the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) will not respond to that point, but will confine his remarks to the amendment.

Mr. Ashdown: The record shows that I was here during that debate.

The Minister and, to an excessive extent, the hon. Member for Buckingham have followed the classic Government technique, which has been employed throughout our proceedings on the Bill. They do not argue the case of the amendment but set up straw men the better to knock them down.

I hold no brief for the amendment, but it suggests nothing more than that reasonable consultation might take place. It does not provide, as the hon. Member for Buckingham said, that consultation must take place. The

Minister suggested that the amendment would impose a duty to consult, but it would merely give discretion to consult.

We have had ample evidence of the fact that the Government have no concern for, or any belief in, consultation. They have shown that from the moment the Bill was introduced. All they are concerned to do is to ram through their ill-thought-out proposals, using the procedures of the House as undemocratically as possible.

The amendment is perfectly reasonable. It suggests merely that, if grants affect staff or the local community, both might be consulted. What an outrageous proposal. The Government have turned their face against reasonable consultation and have sought to introduce a huge structure of compulsion.

In this small and perhaps insignificant debate, the Government's arguments have not been untypical of their approach to the Bill, which has been inappropriate, muddle-headed and wrong.

Mr. Martin Flannery (Sheffield, Hillsborough): The essence of democracy is consultation with the appropriate organisations, so that democracy rules rather than dictatorship. When my hon. Friend the Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) tabled the amendment, he was not giving voice to an isolated argument late at night. It was the continuation of a huge debate that had occupied the House of Commons for nearly 250 hours in the Chamber and in Committee. That debate has focused on a vast Bill, the contents of which are sufficient for five major Bills. It reflects the haste with which the Prime Minister has forced the Secretary of State to bulldoze the Bill through the House. This short debate reflects the continuation of democracy and consultation.

The Government are feeling slightly drunk with power. They are feeling dizzy with success. That is the result of the Bill being pushed through Parliament against the wishes of many Conservative Members. We are all fearful of what the Bill will mean when it becomes an Act after it receives Royal Assent on Friday. We are worried about the effect that it will have on an education system that took well over 100 years to build in a democratic manner. The system is now to be violated by an elected dictatorship.

The Government's majority is huge, for reasons that will be set out in future history books. An ex-Foreign Secretary—Lord Pym—once referred to the danger of misusing such a huge majority. He was promptly sacked by the Prime Minister. Lord Pym was merely referring to the very dangers to which we are now exposed by the enactment of the Bill. We wish to ensure that the teachers, their unions and the local education authorities—the authorities represent a democratic system that was carefully constructed over a long period—are consulted.

The hon. Member for Buckingham (Mr. Walden) was a member of the Select Committee on Education and Science, but he rarely attended its meetings. He then became a Minister and showed himself to be a failure, as he was as a member of the Select Committee. The hon. Gentleman was kicked out of the Department of Education and Science, and let him face that. He should stop lecturing us about democracy, of which he knows nothing. We, the Opposition, are democrats, and we are struggling for democracy against this appalling Bill.

Mr. Walden: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Flannery: I am still on my feet, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Walden: I do not normally fuss about these trivial incidents, but I wish to introduce a small matter of fact. I was not kicked out of the Government; I resigned.

Mr. Flannery: As a matter of fact, the hon. Gentleman is a trivial incident.

That for which my hon. Friend the Member for Blackburn is asking is surely entirely reasonable. I am sure that the hon. Member for Buckingham and the hon. Lady, who has just entered the Chamber, will allow us to have it.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster) *rose*——

Mr. Flannery: I apologise to the hon. Lady, who has been in her place throughout the debate. I was referring to the Minister of State.

In the interests of democracy, I hope that Conservative Members will accept the gentle amendment that we have introduced. It merely asks for the proper democratic process to be completed. Surely the Government can easily concede that.

All that we are asking is that those organisations that represent teachers who have spent their lives in the education system should be allowed to participate in a proper democratic consultation process. If there is something wrong with that suggestion, the Secretary of State should say so and explain why. He should also explain why he would not agree to proper consultation with the long-established local education authorities, which are elected.

10.45 pm

When the Secretary of State destroyed the negotiating rights of the teachers—we shall debate that again tomorrow night—his action was condemned by the International Labour Organisation, which is an agency of the United Nations.

The Minister is aware that we are struggling against anti-democratic processes. We want the democratic process of consultation to be undertaken with the proper democratic organisations. The Minister must explain why we are wrong to ask for that. If he does not, we shall be forced to believe that he is not interested in democracy and that neither his party nor the Prime Minister, who kicks Ministers from pillar to post and sacks them if they disagree with her, is interested in democracy.

Ms. Armstrong: We are here again to discuss the Education Reform Bill, having thought that we had finished with it. Why?

We are discussing yet another amendment that has been forced on the Government by the Lords. It is clear that the Lords insisted upon that amendment yesterday because they do not trust the Secretary of State. All his smooth words to the vice-chancellors have not reassured them.

The Lords thought that they would simply have to ratify what we agreed last week, but they have pressed yet another amendment, which insists on consultation. They do not trust the process that the Secretary of State has set in train regarding the arrangements between the Universities Funding Council, the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council and the universities and polytechnics.

[Ms. Armstrong]

The right hon. Gentleman appears to be much more frightened of vice-chancellors and bishops than he is of any Member of the House.

Mr. Derek Fatchett (Leeds, Central): He is frightened of the Prime Minister.

Ms. Armstrong: Yes; I suspect that he is aware of the Prime Minister's influence.

The Lords were not happy with the consultation process and felt it necessary to identify particular groups that should be consulted. The amendment tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) extends that argument.

In uncharacteristic form, the Minister dealt with my hon. Friend's amendment in a cavalier manner and he re-emphasised the impression held by many of us, namely, that the Government hold teachers and their staff organisations in contempt and that they also have contempt for democratically elected local education authorities.

That is the tragedy of the Government's response tonight. If the Minister had been his normal self when replying to my hon. Friend we would not have been so suspicious. However, because of the manner in which he rejected our amendment, I am concerned that, once more, the message from the Government to teachers and to LEAs is that the Government are sick to death of them and would like them to disappear. We cannot continue an education service without the enthusiastic support of staff at schools and institutions of higher and further education. Our amendment, meek and mild as it is, would reassure them that the Government were not contemptuous of them and were prepared to consult them when appropriate.

We raised the issue of education authorities several times in Committee. We told the Government that the message going out from them was that they had no faith in local education authorities. The Government kept telling us that we had things wrong and that they saw a major role for the authorities in the future of education. But the Government are destroying any attempt to give local education authorities a role in the Bill.

I was surprised by the Minister. I know that he has been seeking ways of providing wider access to higher education. We agreed in Committee that a flexible intermingling of local education authorities, voluntary organisations and the institutions of higher education was essential to opening up access. But again the Government reject the opportunity to provide such co-operation. We can ensure that consultation takes place, if we have a good group of people who continue to be concerned. But, with the last breath of this Bill, the Government are sending out signals yet again to teachers and local education authorities, telling them they are not prepared to write their role into the Bill. That is sad, but is probably a true reflection of the mood of the Government.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: The ship is almost in harbour. This is the last little bit with which we have to deal. Tonight's debate has been typical of others that we have had on the Bill.

The hon. Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery) got hold of the NUT brief yet again and read it right through. The only original part of his speech was his calling me drunk with power and dizzy with success: very original. There is much to be proud of in the Bill, and there has been a great deal of success. As the hon. Member for Durham, North-West (Ms Armstrong) said, we are in the final minutes of debating the Bill in the House. Now it will be discussed, debated and implemented in the country over the coming months and years.

I suppose that this is positively the last appearance by the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) as education spokesman for the Liberal party. In Committee and on Report we discovered that he was the master of the passing brief. He immediately mastered and spoke to any brief that passed across his desk——

Mr. Ashdown: The right hon. Gentleman has said that three times now.

Mr. Baker: This is like the Bellman:
"What I tell you three times is true."

Mr. Ashdown: I congratulate the Secretary of State on getting that little speech well laid off. This is the third time that he has repeated it almost word for word. I am interested in hearing whether there is any variation by the end.

Mr. Baker: I shall add to it. The one thing that the hon. Gentleman showed in Committee was that he had no profound philosophical view on education, or any ideas.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I hope that the Secretary of State will have regard to what I said earlier, and address himself to the amendment. We have had Second and Third Reading debates. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will stick to the amendment.

Mr. Baker: I stand chastened. I was trying to reply to the speech made by the hon. Member for Yeovil and show that it was superficial and characteristic of the hon. Gentleman. The shallowness of the hon. Gentleman runs very deep.

My hon. Friend the Member for Buckingham (Mr. Walden) supported the views expressed by our hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State, who handled the higher education part of the Bill outstandingly well. My hon. Friend the Member for Buckingham said that these amendments are inappropriate. I am staggered that the Labour party has suddenly stumbled upon consultation with the unions, because, when the other place debated the amendment yesterday, the Labour party was very content with the amendment as it came back. The Opposition are engaged in last-minute thinking, dredging around to have a little three-quarter-hour debate late at night. The Opposition did not move the amendment and the Labour spokesman, Lord Peston, expressed complete contentment with the amendment moved by the Government.

The first of the two proposals is that the Universities Funding Council and the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council should consult the unions. That would be inappropriate, because the right process of consultation is between the UFC and the PCFC with the universities and the polytechnics.

Mr. Straw: Once again the Secretary of State has not done his homework. Lord Peston did not express complete satisfaction with the amendment, but said only that it was an improvement and better than his worst fears. That is a very different way of putting things. Lord Peston helped me draft these amendments, as did other

peers who had been concerned with the matter. Why are the Secretary of State and the Under-Secretary so resistant to the "dangerous" idea of consulting trade unions or local authorities, when in each case the council—the PCFC or the UFC—is given a discretion about whether to hold such consultation? It will take place only when they feel it is appropriate. What is the Secretary of State scared of?

Mr. Baker: The hon. Gentleman should read Lord Peston's speech more carefully.

Mr. Straw: I have.

Mr. Baker: So have I. Lord Peston clearly said that he did not have any of these ideas. This was debated yesterday in the House of Lords. He may well have consulted the hon. Gentleman this morning about these amendments, but why did he not put them down in the House of Lords? He did not table them yesterday, so clearly they were a matter of no great concern to him less than 24 hours ago.

Mr. Straw: That is the fault of the Secretary of State, who gave the House of Lords no time whatever to put down any amendments. He knows that the amendment was moved as a manuscript amendment in the House of Lords.

Mr. Baker: The amendment was tabled yesterday morning in the House of Lords, and if Lord Peston had wanted to put down the amendment he had plenty of time to do so. Plainly, he had not thought of it.

I shall now answer the hon. Gentleman's substantive point about consultation with trade unions. At present the UGC does not consult the different unions where it is determining the grants given to universities. That is right. *[Interruption.]* It is the terms and conditions of the grant. It does not do that now and it would be entirely inappropriate for it to do so. The right relationship is that the UFC, replacing the UGC, should consult the university concerned. That is right, because the university is the employer of the people represented by the unions and it would be constitutionally improper for it to consult the unions behind the backs of their employers.

We have already committed ourselves to setting up a consultative committee for local authorities and the PCFC, and it will deal particularly with the divide in those institutions inside and outside the PCFC. The proposal, like many of the proposals put forward by the Opposition about the Bill, is badly thought out, inappropriate and unnecessary. I invite the House to reject the amendment.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett (Denton and Reddish): We have just had an amazing performance by the Secretary of State. He congratulated the Under-Secretary of State, his hon. Friend the Member for Wantage (Mr. Jackson), on the way in which he dealt with the higher education part of the Bill, but did not trust him with a little winding-up speech. Five minutes before the Secretary of State started, he whispered to the Under-Secretary of State that he could do the winding-up speech, by leave of the House. He then snatched the brief away and dealt with it himself. We saw that happen time after time in Committee. We remember how he sat through the account of the hon. Member for Dartford (Mr. Dunn) of the national curriculum and then insisted that he had to jump in and save the ship on that occasion.

I should like to pay tribute to the hon. Member for Dartford for his long service in the Department and for enlivening the Committee proceedings. It is a little sad that he should get his cards before the Bill is finished and without any holiday pay. I hope that the hon. Member for Coventry, South-West (Mr. Butcher) will deal as effectively with school closures as did the hon. Gentleman. It is a difficult task and any hon. Member who had to deal with the hon. Gentleman on the subject would pay tribute to the thoroughness with which he tackled the matter. It is interesting to note that the Secretary of State, in his knockabout performance, did not confirm or deny the fact that the hon. Member for Coventry, South-West had been imposed upon him, rather than chosen by him.

However, what is most interesting is why we have had such an ill-tempered debate, in which the Government have protested so much about what they claim to be our incompetence. I assume that, if we were really incompetent, they would not have to draw attention to the fact. Their claims that we are incompetent are an attempt to cover up the real problem, that the Secretary of State has once again had an amendment forced on him that he does not want. As I understand it, there was pressure in the House of Lords for further concessions, and the Lord Chancellor told him that he would have to come up with the amendment. The amendment was produced and he is now pretty peeved about it, and he has shown his peevishness tonight. Instead of setting out to the House clearly how the Secretary of State envisaged the consultation process taking place, he has tried to criticise us for suggesting some of the people who should be included in the consultation process.

This would have been a last opportunity for the Government to clear up how they will co-ordinate funding between the universities body and the public sector body and how far the consultation process will go. It would also have been an opportunity for the Government to throw in the missing part of the equation; they have still not said what they will do about student fees, which are clearly fundamental to those institutions. We realise that the Government have got themselves into a further muddle and have had to delay that matter, but anyone who wants to see a rational process for the funding of those bodies must know what will happen to the fee process.

If the contracts are to be developed, it is important that the proper consultation takes place. Will the Secretary of State tell us now who should be involved in the consultation process? What will be the position of students? Will they be involved in the consultation process? They will be one of the groups most affected. Will the Government talk to the unions representing the employees, whether the professional academics or the non-academics, as they will be considerably affected by any contracts undertaken? It is all right for the Secretary of State to say that it is up to the institutions, but he knows perfectly well that in all those areas, there are national negotiating bodies, and that any contracts negotiated between the funding bodies and the individual institutions will have to take into account those national contracts that apply in terms of conditions of service.

It seems absolutely logical that the Government should include in their consultation both the academic and the non-academic unions on the campuses. Why on earth should the Government attack the idea of consultation with local education authorities? As my hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North-West (Ms. Armstrong) has

[Mr. Andrew F. Bennett]

pointed out, access courses are important. If we are to have co-ordination between further education and higher education, as has happened in many of our polytechnics and colleges of higher education over recent years, it is important that there is a link between the access course and the course that students will pursue later. If the course that they go on to is being funded by the funding body on a contract basis, that must be properly established. It is fundamental that the two funding bodies should carry out consultation.

We must also remember, when the Government so readily denigrate local authorities, just how substantial local authorities are as employers. Many qualified planners, architects and so on go directly into local authority employment. Again, it is logical that in working out contracts for developing courses in such areas there should be consultation with the local authorities.

As so often, the Government have missed the opportunity to use time in the House of Commons to inform people outside how they see the consultation process going along. The Government do not believe in trying to obtain consensus as a result of consultation; they believe in dictatorship. Time after time, in the other place and as a result of all the pressure groups outside, the Government have been persuaded—almost forced—to change their mind and put consultation into the legislation.

The Opposition believe that the Government should not only have consultation in legislation, but should carry out its spirit and aim for consensus in higher education rather than operate by Government diktat. I ask the House to support the amendment.

Amendment negatived.

Question, That this House doth agree with the Lords in their amendment in lieu, *put and agreed to. [Special Entry.]*

Social Security

11.6 pm

Mrs. Margaret Beckett (Derby, South): I beg to move,

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that the Child Benefit (General) Amendment Regulations 1988 (S.I. 1988, No. 1227), dated 15th July 1988, a copy of which was laid before this House on 15th July, be annulled.

It may be for the convenience of hon. Members if I make it clear at the outset that as the regulations that we are debating represent a degree of concession from the harsh legislation inflicted on young people by the Government, we shall not be voting against them. However, we do want to take the opportunity to express not just our reservations, but those of the many groups and organisations who seek to help the vulnerable young, about the implications of what the Government are doing to save, as I recall, some £97 million. I recognise that the Government argue that there are some commensurate costs. However, there is no argument but that a substantial net saving is expected from the legislative cuts that the regulations reflect.

Let us first put on record that the Government have removed the rights to benefit from all 16 and 17-year-olds —not from those who refuse youth training scheme places, not from those who refuse jobs, or any of the other glib excuses that the Government have trotted out over a period of time. Not one 16 or 17-year-old in the country will enjoy the right to benefit when the regulations are approved, as I presume they will be, this evening. But the Government will allow some exceptions to that general deprivation, exceptions which, although welcome, are inadequate in their scope and degree.

We do not query the exemptions that the Government are allowing, but we question how they will work, who will not benefit and how the regulations fit into the general scope of the new social security scheme—a point with which I should like to begin.

Although the age of majority is now 18, not 21, the Government are setting a new age of majority for those forced by circumstances to depend on benefit and setting it at 25. The imposition of a junior rate of benefit below that age, and, still more, its consequential effects on an aligned scheme of housing benefit, has saved the Government, again from memory, £150 million to £200 million.

The attitude that sets that as a new age of majority permeates a wide range of social security law. The assumption seems now to be that all under-25s live at home in a happy and supportive family who welcome their presence and, with the financial and other resources, accept without any serious difficulty their continuing, indeed their permanent, presence up to the age of 25 in their childhood home.

It seems to be only with the utmost reluctance that the Government concede that there are any exceptions to that rosy picture and, with still more reluctance, accept any responsibility to help those for whom that picture is outside their experience—a particularly dangerous assumption when dealing with those aged 16 or 17.

The Government seem to be saying—in this I am following their advice and former slogan of looking at the action and not the words—that if those are not the family circumstances of the young, they should be, and it is no concern of the Government that they are not. It is easy to

say that there ought not to be young people who are homeless, jobless and destitute wandering the streets—we could all agree with that—but there are, and the Government's policies and lack of recognition of the wider scope of the regulations make matters worse.

During the debates earlier this year on the Social Security Bill, of which these are consequential regulations, we asked what would happen to young people receiving income support but who had to wait two weeks. We asked how they were to make £150 bed-and-breakfast payments in London, for example, not because that represented the best type of lodgings for young people, but because it offered the only chance of a bed without strings that most of them would have. The administrative convenience of paying income support in that way alone causes problems for 16 and 17-year-olds in particular.

Recently, the Minister suggested to concerned organisations that payment could be made on a daily basis, enabling people to book into a hotel. However, experience shows that that arrangement is not acceptable to the people running such establishments, and it is not accepted. The Minister also suggested that those starting to receive income support normally already have a regular income, so the payment of income support in arrears does not matter and is simply part of the general pattern of payment in arrears. Again, that is not likely to apply to 16 and 17-year-olds in particular, who may have just left home.

The relationship between benefit and the YTS makes matters even worse. Those organisations which in the past have sought, with some difficulty, to help the young homeless must try to find them not just a bed but a job or a training place if they are to enjoy any income at all. Without the one, they probably will not get the other, and they may be caught in a vicious spiral of despair and homelessness. Now that such young people have no right to income support, and none to an urgent needs payment —which, basically, does not exist anyway—all that they could possibly be offered, as has been suggested, is a crisis loan. However, the people with whom these regulations deal will not be offered a crisis loan because the young, homeless or not, have a low priority need under the Government's guidelines for crisis or any other loans.

Even if the young were not rated as having a low priority need, in the case of the Westminster office, for example, officers took one look at the needs payments made to the young homeless last year and realised that if crisis loans were made to the same people this year, there would be no social funds left for any other claimants.

When one considers the framing of the regulations and the exceptions they embody, one returns again and again to the basic theme that the Government appear to be adopting towards the young—that they should not be homeless or jobless. If they are, what then? To hell with them? That may be an all-too-accurate description of the fate that will befall the most vulnerable. How can suitable or any YTS places be found, and how fast? If they can be found at all, it will take time. Meanwhile, how are those young people to live and eat? How are they to keep clean so that they may impress a prospective employer?

The Government's rules are not merely unjust; they are impracticable. During our debates on the Social Security Bill, we asked Ministers what would happen if it proved impossible to find enough YTS places for all 16 and 17-year-olds who might need them by September. The Minister of State said that that was a matter for the Department of Employment, and it had assured him that everything would be all right. The Under-Secretary of State, who, mercifully for him, has now left that slot, was not so wise. He kept saying that it would not happen. Over and over again, the hon. Gentleman, who now occupies high office in the Ministry of Transport, assured the House that it would not happen.

I have been asked to bring to the Minister of State's attention the situation in Cleveland, using figures from my hon. Friend the Member for Redcar (Ms. Mowlam), who, sadly, is unable to be present. In Cleveland, there are currently on the books 750 pre-1988 school leavers for whom one YTS place is available; there are a further 250 Easter school leavers for whom no YTS place is available; and there are, of course, this summer's school leavers still to come. How are all those extra YTS places to be magicked out of thin air between now and September? If they are magicked out of thin air, we are still confronted by the anxiety that was most forcibly expressed in Committee—that the number of places, not in any sense the quality, will take precedence. That is likely to lead to a mismatch that is even greater than usual between the opportunities that should be available and are right for the individuals involved and those into which they are being forced because otherwise they will not receive benefit. My hon. Friend the Member for Redcar has asked me to seek confirmation from the Minister that if our fears turn out to be justified—if, by September, there are not enough places, whether it be in Cleveland or elsewhere—he will make a commitment to consider extending the bridging allowance beyond the eight weeks for which it could now be on offer.

The regulations offer a possible entitlement to income support for a young person who has left home because of abuse. I suppose we should say, "Thank God for small mercies." But how is that to be judged? Will there be specially trained officers, skilled at dealing with an emotionally explosive situation? Or will the poor DSS counter clerk be told to demand proof—and what kind of proof—or simply to reject most such claims? Those problems, too, arise directly from the decision to remove all right to benefit.

There seem to be anomalies of timing. The framing of the regulations suggests that even young people whom the Government accept cannot live at home—because they have no home, have been kicked out of the home or have been abused in it—will have the limited protection that is offered withdrawn after the child benefit extension period. In other words, those identified by the Government as being at risk will get three to four months' grace to find a YTS place, and after that they will have no rights.

Ms. Joyce Quin (Gateshead, East): Does my hon. Friend agree that the regulations carry a risk of making the problem of homelessness in London even greater, particularly for young people who are attracted to London from the north and other places where unemployment is high because they think that there is a chance of a job, but who will find it almost impossible to get accommodation or to survive because of the lack of benefit? The Government do not seem to have taken that problem into account.

Mrs. Beckett: My hon. Friend is right. The problem is causing great anxiety, and the more pressure that the Government put on young people, as they are doing in the

[Mrs. Beckett]

legislation and the regulations that flow from it, to be in a job or a YTS place, the more likely it is that those who see little chance of such a prospect in their own area will travel to places where they have been told there is a better opportunity and render themselves vulnerable.

The regulations seem to make no allowance for those who, having had the right to benefit in the family from the child benefit extension period, become homeless after that time. They may crack after years of abuse in February rather than in October. The regulations seem to have been framed for the administrative convenience of the Department rather than to take account of those whose life experience does not fit precisely within the dates for which they allow.

I suspect that the Minister's answer will be that such cases could be met by the provision that the Secretary of State is able to recognise cases of severe hardship. The difficulty that we see is that that provision has existed in the board and lodging regulations, and we have noted—as have those who deal with these matters—that the Secretary of State, like every Secretary of State, seems to have extreme difficulty in recognising such cases. Few cases which most of us would think should qualify get past the Secretary of State. In any event, there is no proper appeal procedure for cases put to headquarters—to the Secretary of State—to decide whether there is severe hardship. Only the Secretary of State or his departmental officers have the right to exercise discretion. There is no scope for the judicial consideration of decisions. That is arbitrary in the extreme.

The problem of young people who are abused at home is an emotional and difficult one, but what about another judgment that is less emotionally fraught—whether somebody who is caught by the regulations is over 18? That is likely to occur in the kind of cases that my hon. Friend the Member for Gateshead, East (Ms. Quin) identified, when young people leave home and seek jobs or training opportunities elsewhere.

Will the Department accept birth certificates? They have sometimes refused to accept that evidence. Is the ludicrous guidance that has been used in the past still to apply: that other proof should be sought, such as the family Bible? The people who write this sort of stuff live in another world. How many families ever had a family Bible? How many families have a family Bible now? Is it likely that when young people aged 18 leave home they will think to shove the family Bible into their case? Even if they had, would it survive the sleeping rough, which is the only option that the Government offer, until they can prove that they qualify for benefit?

The Minister knows that the Department is coming under heavy pressure to look afresh at the implications for the homeless of all these questions, including the payment of income support in arrears and the possible extension of benefit to young people who are estranged from their parents and involved in resettlement programmes. The long experience of organisations that have tried to help this most vulnerable group of young people leads them to believe that this further additional burden will create considerable problems. Young people will be required to find a job or a YTS place before they can qualify for a legitimate income. I ask the Minister seriously to consider the case that is being put to him.

I suspect that in this debate we shall concentrate most on vulnerable young people who are being placed seriously at risk by the harshness of the Government's policies. We ought to put on record the concern that is felt by all who know about and understand what the Government are doing and the danger of their approach to this problem. I have no doubt that the Minister of State will refer to the need to offer proper choices to the young, but when we consider the changes that the Government are making to the rights to benefit and to benefit entitlement we have to conclude that in their heart they know that they are not offering proper choices to young people. They are seeking to corral and coerce the young into fitting into an unsuitable system.

Sixteen and 17-year-olds sometimes come to the conclusion that the world is against them. It is a great pity that the Government seem to be working hard to confirm that view. The removal of starter credits is regarded as a levelling down, as this Government always do. There is a real difference between the encouragement and support of young people to exercise sensible choices that will provide them with good opportunities and compulsion, which is all that the Government seem to be prepared to offer.

The Opposition fear that the Government are creating a great deal of resentment and that they are increasing the lack of a sense of responsibility and of a place in society, as well as removing the last life-line from the young, who are in the most desperate need. I beg the Government to monitor carefully the development of their policies for young people and, most urgently, to heed the advice that is being given to them from the organisations that deal, especially in the big cities, with the vulnerable young. They must not wait until well publicised, personal tragedies occur among the young homeless before they take action.

11.23 pm

The Minister of State, Department of Social Security (Mr. Nicholas Scott): I welcome the recognition by the hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) of the fact that the application of the regulations will be largely beneficial, although they are part of the implementation of a policy with which the Opposition profoundly disagree. Therefore, the Opposition will not seek to divide the House.

The point of principle that forms the background to the debate was settled in Committee and during the other stages of debate on the Social Security Act 1988. We took the view that able-bodied young people capable of work and/or training should not be given the option of moving from full-time education to benefit. Whatever doubts the Opposition may have about the detailed application of the provisions, the vast majority of people in this country will agree with that fundamental principle. I can think of nothing more corrupting than offering young people generally the option of moving straight from full-time education to benefit.

Earl's Court is in my constituency, in the centre of London. I know of some of the problems that have arisen because young people have had the option of coming to London and claiming benefit. They have been subjected to all the temptations and problems of living in the area. I do not want to see——

Mrs. Beckett: With great respect, the Minister has used a very dangerous word. He said that he could think of nothing more "corrupting" than young people being

tempted to come to London and claim benefit straight away. I recognise the case that he is putting, although I know of no evidence to support the argument that young people come to London because they can get benefit. They tend to come to London either because of the bright lights syndrome or because they hope that they will get a job or training place.

I can think of something more corrupting than being drawn to London by the promise, thought or offer of benefit; young people may come to London in the hope of finding better prospects here but then find that they have no income at all because the Government have withdrawn their right. That is the most corrupting option of all.

Mr. Scott: I had intended to deal with that rather later. We need to strike a balance in this matter. Of course, I want to ensure that young people who are in genuine need have proper protection through the social security system and I shall go on to explain why I believe that the regulations will meet that requirement. But the hon. Member for Derby, South, for whom I have considerable respect, does not seem to understand the temptations for those who believe that they can come to London and establish themselves, with semi-independent status, on the benefit system and without the prospect of a job.

I know that many young people come here wanting a job or a training place which may not be available to them elsewhere, but many come on spec, thinking that when they get to London everything will be all right and that they can sustain themselves through the benefit system. Almost always that dream ends in tears, and I have known many tragic circumstances to arise from that in my own constituency of Chelsea.

Ms. Quin: Does not the Minister recognise the contradiction in the Government's policy? They urge young people to show initiative and to move from one area of the country to another to find work, yet when young people reach the place where the work is available, they do not have the financial wherewithal to become established. They have to wait until their first pay packet comes in, and it is difficult for them to find accommodation that they can afford.

Mr. Scott: The hon. Lady's point centres on the problem of the payment of benefit in arrears when young people come to London. Again, we need to strike a balance. People may be encouraged to up sticks, leave their own homes and come to London on a speculative basis in the hope that they will get jobs and that they can live on benefit if they do not, and I have talked about all the dangers inherent in that.

Having said that, although we hear much about young people coming to London and failing to find accommodation, we still have a considerable number of vacant spaces in the resettlement units in central London each night. I am told that many voluntary organisations in central London also have vacant beds at night, and young people could go there if they wished to do so. Our local offices in central London, which deal mainly with the transient population here, have reported not an increase but a decrease in the numbers of those seeking help since the implementation of the reforms on 11 April.

Mr. John McWilliam (Blaydon): That is not our information; our information is that many young people are coming to London, and that they seek help from those organisations that can give them help in the short term. In the long term, however, finding permanent accommodation—somewhere that they can describe as their abode—is a real problem now that the two weeks' benefit is being denied them until they get here.

Mr. Scott: I understand that, but at the moment the evidence is that there is a decrease rather than an increase in demand. There is also evidence that, as those who provide accommodation for young people realise that they will be paid in arrears and as those young people give them a piece of paper which states that the benefit will be payable, albeit in arrears, landlords are adjusting to that situation.

Having said that, I want to find out the truth. Therefore, I have asked officials in my Department to meet the organisations concerned, and to discuss with them the evidence that they have, which may conflict with that which the Department is receiving. As an hon. Member representing a constituency in central London, as well as bearing my ministerial responsibilities, I am concerned to find out the facts. I have asked for that survey and those discussions to take place, and when I have the results, I shall review the situation and consider what, if anything, needs to be done. I believe in my heart that we should be wary of encouraging young people to come to London on the speculative chance that they may be able to obtain accommodation and jobs.

The hon. Member for Derby, South mentioned YTS opportunities. At the end of June, there were 162,000 unfilled places on that scheme. I cannot deal specifically with Cleveland tonight, but it is quite clear that throughout the country there are a considerable number of unfilled places on the scheme. Therefore, I see no difficulty about us being able to fulfil the commitment given by my hon. Friend the former Under-Secretary of State when we discussed these matters in Committee.

Whatever the hon. Lady says, the net expenditure—that is, the withdrawal of benefit from 16 and 17-year-olds unless they are prepared to take a place on YTS and the cost of providing places on YTS programmes—means that there will be a net cost, not a net saving, to the Exchequer. Therefore, we are investing in young people, not making overall savings at their expense.

In simple terms, we believe that it is neither necessary nor healthy for young people to see dependence on state benefits as the natural step to take after leaving school. I am sure that the vast majority of hon. Members agree with that. I shall not repeat the manifesto commitment, except to say that the withdrawal of benefit is closely linked to the guarantee of a high-quality training place for every school leaver under 18 who wants one. I believe that, as the scheme develops, we shall convince even the sceptics on the Opposition Benches of the merits of the training for young people that we shall provide. We all know that the training allowance that they will receive will be substantially in excess of anything that they could get on income support.

However, we appreciate that the burden of the regulations centres on the particular aspect that there are some young people who do not fit into the general pattern and who require special protection. The regulations deal primarily with the situation in which benefits will remain available to young people over the age of 16 when the new arrangements take effect on 12 September.

We have sought to identify two groups for whom income support will remain available. There are those who

[Mr. Scott]

are not required to be available for work or training, such as lone parents, the severely disabled and the registered blind. They will still be able to claim income support at all times. Then there are those who are required to be available for work or training, but may have to leave home because of physical or sexual abuse, broken homes, and so on. They will be entitled to benefit for a short period while they are considering the work or YTS opportunities that are available to them.

The categories of young people who are entitled to support can be found in the schedule to the regulations. All hon. Members will agree that we have gone to not inconsiderable lengths to try to identify as precisely as we can the categories of young people who are most in need. I am sure that, if we trawl through, it will be possible to identify smaller groups who do not fit tidily into the categories. My answer to that is that we have always recognised that it would not be possible to regulate for every conceivable circumstance.

Therefore, we have expressly taken power under the Social Security Act 1988 so that, when a person under 18 is not entitled to income support and it appears that he or she would suffer severe hardship unless benefit is paid, the Secretary of State may direct that the young person should be so entitled. That is an important and significant fallback to protect any who may fall outside the regulations, however much we have tried to identify categories that may need that help.

In short, the vast majority of people in this country will applaud our initiative in seeking to deprive 16 and 17-year-old, able-bodied people who are capable of work or of taking a training place of the opportunity to go directly on to state benefits. At the same time, we shall guarantee a place on the YTS for those who can take their part. We shall have the protection for the most vulnerable groups in the way that I have described. I commend the regulations to the House.

Question put and negatived.

PETITIONS

Gipsy Site (South Woodham Ferrers)

11.36 pm

Dr. Michael Clark (Rochford): With permission, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I present a petition

To the Honourable Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Parliament assembled.

The humble Petition of the residents of South Woodham Ferrers and the surrounding area.

The petitioners state that they are opposed to the creation of a gipsy encampment on the old concrete batching plant in South Woodham Ferrers. They point out that, in 1974, Essex county council promised that the site would be public open space. In 1984, it was designated as within the coastal protection belt, with the most stringent development restrictions placed upon it. Developments that adversely affect the character of that rural and open area are not permitted.

The residents of South Woodham Ferrers are, and have been since the new town was developed, prevented by restrictive covenants from parking caravans on their own property, yet there is now a proposal to bring in caravans belonging to strangers from outside the area and allow them to park legally in the town where other caravans are prohibited.

The petitioners point out that the new town, which is built on a riverside and advertised as a rural country town with a riverside nature and a rural environment, will be spoilt by bringing a gipsy site into the town.

The petition is signed by 315 residents of the town. It is backed up by another substantial petition, with over 5,000 signatures on it, being more than half the adult population of the town of South Woodham Ferrers. The petition concludes:

Wherefore your petitioners pray that your honourable House do urge the . . . Secretary of State for the Environment to intervene in the proposal by Essex County Council, to locate a gypsy site within or within proximity to South Woodham Ferrers. And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray, &c.

I beg leave to present the petition.

To lie upon the Table.

Maternity Unit (Moray)

11.40 pm

Mrs. Margaret Ewing (Moray): It is with pride in my constituents and in humility as their elected representative that I tonight present to the House a petition of 12,888 signatures collected in just a fortnight supporting the call for a specialist maternity unit in Moray. The petition reads as follows:

That the decision of Grampian Health Board taken on 7 April 1988 is against the interests and welfare of our residents and that there are clear medical, social and economic reasons for the establishment of a full obstetric and gynaecological unit in Moray. Wherefore your Petitioners pray that your honourable House will use its influence to persuade the Secretary of State for Scotland to instruct Grampian Health Board to reopen discussions on a specialist obstetric and gynaecological unit in Moray and further to carry out a feasibility study on the provision of such a unit. We further petition that the Secretary of State investigate the possibility of financial provision to enable the unit to be established.

To emphasise the importance of this matter, I shall mention briefly a case that occurred in my constituency

last weekend. A young mother who went into early labour in Elgin had to undergo a caesarean section by a doctor who had no delivery experience. The flying squad in Aberdeen, about 70 miles distant, said the emergency was too acute for transfer, which would require several hours. As a result, my constituent was delivered of twin girls without the mandatory attendance of an obstetrician or paediatrician.

Fortunately, the skills of the doctor in attendance prevented a tragedy from occurring, but it can only be a matter of time before a tragedy does occur, a point emphasised by the surgeon. We in Moray do not want such tragedies to happen and we seek the basic right of access to a specialist unit.

The petition concludes:

And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

We ask the House to give serious consideration to this matter.

To lie upon the Table.

Opencast Mineworkers (Gateshead)

11.42 pm

Ms. Joyce Quin (Gateshead, East): I beg to ask leave to present a petition on behalf of opencast workers employed at the Swalwell disposal point in Gateshead. These workers are to be relocated and many will, as a result, lose their jobs.

The petition states that the workers feel unfairly discriminated against, as they do not receive retraining or redundancy payments at anything like the levels of their colleagues who are classified as deep miners and who work for British Coal, even though the same levy is imposed on the coal with which both sector workers deal.

They feel that their situation is unique, as, unlike many opencast sites, theirs has been closed not because there is no longer a market for their coal but because the site has been acquired for another purpose.

The petition concludes:

Wherefore, your petitioners pray that your honourable House will be sympathetic to our unique situation and press Her Majesty's Government to invoke the Treaty of Paris to enable us to be fairly and justly compensated.

And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

To lie upon the Table.

11.43 pm

Mr. John McWilliam (Blaydon): I present on behalf of my constituents a petition in exactly the same terms as that presented by my hon. Friend the Member for Gateshead, East (Ms. Quin). Bearing in mind that my hon. Friend the Member for Bridgend (Mr. Griffiths) will shortly initiate an important Adjournment debate on the subject of opencast mines, I will not detain the House by reading the terms of the petition.

Settle-Carlisle Railway

11.44 pm

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): I present a petition against the closure of the Settle-Carlisle railway on a date which is before the closure date when the TUCC can hear objections on the grounds of hardship. I hope and believe that this will be the first of many more petitions on this subject.

I and the petitioners believe that closure would be an act of organised vandalism. The signatures include people on a train hauled by the "Sir Nigel Gresley", which you will vividly recall, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was built in Doncaster and is a fine engine named after the chief mechanical engineer of the London and North Eastern Railway.

The petition is also signed by people on the train on the Worth valley railway, who know how to run railways and know that a private preservation scheme for the Settle-Carlisle line is, to say the least, unworkable and unlikely. It is also signed by ordinary people from all over the country who treasure the railway, people who live near the line who would face grave hardship if it was closed, and people who love the line and the access that it provides to the Yorkshire Dales.

The petition reads:

The humble petition of the supporters of the Settle-Carlisle railway sheweth that the outstandingly beautiful and historic Settle-Carlisle railway provides an essential transport system for people who live in the area, for people wishing to visit the area, for people travelling between the midlands, Yorkshire and Scotland, for British Rail to use as a diversionary route, for British Rail to use as a potentially important freight route and for hundreds of thousands of people who wish to enjoy the scenery near the line, and the engineering heritage of the line itself. Wherefore, your petitioners pray that the Settle-Carlisle railway and the associated Blackburn-Hellifield railway will be retained as an integral part of the national railway network.

To lie upon the Table.

Opencast Mines

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Dorrell.]*

11.46 pm

Mr. Win Griffiths (Bridgend): The subject of this debate will be familiar to the Minister as it has for at least a decade been the subject of correspondence and debate in the House and the European Parliament. It relates to the application by successive Governments of article 56.2(b) of the treaty of Paris.

The budget of the European Coal and Steel Community is derived almost entirely from production levies on coal and steel. Every year since 1981 more than £1 million has been levied from opencast coal production, culminating last year in £1,902,000 out of £13,008,000 being paid by the Government in coal levies.

One of the purposes of the money is to contribute to eventualities described in article 56.2(b) thus:

"If fundamental changes, not directly connected with the establishment of the common market, in market conditions for the coal or the steel industry should compel some undertakings permanently to discontinue, curtail or change their activities, the High Authority, on application by the Governments concerned: . . .

(b) may provide non-repayable aid towards:
—the payment of tideover allowances . . .
—the payment of resettlement allowances to workers;
—the financing of vocational retraining for workers having to change their employment."

Because of the failure of successive Governments to apply article 56.2(b), opencast workers have been excluded from the possibility of the Commission deciding whether any redundancy meets the requirements of article 56.2(b) and is eligible for some or all of the aids in it.

I first became involved in the quest for justice for redundant opencast workers at the beginning of 1981 as the Member of the European Parliament for South Wales. In response to my inquiry, the Director-General of Employment and Social Affairs, Mr. J. Degimbe, wrote on 9 March 1981:

"The Commission will participate financially in the aids for all redundant coal miners, whether they be from Deep-mines or Open-cast mines, whenever article 56.2(b) of the ECSC Treaty is applicable."

After unsatisfactory correspondence with the Department of Energy over several years, I tabled a question in November 1983 to the Commission. My purpose was to get on the record the view expressed earlier by Director-General Degimbe. My question read:

"As far as the Commission is concerned, would there be any objection if the British Government brought opencast workers—on whose production the ECSC levy is paid—into the scheme of benefits that can be claimed by the UK Government, under the Treaty of Paris, when coal workers are made redundant?"

The Commission's reply, by Commissioner Ivor Richard, on 27 February 1984, read:

"If the United Kingdom Government revised their policy towards redundancies in the opencast mining sector, the Commission would have no objection in principle to granting aid under Article 562(b) of the ECSC Treaty for the workers concerned. The manner in which this could be done would be a matter for discussion with the United Kingdom authorities. In order for the workers to qualify, however, redundancy would need to arise from fundamental changes in market conditions for the coal-mining industry which compelled the undertaking concerned permanently to discontinue, curtail or change its activities. In practice, the Commission believes that this Treaty requirement is unlikely to be met in the majority of cases arising in opencast coal mining."

The Commission's position is clear: it will consider any application put forward by the British Government for redundant opencast workers. The British Government, however, are not disposed to do so.

To test further the powers of the Commission to act on the Government's failure to implement in full the provisions of article 56.2(b) for all workers involved in the production of coal, on which the levy was paid, two redundant opencast workers, Mr. V. E. Williams and Mr. P. Shepherd, petitioned the European Parliament in December 1984 to request the Commission

"to set in train the steps needed for Opencast Coal Production Workers to have the opportunity of claiming benefits under Article 562(b) of the Treaty of Paris when redundancies arise in the industry."

The Commission's reply was discouraging. Part of it read:

"There is indeed no provision of the Treaty which requires a Member State to grant special aid to workers affected by discontinuance or curtailment of activities in an ECSC undertaking or to apply for non-payable aid in respect of these workers under 562(b).

There is, therefore, no basis on which the Commission could unilaterally grant readaptation aids to opencast coal miners neither could it begin infringement proceedings against the United Kingdom Government for not granting such benefits."

However, the Commission reiterated its previous position. It stated:

"In principle it makes no distinction between opencast coal workers and deep mine (including face) workers for the purposes of Article 562(b) of the ECSC Treaty."

The reply continued:

"In order to verify whether in specific cases this basic eligibility condition is fulfilled, the Commission must rely on information presented by the Member State which under the Treaty is the only entity empowered to submit an application for aid . . . Until now the United Kingdom Government has not submitted to the Commission any such case concerning opencast coal workers."

That leaves us with the important principle that all workers involved in the production of coal which is levied for the ECSC budget should have the right, if made redundant, to receive ECSC benefits under article 56.2(b) if eligible. The plain truth is that the Government have arbitrarily barred opencast workers who have been made redundant from any possibility of access to ECSC benefits. In the past the Government have argued that opencast work is akin to civil engineering, has nothing in common with deep mining, and that opencast workers are, according to a former Secretary of State for Energy, who is now the Secretary of State for Wales, the right hon. Member for Worcester (Mr. Walker)—I quote from his letter to me on 8 October 1983—

"accustomed to the need to move to another site, or find alternative employment, at fairly frequent intervals."

They are not specified in the treaty of Paris as criteria for non-eligibility. The decision to exclude opencast workers is morally and legally unacceptable.

Given that provision has been made in British legislation for deep miners, whose coal production is levied to be eligible for ECSC benefit—when the conditions of their redundancy meet the requirement of article 56.2(b) —there should also be provision for opencast workers whose coal production is levied to be eligible when the conditions of their redundancy meet the criteria of article 56.2(b).

In the past the Government have argued that opencast mine redundancies do not meet the requirement of article

56.2(b) that an undertaking must have had to discontinue permanently, curtail or change its activities as a result of fundamental changes in market conditions in the coal industry. What may have been true in the 1970s is not true of the 1980s. In 1983 workers in my constituency at the Parc Slip site, Cefn Cribwr—incidentally, that is but a field away from my back garden—were given redundancy notices on which the reason for their redundancies was declared to be a reduction in the demand for coal. Those redundancies were permanent, as has been the drop in demand for coal.

More recently, in October 1986, the Llanilid east site, in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Ogmore (Mr. Powell), was closed with the loss of 240 jobs. British Coal also failed to extend the site to Llanilid west. Although the inspector appointed to hear the planning appeal for that site stated:

"On the balance of probabilities, the proposed operations would be profitable,"

in paragraph 265 he also said:

"There is evidence to support a reduced consumption of coking coal by BSC."

In paragraph 266 he said:

"I can see no justification for working Llanilid west on the basis of its coking coal content either in terms of the need to satisfy a particular market requirement or its economic value in the context of its intended purpose."

Plainly, the planning appeal inspector felt that the state of the market did not justify the continuation of work at the Llanilid site, which would have enabled 240 men to continue in employment. Despite satisfying ECSC criteria, those men cannot be eligible for ECSC benefits because the Government have not enacted a scheme to enable application to be made under the provisons of article 56.2(b) of the treaty of Paris.

My hon. Friends the Members for Gateshead, East (Ms. Quin) and for Blaydon (Mr. McWilliam) have already told us how opencast workers in their constituencies have been similarly affected by unforeseen changes. The Government's failure to provide such a scheme discriminates against opencast workers, whose coal production is levied in exactly the same way as deep miners.

The Secretary of State for Energy has the power to rectify that anomaly by establishing a scheme that is specifically designed for opencast workers. I hope that tonight the Minister will declare himself to be on the side of justice and that he will end the unjustifiable, illegal and immoral discrimination against redundant opencast mineworkers.

11.59 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy (Mr. Michael Spicer): I congratulate the hon. Member for Bridgend (Mr. Griffiths) on raising an issue which he has pursued with my Department on several occasions over at least eight years. I congratulate him on his persistence. He will not, I suspect, be surprised if, similarly, my response tonight has a familiar ring to him.

Article 56.2(b) of the treaty of Paris, which he quoted, which established the European Coal and Steel Community, states that

"if fundamental changes . . . in market conditions for the coal or steel industry should compel some undertakings permanently to discontinue, curtail or change their activities, the High Authority,"

—which is now the European Commission—

"on application by the Governments concerned . . . may provide non-repayable aid."

Certain costs associated with a reduction in labour requirements towards which this aid may be given are then listed. The treaty goes on to say that

"the High Authority shall make the provision of non-repayable aid conditional upon payment by the State concerned of a special contribution of not less than the amount of that aid".

As part of the coal industry, opencast mining is in principle covered by article 56.2(b), and if the conditions set out in the article were met it would be possible for the Commission to grant readaptation aid. However, it is clear that these conditions are not met, for two main reasons, one of which the hon. Member touched on.

First, the Government have no special scheme for redundancy or associated payments to workers at opencast sites. Such a scheme would have to be introduced, requiring legislation, before the Commission could make a contribution under article 56.2(b). Such a scheme, were it introduced, would of course be anomalous. It would single out for exceptional treatment a particular group of employees the nature of whose work was similar to that of many others employed in civil engineering and aggregate extraction industries. That is a perfectly fair comparison.

Mr. Win Griffiths: Is the Minister aware that, in other member states, opencast iron ore miners are eligible for ECSC benefits, and that the manner of their operations is exactly the same as that of opencast workers in the United Kingdom?

Mr. Spicer: I am not familiar with iron ore extraction in other countries; but I am familiar with the opencast industry. One of its characteristics—this may or may not be true of the iron ore industry in other countries—is that it is a productive, efficient and thriving industry. That comes into consideration of this matter.

To return to my point about comparable industries, employees in those industries typically need to move from site to site, or to find alternative employment, at fairly frequent intervals, as the jobs that they are doing come to completion. Redundancy payments to all these workers must, of course, conform to the requirements of the Employment Protection (Consolidation) Act 1978; but there is no justification for incurring the substantial extra public expenditure that a special publicly funded scheme for opencast workers would involve.

Ms. Joyce Quin (Gateshead, East): Does the hon. Gentleman agree that opencast workers, who may work alongside other workers employed by British Coal—that was the case in my constituency—are in an anomalous position? A levy is paid on the coal on which they work, yet, oddly, only one of those two groups receives any advantage from that levy. In the case I mentioned when I read out my petition, the opencast site had not come to the end of its useful life. It was closed for a completely different reason, which would meet the criteria that the Minister talked about before.

Mr. Spicer: The hon. Lady raises the matter of the levy, and I shall deal with that in a moment. On the question of conditions that might apply, I must stick to the point that this is a thriving industry and we cannot see any specific reason for singling it out for the public funding that would be required to make it conform to ECSC requirements.

[Mr. Spicer]

The possibility of funds from the ECSC to offset part of the expenditure is no justification, even supposing that opencast workers met the other conditions for aid that are set out in article 56.2(b).

It is highly unlikely that those further conditions would be met in the large majority of opencast sites. Perhaps that addresses the specific points raised. Closure of opencast sites is usually necessary because there are overriding environmental or planning objections to further extraction. Opposition Members are proposing, on the basis of what I suspect they might agree are limited cases, the introduction of a substantial and anomalous public subsidy for an industry that, by and large, is thriving.

Given the present state of the opencast industry, it would be hard to establish that there had been fundamental changes in market conditions requiring permanent discontinuation, curtailment, or changes of activities. The hon. Member for Gateshead, East (Ms. Quin) said that it was inequitable that ECSC funds were raised by a levy on coal production, including opencast coal, but that the benefits of readaptation aid did not extend to opencast coal workers. This point is based on at least three misconceptions.

First, no levy is paid by the contractors operating at opencast sites. They provide the vast majority of the work force and are responsible for redundancy payments. The levy on opencast production is paid by British Coal as the licensor. Secondly, there is no direct link between levy payments and readaptation aid. The coal production levy finances a variety of ECSC expenditures, of which readaptation aid is only one. Finally, and perhaps fundamentally, opencast mining is a thriving, prosperous industry for which ECSC readaptation aid is hardly appropriate.

Mr. John McWilliam (Blaydon): Perhaps the Minister has not been told by his officials that some of those opencast mining companies are financially effective because they are taking opencast coal and running it through private drift mines that they own. They claim the levy on the opencast coal as if it were drift mine coal. If the Minister is so innocent that he does not know about the rip off that is taking place in the industry, he should not be on the Front Bench.

Mr. Spicer: The hon. Gentleman makes strong allegations.

Mr. McWilliam: They are accurate.

Mr. Spicer: If the hon. Gentleman feels strongly about those allegations, perhaps he will write to me, giving specific examples, so that I may consider them. However, we are talking not about drift mining, but about opencast mining. The hon. Gentleman is proposing specific public funding arrangements for an industry which, by and large, is thriving. If he thinks about the matter carefully, he will see that he and his hon. Friends are putting forward a peculiar proposition.

Mr. McWilliam: If the Minister were to study the activities of R and A Young in the north-east, and if his officials and the Inland Revenue were to operate properly, he would discover that opencast coal is being run through drift mines as if it were drift-mined coal.

Mr. Spicer: The hon. Gentleman has made his allegations under privilege of the House of Commons and no doubt they will be seen by other people. I see no prospect of the opencast coal industry in the United Kingdom ever justifying the kind of special and expensive measures that were taken to deal with the social consequences of the closure of high-cost deep mines. They were extraordinarily generous measures that the state funded because of the restructuring of the industry, but they are totally inapplicable to and inappropriate for an industry which, by all acknowledgements, is thriving. British Coal is currently making £240 million a year profit in that industry.

Mr. McWilliam: Crooks.

Mr. Spicer: The hon. Gentleman shouts "Crooks", but this is a thriving industry for which he is implicitly demanding further public funds simply on the basis that the deep mine industry is undergoing considerable and radical restructuring to the great benefit, ultimately, of that industry. We believe it is appropriate that public funds on a massive scale should have been applied to that industry to deal with redundancies.

I do not think that the hon. Gentleman and the hon. Member for Gateshead, East will agree with me, as they have heard these arguments before and have not agreed with them in the past, but I hope that they will, after this useful and interesting debate, at least acknowledge that there are two different sets of circumstances. Because the word "coal" appears in the titles does not mean that it is appropriate to apply public funding to one industry just because the other is going through a massive restructuring. On that basis, I rest the Government's case.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at twelve minutes past Twelve o'clock.

House of Commons

Wednesday 27 July 1988

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

BRITISH WATERWAYS (NO. 2) BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*
Read the Third time, and passed, with an amendment.

LONDON DOCKLANDS RAILWAY (BECKTON) BILL *(By Order)*
Considered; to be read the Third time.

BRITISH RAILWAYS (NO. 2) BILL *(By Order)*
Order for consideration read.
To be considered tomorrow.

HARWICH HARBOUR BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*
Read a Second time, and committed.

Oral Answers to Questions

SCOTLAND

Local Government Reform

1. **Mr. McAllion:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any plans for reform of local government in Scotland.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton): My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State has no specific plans at present affecting the future of local government in Scotland.

Mr. McAllion: The last time the Tories met in conference in Scotland the Minister told them that any reform of local government could be justified only if it led to greater economy and efficiency and if it made local government more responsive to the needs of the Scottish people. Does the Minister accept that his poll tax reforms are less economical, as the collection will cost £28 million more every year than the present rating system? As they are demonstrably less efficient than rates as a mean of tax gathering, and as they respond to neither the needs nor the wishes of the Scottish people, who have overwhelmingly rejected them and despise them as a sop to the rich—which they are—does the Minister accept that he should either resign or stand condemned as a monumental hypocrite, which Opposition Members know him to be?

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman must withdraw the word "hypocrite".

Mr. McAllion: Under your instructions, Mr. Speaker, I withdraw the word "hypocrite".

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The purpose of the community charge was to introduce accountability. Reform of the rating system would not inevitably necessitate the reduction of local government to one tier. The hon. Gentleman referred to the Scottish Tory party conference. I am well aware of the representations from that party and many others, including representations from the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) who said on 27 January:

"there is a case for a move towards a one-tier, all-purpose local authority below an assembly"—[*Official Report*, 27 January 1988; Vol. 126, c. 327.]

We are anxious to encourage informed debate on this subject and we will look very carefully at any constructive proposals and particularly at the quality of the evidence. All such proposals will receive the most careful consideration.

Mr. Allan Stewart: Further to the second point made by my hon. Friend, does he agree that while there might be a case for a modest change, the move to a single-tier system is simply a superficial gimmick which would increase costs and inevitably lead to a great deal of disruption? Does he further agree that the watchwords for Scottish local authorities should be "cost-effectiveness" and "increased accountability" through the community charge, not spurious schemes for structured reform?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My hon. Friend is right. If a case can be made for the reform of local government, it must be on the basis of more effective and accountable local authorities within the existing constitutional arrangements.

Mr. Canavan: In view of the increasing interference by this over-centralising Government into the affairs of local government, is it any wonder that an increasing number of people in Scotland are concluding that the best way to restore and improve local democracy in Scotland would be to set up a Scottish parliament with economic as well as legislative powers, including the power to introduce a one-tier system of local government?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: We have no plans for devolution. We do not want more government; we want better government.

Mr. Kirkwood: If the Minister is really serious about striving towards greater accountability in the context of the poll tax or the reform of local government, will he consider the introduction of a sensible system of proportional representation? Is it fair that in the district elections in Edinburgh in May the Conservatives won only 23 seats, the Labour party won 33 seats and both parties secured only 36·5 per cent. of the poll?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The hon. Gentleman has mentioned an interesting case. More people in Edinburgh voted Conservative than Labour. However, I cannot give any undertaking to support proportional representation. We prefer the system in which people may vote for a person with a direct tie to his constituency and not to strengthen the party list system.

Ravenscraig Steelworks

2. **Mr. Buchan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what recent discussions have taken place between

his Department and the British Steel Corporation concerning the future of the strip mill capacity at Ravenscraig steelworks; and if he will make a statement.

The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Malcolm Rifkind): Following a meeting on 14 July, Sir Robert Scholey wrote to me confirming that, at present, there is no reason for the corporation to make plans to close the Ravenscraig hot strip mill.

Mr. Buchan: Has the Secretary of State seen the headline in today's *Glasgow Herald*, which says

"MacGregor offers to look at Ravenscraig"?

That is the most ominous headline that one has read in the past decade. I hope that, after the discussions, the right hon. and learned Gentleman will make it clear that the Scottish steel industry is not up for trafficking, that the buck stops with him and that he will carry the responsibility. I noticed that he was described as one of the best Secretaries of State for Scotland that we have ever had——

Mr. Home Robertson: Who by?

Mr. Buchan: By the Prime Minister. That is the kiss of death from the black widow if ever there was one.

Mr. Rifkind: I notice that the hon. Gentleman has rejected the view of his hon. Friend the Member for Motherwell, South (Dr. Bray) about the splitting up of the British Steel Corporation. The BSC is performing extremely effectively at present and, to be completely fair, credit must be given to its management, who have found markets that will purchase the product made by the excellent work force at Ravenscraig. Such excellent teamwork offers the best short-term and long-term prospects for Ravenscraig.

Sir Hector Monro: Bearing in mind Ravenscraig's success in recent years, does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that any reduction in output in any part of the plant will have a detrimental effect on the Scottish economy? Will he do all that he can to encourage the British Steel Corporation to invest in Ravenscraig, to ensure the plant's long-term future?

Mr. Rifkind: I do not know whether a reduction in output would have a significant effect on the Scottish economy, as only 4 per cent. of the British Steel Corporation's products are utilised within Scotland. Ravenscraig's major importance is the employment that it produces for Lanarkshire. Investment has been made in the strip mill in recent years, and I believe that the Arthur Young report, which is often referred to by Opposition Members, said that there was no economic case for new investment in Ravenscraig at the present time.

Dr. Bray: Is the Secretary of State aware that the restrictive strategy of the British Steel Corporation is a continuing threat to Ravenscraig? It seeks to restrict capacity and output to force up prices to the limit that European competition will bear. While the immediate threat to the hot mill will depend on when the next dip in demand occurs, the threat to Ravenscraig will remain until the Government take action to impose on Britain's steel industry a genuinely competitive regime to which Ravenscraig can properly contribute.

Mr. Rifkind: The actions of British Steel's management have, in part, led to the hot strip mill, which some months ago was operating at reduced capacity, working flat out. Clearly, that steel could not be produced unless there were markets for it. It is to the credit of the management that those markets have been identified. Over the past few years the Government and the British Steel Corporation have insisted on rationalisation and modernisation of the industry, which is why we have a steel industry which, instead of making a loss of over £1 billion a year, as it did in 1979, is making a healthy profit. I am sure the hon. Gentleman will appreciate that a profitable steel corporation is a much better prospect for the long-term future of all its plants, including Ravenscraig, than one that makes a loss of billions of pounds a year.

Mr. Salmond: How will Ravenscraig's prospects be affected by the elevation of a sudeten Scot—the hon. Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Forth), who has joined the Government and therefore left Scottish Question Time, for which we are thankful? Will not the anti-Scottish bias that is so evident among the British Steel Corporation's senior management now be accompanied by anti-Scottish bias in the Department of Trade and Industry?

Mr. Rifkind: Only the Scottish National party could interpret the appointment of a Scot to the United Kingdom Government as being to the disadvantage of Scotland. The hon. Gentleman has a lower opinion of his compatriots than have Conservative Members.

Mrs. Fyfe: What calculations has the Minister made of the number of non-steel jobs that will be lost if Ravenscraig is closed?

Mr. Rifkind: Various calculations have been made, but as there is not the slightest prospect of Ravenscraig closing, certainly in the near future—or, I believe in the longer future—such questions are purely hypothetical. I have emphasised that Ravenscraig is of major importance to the economy of Lancashire. Clearly, there would be grave implications for the economy of the locality if Ravenscraig were to close. The combination of Government policy and the qualities of the industry's work force and management mean that there are no reasons to consider the closure of the strip mill or, in the next few years, Ravenscraig itself.

If the Labour party's policies had been pursued, Ravenscraig could not have hoped to be competitive in world markets, especially as quotas have now disappeared in the European Community.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: In the absence of my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Forth), who is deploying his excellent talents for the benefit of the whole of the United Kingdom, will my right hon. and learned Friend confirm that this year alone Ravenscraig has broken 16 production records, and that it has received £12 million of investment over the past three years? If that is kept up, will it not be the best guarantee of the continuation of Ravenscraig?

Mr. Rifkind: The Department of Trade and Industry's gain is a loss for Scottish Question Time, I will confirm what my hon. Friend said in the latter part of his question, and repeat the important rider that it would be of little value for Ravenscraig to have this superb maximum output if Sir Robert Scholey and his colleagues in management had not been working to find markets for

that output. That combined effort by Sir Robert Scholey, his management team and the work force at Ravenscraig, has substantially increased not only the short-term but the longer-time prospects of Ravenscraig.

Mr. Dewar: The Secretary of State might not have been so optimistic about the increased Scottish presence in the Department of Trade and Industry had he had the pleasure of reading the articles about Scotland written by the hon. Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Forth) for his local press, and the dismissive and wounding comments that he made about expenditure in Scotland. Will the Secretary of State be a little more specific and go a little further than he has so far? As he knows, the guarantee for the hot strip mill at Ravenscraig lasts only until 1989, and in view of his correspondence with Sir Robert Scholey and his suggestion that closure was not a possibility in the near future, will he give the guarantee that he conspicuously refused to give in the recent Scottish Grand Committee debate, and make it clear that there is no possibility of the mill closing in 1989 when the transitional protection ends?

Mr. Rifkind: My hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Forth) was drawing attention to the level of Government expenditure in the constituency of Glasgow, Garscadden, compared with Government expenditure in Mid-Worcestershire. I can fairly say for my hon. Friend's point of view that there may have been a difference between the two totals to the disadvantage of his constituents.

As to the latter part of the hon. Gentleman's question, I have already said that the view of the British Steel Corporation is that it has no reason to plan for the closure of the hot strip mill. Clearly, it is for BSC and the market that it supplies to determine the prospects for all parts of BSC. I am not in the business of giving guarantees on matters for which I do not have ministerial responsibility. I have not had, I do not have and I will not have ministerial responsibility for this matter. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will want to join me in expressing delight that, because of the combined efforts of management and work force, there is no economic reason for anyone to wish to consider the closure of the hot strip mill at Ravenscraig.

Housing Standards

3. **Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what consideration he has given to a wider definition and assessment of houses which are below tolerable standard.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My right hon. and learned Friend is currently reviewing the statutory tolerable standard as part of the proposed reform of the home improvement system.

Mr. Griffiths: Why is it taking the Secretary of State so long to review this matter when so much hardship is being caused to many home owners and council tenants in Scotland by the fact that their houses, which have leaking roofs and crumbling stone work, and are riddled with damp, do not come below a "tolerable standard" in his eyes? Why will he not accept the need for a housing condition survey, such as England and Wales have, to ensure that there is available to the House and the public of Scotland an appraisal of the terrible conditions in which so many Scots are housed today?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: A housing conditions survey would cost about £5 million and that sum would have to come out of housing resources. Frankly, I would rather that local authorities had that sum now, and we believe that it would be better utilised on that basis.

It is important to remember that the primary responsibility for assessing housing needs rests with the local authorities, which have the greatest need for local information.

We propose to change the definition of "tolerable standard" and the new standard will include a fixed bath, shower or wash hand basin and the requirement that the house should be free from serious disrepair. We shall consider any representations about consultation.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: Is my hon. Friend aware that the district council of Kincardine and Deeside has frozen all applications for home improvement grant? That has caused considerable confusion, especially as it has occurred so early in the financial year. Will my hon. Friend use his good offices and those of the Scottish Development Department to resolve the difficulties and confusion that have arisen so that those who have a genuine wish to improve their houses—some of which are below the tolerable standard—are given the proper opportunity to do so?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: This year £625,000 was awarded as the non-housing revenue account capital allocation to Kincardine and Deeside Council, which represents 87 per cent. of its bid and is above the Scottish average. The problem for the district council is that it appears that it has over-committed the resources made available to it. We have already made it clear that officials will be glad to discuss the problems with the council as soon as it wishes.

The resources available for housing were allocated in March, but if additional resources are identified later in the year the needs of all local authorities will be taken into account.

Mr. Andrew Welsh: Is the Minister aware that 250,000 Scottish people now live in damp and intolerable housing conditions? Is the Government's decision not to raise housing standards based on the fact that they cannot cope with present Scottish housing conditions?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: It is extremely desirable that local authorities should carry out their own housing surveys. We are helping them to do so by sending out an information pack and a detailed brief on how best to conduct those surveys. The results of those surveys can be used in targeting resources to those areas that local authorities consider as priority areas.

The hon. Gentleman exaggerated when he quoted the figure. The information from local authorities suggests that, on 31 March 1987, a total of 119,000 local authority houses required treatment for condensation; 38,100 required treatment for dampness and 78,400 required treatment for dampness and condensation. They are somewhat different from the figure that the hon. Gentleman quoted.

Mr. Darling: If the Minister does not want to spend money on conducting a survey, will he make money available to councils, such as Edinburgh district, where all applications for home improvement grants have been frozen? Is he aware that that council has received more

than 8,000 applications, some of which date back to 1983, which cannot be dealt with because of the Government's constant policy changes and because the Government will not make money available for essential repairs? That is causing misery and anger to a growing number of people.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The bid put in by Edinburgh district council this year for non-HRA spending was for £31 million and every penny of that bid was awarded to it. Since that time the district council has estimated that the cost of clearing the backlog of repairs is about £19 million more than it estimated a few months ago. Obviously we are giving careful consideration to that matter as well as to the problems of Glasgow. My right hon. and learned Friend and I are considering what can be done to assist those affected by Edinburgh council's astonishing miscalculation of the figures. We hope to make an announcement shortly.

Mr. Harris: Will my hon. Friend confirm that the total number of houses in Scotland below the tolerable standard has fallen—[HON. MEMBERS: "Reading".] Only the figure. That number has fallen from 121,000 in 1979, under the Labour Government, to 54,000 in March 1987. If those figures are correct—I suspect that my hon. Friend will be able to confirm that they are—will he assure the House that the question from the hon. Member for Edinburgh, South (Mr. Griffiths) was not planted?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. The figures have fallen substantially, from 121,000 to 54,000. We rely on the latest figures from local authorities. Dundee, for example, recently said that it had 1,000 more below tolerable standard—BTS—houses. That is why the figure is 54,000 today.

Mr. Home Robertson: Will the Minister live up to his responsibilities for once and acknowledge that a house affected by severe condensation, or a house with no bath or shower, is not a suitable or tolerable habitation for any Scottish family? Will he acknowledge that the official statistics, which were parroted by the hon. Member for St. Ives (Mr. Harris)—he is supposed to know about these things—are a scandalously complacent under-estimate of the number of squalid and unhealthy houses in which far too many Scots are compelled to live? Many of those houses are to be found in the Minister's precious private rented sector. What will he do about the shortfall in funds that local authorities need to deal with this scandalous problem?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: It is highly desirable that local authorities undertake the surveys for which we have given them the expert information. Then they can identify how best to target resources on priority areas.

Nurses

4. **Mr. Doran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what guidelines he has given to health boards with regard to the regrading of nurses.

12. **Mr. McAvoy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received concerning nurse regrading.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Michael Forsyth): The Scottish Home and Health Department issued written guidance covering organisational and implementation arrangements to health boards on 13 May. Copies have been placed in the House Library.

I have received five letters on the subject and I shall be meeting representatives of the Royal College of Nursing on 8 August to discuss this.

Mr. Doran: We have become used to cynical manipulation of the figures, particularly by Conservative Members, when we discuss the Health Service. Is the Minister aware that a substantial proportion of the nurses who were supposed to receive the recently announced pay award of 15·9 per cent., of which the Government made great play, will get less than half that trumpeted amount? What calculations has he made of how the award will be distributed? How many of those who will receive it will get less than the advertised amount?

Mr. Forsyth: Speaking of the manipulation of figures, the hon. Gentleman should be accurate. The figure is 15·3 per cent., not 15·9 per cent. I am sure that he wants me to be accurate.

The hon. Gentleman probably knows that a review of grading is going on, and it is not possible at this stage to give the precise amount that each nurse will receive according to her grade. To ensure that every nurse gets some increase there has been an interim award of 4 per cent. The average increase will be 15·3 per cent. The hon. Gentleman should reflect that the Government whom he supported cut nurses' pay by more than 20 per cent.

Mr. McAvoy: In view of the Minister's announcement of his meeting with the nurses, will he give a commitment that he will make every possible effort to give positive reassurance to the nurses at that meeting that the principles of regrading will be honoured?

Mr. Forsyth: I shall be happy to give that assurance, of which I think the Royal College of Nursing is aware. We have taken steps to ensure that the health boards are given guidance and that management has enough training and expertise to carry out the grading review as quickly as possible. We expect it to be achieved by the end of October. A nursing sister with substantial clinical responsibilities on the ward will find that her real pay has improved by more than 50 per cent. since 1979 as a result of the Government's commitment to the Health Service and to nursing within it.

Mr. Jack: Does my hon. Friend agree that a 44 per cent. increase in the real pay of nurses in Scotland since 1979, the regrading exercise, the pay increase and the hospital building programme north of the border show a real commitment to developing a high quality Health Service in Scotland?

Mr. Forsyth: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. The Health Service has never been better funded and now has the biggest capital investment programme in its history. It has never had more doctors and nurses, and they have never been better paid. That is because of the success of the Government's economic policies in delivering the resources to provide that care. The last Labour Government failed the Health Service because their economic policies failed the nation.

Mr. Ernie Ross: The Minister has rattled off success stories in Scotland. Will he tell the House why it is that the nurses' representatives in the Health Service in Scotland

do not accept the Minister's statement? Will he also give a guarantee that the actual cost of the regrading will be met by his right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State when it has been concluded? Will he answer the original question and tell us what guidelines he is giving?

Mr. Forsyth: The vast majority of nurses who eschew strike action are members of the Royal College of Nursing. The hon. Gentleman is referring to remarks made by the Confederation of Health Service Employees in Scotland. I deplore the campaign of rumour and innuendo that the confederation has mounted. It has suggested that nurses will be made redundant as a result of the regrading exercise. That is completely untrue. It has suggested that nurses' pay will be cut, which is also untrue. I can only imagine that such trade unions are piqued by the success of the Royal College of Nursing in delivering better terms and conditions for its members while not taking any part in strike action.

Sir Hector Monro: Bearing in mind that the Labour Government cut nurses' pay in real terms, does my hon. Friend agree that the present pay award has been well received by nurses? Is it not ludicrous that the Opposition should ask for an open cheque for the payment of the very large award that we have made, bearing in mind that the sum was recommended by an independent review body?

Mr. Forsyth: I agree completely with my hon. Friend. The 15·3 per cent. increase in the nurses' pay bill was calculated not by the Government, but by the review body. The Government gave a commitment to fund that cost, which amounts to £803 million for the United Kingdom and to £92 million for Scotland. That is a substantial additional resource for the Health Service, and a responsible Opposition should welcome that and give the Government credit for what they have achieved.

Mr. Galbraith: The Minister will know that to fund the review body awards, including that for the nurses in the regrading exercise, he allocated £21·6 million to the Greater Glasgow health board. Has he read the minute of the finance and general purposes committee of the Greater Glasgow health board of Tuesday 3 May? Item 53 is headed "National Health Service pay body awards 1988-89" and paragraph 2 reads——

Mr. Speaker: Paraphrase it, please.

Mr. Galbraith: It was expected that the amount allocated—£21·6 million—would be £6 million less than the cost of the pay review body award. The minute goes on to say that the board would have to find the extra £6 million from its own reserves. Is that what the Minister means when he talks about fully funding the nurses' pay award? Why does the Minister constantly maintain that he will fund it fully, when he knows that he will not?

Mr. Forsyth: I have already explained to the hon. Gentleman that the sums were based on the estimates that were made by the review body. I must confess that I have not read the minute to which he referred. However, I can tell the hon. Gentleman that I have had no representations from the Greater Glasgow health board to that effect. Also, the board has taken the unusual step of refuting some of the scaremongering that has come from the trade unions and others. I am sorry that the hon. Gentleman chooses to associate himself with such action.

Waiting Lists

5. **Mr. Neil Hamilton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what effect the new Scottish performance indicators package for National Health Service managers is expected to have on waiting lists.

Mr. Rifkind: The indicators will help to identify areas where management action is required to improve performance and to speed up the waiting list reductions, which have been stimulated by the extra money that I have made available.

Mr. Hamilton: Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that, although the performance indicator package is welcome, we still have a long way to go? The National Health Service is still flying blind, in as much as the cost of inputs is largely unknown and the value of outputs is largely unassessed. We need to go rather further than we have.

Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware of a pamphlet that has been published today entitled "The NHS—a suitable case for treatment", which was written by the No Turning Back Group of Conservative Members and edited by my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Forth)? *[Interruption.]* I know that that name has the same effect on Opposition Members as mirrors do on vampires, and therefore that it will appeal to my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State. The essence of the argument is that we shall not solve the problems of the National Health Service until we move towards an internal market where hospitals——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Make it brief, please.

Mr. Hamilton: —sell their services to the district health authorities. It is only in that way that we shall improve the Health Service in the long term.

Mr. Rifkind: I congratulate my hon. Friend on his ingenious way of publicising the document to which he referred. Naturally, I look forward to reading and studying its recommendations. The concept of an internal market within the Health Service is of increasing interest among those who work within it as a way of ensuring better service for the patients with the resources that are available.

Dr. Moonie: I am sure that the Secretary of State, unlike his hon. Friend the Member for Tatton (Mr. Hamilton), is well aware that a package of statistics will not improve waiting lists in Scotland. Does he agree that one way in which they can be improved is to back the findings of the Select Committee on Social Services, which has a majority of Conservative Members, and provide the resources that we have identified the NHS needs to perform its work adequately?

Mr. Rifkind: I can assure the hon. Gentleman that the Scottish Office does just that. For example, in the course of the current year we have allocated an extra £2 million to deal with waiting lists, the very subject with which his question deals, and, as a consequence, the number of patients treated in 1988-89 has been increased by 16,000 out-patients, 6,000 in-patients and over 3,000 day cases. We are seeking to undo the damage caused by the industrial action in the NHS in Scotland in earlier years, which led to an increase in waiting lists of some 30,000.

Rating Reform

6. **Mr. Douglas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the further advice which his Department is issuing to Scottish poll tax payers in order to facilitate knowledge of exempted categories.

The Minister of State, Scottish Office (Mr. Ian Lang): When registration officers send out the notifications in October and November to those whose names are on the register they will also send a supplementary notice detailing all the exemptions. This will enable people who may benefit from the exemptions to approach the registration officer about their entitlement to exemption.

Mr. Douglas: Will the Minister concede that at this stage there is room for alteration of the exemptions? During the recess, will he suggest that one way to be exempt from payment is to put one's father or mother into a local authority nursing home rather than retain him or her in the family home? Will he promulgate that? In addition, will he say clearly that one of the tricks that the Government have deplored is to remove from the rating system certain fishing owners, at a cost of £1·5 million, while those who desire exemption because of severe mental handicap will have to go through the humiliation of registering that fact, through their offspring, patients or relations, with a general practitioner in order to have it recorded that they are "unfit" to perform civic functions? Does the Minister accept that the whole question of exemptions blows a hole in accountability and that a Government who had one scintilla of Christian conscience would not promote such a piece of legislation?

Mr. Lang: Some of the exemptions remain to be prescribed in regulations, but I see no reason for expecting any of the exemptions, or indeed any of the regulations, to lead to any change in the domestic residential arrangements of any family. The value of the fishing rates concession is equal to one fiftieth of 1 per cent. of total local authority current expenditure.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: Has my hon. Friend seen the report in this week's *Glasgow Herald*, on 22 July, that 12 Scottish Labour Members of Parliament have said publicly that they will not pay the community charge? Therefore, will he give the hon. Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton), who said in the same edition that there was no split in the Scottish Labour party on that issue, an opportunity to come here and explain how he squares the circle?

Mr. Lang: I have read the article to which my hon. Friend refers. A battle is raging within the Labour party over the community charge, between those who think that they should obey the law and the 12 members of the law-breaking tendency. There is also one special class which embraces the hon. Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman), who intend to obey the law, but whose wife does not. I have to tell him that the joint and several liability provision will cater for that.

Gaelic Language (TV Programmes)

7. **Mr. Kennedy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received in favour of increased Gaelic language programmes on television in Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Anns na dha no tri bhliadhnaichean a chaidh seachad tha sinn air tagraidhean fhaighinn o bhuill uasal, comhairlean ionadail agus buidhnean Gaidhlig.—*[Interruption.]* If hon. Members would prefer——

Mr. Speaker: What does that mean?

Mr. Forsyth: I did not realise that you did not have the Gaelic. It means:

"In recent years a number of representations have been received from hon. Members, local authorities and organisations representing the Gaelic community."

My right hon. and learned Friend and I recognise the contribution which the media can make to the preservation of the Gaelic language and we have consistently encouraged the broadcasting authorities to provide a reasonable range of Gaelic programmes.

Mr. Kennedy: I thank the Minister for his sterling efforts. May I assure him that he does not sound any more acceptable to the Opposition in Gaelic than he does in English? Will he take this opportunity to welcome the recent publication by Comunn Na Gaidhlig—that is the correct pronunciation—"Towards a Gaelic Television Service"? Will he say what input, if any, the Scottish Office will have to the Government's White Paper on broadcasting, particularly the degree of influence it could exert to redress the imbalance with the United Kingdom so that Gaelic in Scotland can enjoy the same sort of broadcasting support as Welsh does in Wales? It is high irony that STV and Grampian are contributing towards the Welsh broadcasting service, but we do not have specifically designated funding in that way in Scotland.

Mr. Forsyth: I cannot anticipate what will be in the White Paper. We have received copies of the document to which he referred and we shall study its proposals with interest. The hon. Gentleman might acknowledge that the BBC and the independent television companies in Scotland are planning to increase the time that they make available for broadcasting. I know that there is still concern. The hon. Member for Argyll and Bute (Mrs. Michie) had a recent Adjournment debate and summarised that concern. We are sympathetic and we urge the Gaelic-speaking community to continue to put pressure on the broadcasting authorities, because it is a matter for them.

The hon. Gentleman will know that in Wales a considerable part of the Channel 4 take-up is given over to the language. The numbers are larger and the issues are difficult, but it is a matter that we shall bear in mind.

Mr. Macdonald: I congratulate the Minister on his admirable Gaelic and say "Meala naidheachd airson bruidhinn Gaidhlig agus rinn thu uamhasadh math."

Mr. Speaker: What does that mean?

Mr. Macdonald: Those are the kindest words I have ever spoken to the Minister.

I appreciate what the Minister said in his reply, but he must be aware by now that the broadcasting companies have made it clear that they cannot possibly increase Gaelic provision within their present financial constraints. Is it not the Government's responsibility to increase the financial allocation to the broadcasting authorities to enable them to provide a Gaelic television service or to map out other ways in which it might be done?

Mr. Forsyth: I thank the hon. Gentleman for his kind remarks.

He asked about support for the broadcasting authorities. I understand that the problem is more one of scheduling and that the commitment is there on the part of the broadcasting authorities to do more. No doubt my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Home Office will note what the hon. Gentleman said.

On the matter of giving specific financial support for Gaelic, the hon. Gentleman will be aware that we have increased the support for education authorities for the current year to £500,000 from £300,000. In addition, we are making available nearly £200,000 for grant-aid to organisations that work in support of Gaelic. I should mention that Grampian television is planning a series of programmes to support standard grade Gaelic. Gaelic is strengthening as a language and it has our support.

Mr. John Marshall: Will my hon. Friend accept that 95 per cent. of Scottish people do not know a word of Gaelic and that they want television programmes that they can enjoy and understand in the lingua franca?

Mr. Forsyth: What my hon. Friend says is true. There are 80,000 Gaels in Scotland, which is about 2 per cent. of the population. However, there are concentrations in particular communities. I see no conflict between giving stimulus and support to the Gaelic language and providing the required wider programming interests through the broadcasting authorities. I believe that the development of new technology will enable more broadcasting to be achievable, and that is a matter to which I hope the broadcasting authorities are turning their minds.

Rating Reform

8. **Mr. Worthington:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will meet *(a)* the Confederation of British Industry (Scotland), *(b)* the Scottish Council (Development and Industry), *(c)* Chambers of Commerce and *(d)* the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities to discuss the implementation of a uniform business rate.

Mr. Lang: The reform of business rates has been discussed with a number of Scottish business interests. No further meetings are planned at present.

Mr. Worthington: I find it amazing that the Minister continues to be complacent as always when he knows, as he has said in the past, that the Scottish business community is substantially disadvantaged, so that a Marks and Spencer store in Falkirk pays £166,000 in rates and a Marks and Spencer store of similar size in York pays £32,000. It is universally agreed that, after the revaluation in 1990, Scottish business will be further disadvantaged. Neither I nor the business community can understand why the Government wish to impose a higher tax on Scottish business than will be paid in England and Wales. Why is the Minister being so complacent?

Mr. Lang: The complacency is on the other side, when one reflects that the hon. Gentleman was once finance convenor of Strathclyde region. One of the disadvantages that Scottish businesses face is as a result of the depredations of high-spending Labour-controlled local authorities. However, I am happy to assure the hon. Gentleman that Scottish businesses will derive considerable benefit from the index-linking provisions in the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Act 1987. If those provisions had been in force for the past five years, Scottish businesses would have had to pay £200 million less in rates than they have had to do.

Manufacturing Industry

9. **Mr. Millan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement about the prospects for manufacturing industry in Scotland.

Mr. Rifkind: The prospects for manufacturing industry in Scotland are extremely favourable, Manufacturing output in the final quarter of 1987 was 4·7 per cent. up on the previous quarter and I expect further strong growth this year.

Mr. Millan: Does the Secretary of State agree that it is important to manufacturing industry in Scotland that it should have available to it an efficient and economic electricity supply? Is he aware that today's Energy Select Committee's report on the Government's proposals for electricity privatisation is a devastating indictment of the proposals, showing them to be ill-thought-out and thoroughly muddled? It also shows that the so-called competition by comparison that the Government have claimed would keep down costs in Scotland is largely meaningless, that the proposals pose real dangers to Scottish consumers and, particularly, that Scottish consumers, including industrial consumers, may very well finish up by subsidising the export of Scottish electricity to England. Why does the Secretary of State not drop the proposals?

Mr. Rifkind: I have not yet had an opportunity to read the Select Committee's conclusions, but I understand that they question the value of continuing with vertical integration in Scotland whereby generation, production and distribution are in the same company's control. As the right hon. Gentleman shares the Government's view that vertical integration has been to the benefit of the Scottish economy, and as that will continue, I am surprised that he did not refer to that.

Mr. Steel: Does the Secretary of State accept that the adverse effect of the high value of the pound and of high interest rates is bound to be considerable on manufacturing in Scotland in general and on the woollen trade in the Borders in particular? Does he not receive a warning from this morning's trade figures, which show that we are on target, not for the Chancellor's £4 billion deficit at the end of the year, but, possibly, for a £10 billion deficit? Does the Secretary of State accept, therefore, that the Government's economic policy appears to be constructed on a pack of credit cards?

Mr. Rifkind: No, I do not, because, as the right hon. Gentleman will appreciate, if we returned to the levels of inflation that existed when he was in a pact with the Labour Government, the prospects for Scottish industry would be disastrous. Scottish industry and manufacturers are going through a period of unprecedented growth, which they recognise as being favourable to their interests and those of their employees. The alternative economic prescriptions that the right hon. Gentleman supported during the period of the last Labour Government would create a gloomy future for the textile industry in his constituency, as well as for Scottish industry as a whole.

Mr. Favell: Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that the recent marked and welcome improvement in the performance of Scottish manufacturing industry comes through a growing awareness among the Scots people that the way to success and to compete against the rest of the United Kingdom is not through the Socialist dependency preached by all three Opposition parties, but through hard work, free enterprise and individual promotion—in other words, Thatcherism?

Mr. Rifkind: Yes.

Mr. Dewar: May I help the Secretary of State by telling him that the Select Committee on Energy did not make the comment that he has reported to the House. Instead, it made the interesting point that vertical integration has been favoured in Scotland and not in England, and that no arguments, except that of historical convenience, have been adduced by the Government to justify that difference of approach. Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman accept that he cannot shrug off a Committee with a solid Tory majority, which has condemned in the most stringent terms as ill-thought-out and ill-considered the Government's plans to privatise the electricity industry? It makes the telling point that no real effort has been made by the Government to establish or argue that there will be any advantage for the consumer. It condemns in the most forthright way the atmosphere of hostility that has, for example, conditioned the Government's approach to the coal industry. Is it not clear that the Secretary of State will have to rethink his position following the devastating job that has been done by the Select Committee?

Mr. Rifkind: I recall that before every previous privatisation there have been those who have made exactly the same predictions, which have been found to be entirely incorrect when the results have been announced. Since the Government have announced their proposals for privatisation in Scotland—those for the electricity industry and the Scottish Bus Group, for example—we have found a tremendous increase in interest among the employees of the industries. Their main interest lies in the opportunity for them and their fellow workers to enhance their participation in the industries that are important to them.

Type 23 Frigate Order

10. **Mr. John Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what assessment he has made of the impact on the Scottish economy of the recent order for three type 23 frigates from Yarrow Shipbuilders.

Mr. Lang: The order, together with existing work on frigates in the yard, will safeguard over 4,000 jobs at Yarrows well into the 1990s, with proportionate spin-off to the local and national economy. The Ministry of Defence estimates that the equivalent of 10,000 jobs, including those at Yarrows, will be sustained in the defence industry throughout the United Kingdom over the next four to five years.

Mr. Marshall: Does my hon. Friend agree that the news that the jobs have been safeguarded is yet another sympton of the buoyancy of the Glasgow economy, which has led to the Glasgow commercial property market being one of the most vibrant in the United Kingdom? Does he further agree that the order makes it highly likely that Yarrow will be at the forefront of those tendering for the fourth frigate in 1989?

Mr. Lang: My hon. Friend is right to welcome the order and the success that it brings to the Clyde. It was won in fair and open competition. It is a tribute to the work force and its skills and to the forward-looking investment programme of the management at Yarrow.

Mr. Ingram: Is the Minister aware of the excellent design assistance that has been given to Yarrow by the national engineering laboratory at East Kilbride? Will he share in the outrage that has been expressed throughout Scotland at the proposed sell-off of the NEL, and the secretive way in which it has been introduced?

Mr. Lang: I welcome the interest that has been shown in the national engineering laboratory by the number of applications that have been submitted. I believe that that will achieve a secure future for the laboratory.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: Has the Minister spoken at any stage to his colleagues in the Ministry of Defence to ensure that further defence jobs of this nature come to Scotland? The defence procurement budget acts as a massive subsidy to the south-east and south-west of England. Would it not be more appropriate if more of the budget were spent in Scotland?

Mr. Lang: The hon. Lady is talking bigoted nonsense. Yarrow has seven Royal Navy ships on order or under construction. I wonder how many ships there would be in the Royal Navy of an independent Scotland.

Regional Development Grant

11. **Mr. McKelvey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps he has taken to speed up the process of settling applications and claims for payment of regional grants.

Mr. Lang: A large intake of applications and claims were received in the period just before the scheme was closed to new applications. Additional staff have, therefore, been deployed in the regional development grants office in Glasgow. The number of cases dealt with is running at record levels, but some delay to applicants is unfortunately inevitable.

Mr. McKelvey: The Minister will recall that I wrote on behalf of Forbes and Whiteford Ltd. in my constituency —a small but successful firm—which has been held up for several months. Its application has been forwarded and it is waiting on the cheque. I appreciate that extra staff have been employed in the office to issue the cheques, but does the Minister share my anxiety that if small firms do not receive the money that they need up front for their small expansions there will be job losses? The number might be small, but they will be vital jobs that we require in areas such as Kilmarnock. Will further staff be deployed so that we can reduce the waiting time to weeks rather than months?

Mr. Lang: I understand the hon. Gentleman's concern, and I appreciate the difficulties confronting small firms. More than one year's applications were received by the Department within about three months. The case to which the hon. Gentleman refers is being considered at this time.

Mr. Oppenheim: Would not more of the same reach the right parts faster if it were not for the regional policies of the TGWU, which seems to put the interests of its members in the prosperous south ahead of those of the unemployed in Dundee, but whose sponsorship money Opposition Members still seem keen to take?

Mr. Lang: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. It is also a cause of considerable regret that while the TUC supports the introduction of the employment training scheme, the STUC is resisting the scheme, which is designed to help the long-term unemployed in Scotland.

Mr. McLeish: Does the Minister not accept that the RDG fiasco is another example of the mismanagement of the Scottish economy? Will he tell the House how many applications are still outstanding and when the backlog is likely to be cleared?

Mr. Lang: A considerable number of grants are outstanding. It is impossible to give the hon. Gentleman an exact figure, because of the movement that is taking place. I can tell him that over the past four months 2,000 cases have been cleared and that the clearance rate will accelerate further at the end of the holiday season.

Scottish Bus Group and CalMac

13. **Mr. Lambie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has held concerning the privatisation of the Scottish Bus Group and the future of CalMac; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My right hon. and learned Friend has met the chairman and deputy chairman and the board of the Scottish Transport Group. I have met the Scottish Trades Union Congress and the joint Scottish shipping services advisory committees. My right hon. and learned Friend is presently considering the future arrangements for CalMac and the pattern of privatisation of the Scottish Bus Group.

Mr. Lambie: In view of the Secretary of State's reply to my right hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Millan) concerning the need for employee participation, will the Secretary of State provide general preferential arrangements for employee bids for the Scottish Bus Group?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Yes. We regard it as particularly important that management and employees are given the opportunity to acquire a stake in their own business, and consideration will be given to how best to encourage that. We are aware that a considerable measure of interest is already being shown by employees, as well as by management, in possible management/employee buy-outs. I hope that privatisation in this case will see a significant increase in employee participation.

Mr Allan Stewart: Is my hon. Friend aware that the Scottish Transport Group and many of the people involved in the industry sincerely believe that privatisation should be on the basis of the existing companies and not on a structure which, perhaps, has purely theoretical merit? Will he assure the House that he will take those representations seriously? Does he agree that bus privatisation will present a major opportunity for Scots and Scottish institutions to take a stake in an important indigenous industry?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Certainly. The Secretary of State's decision was based on the advice of the Scottish merchant bank advisers, Quayle Munro, and has the prime purpose of increasing competition in the Scottish bus market to the benefit of the consumer and to boost enterprise and, in particular, employee participation.

National Farmers Union

14. **Mr. Wallace:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last met the president of the National Farmers Union of Scotland to discuss the current state of agriculture in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: My right hon. and learned Friend last met the president at the Royal Highland show.

Mr. Wallace: I am sure that the Under-Secretary of State is aware of the disappointment in Scottish agriculture at the relatively small devaluation of the green pound—not least in the beef sector, where a date for it to take effect has not even been announced. Additionally, there are ever-increasing financial burdens as a result of higher interest rates. On the next occasion that the Secretary of State meets the president of the Scottish NFU, does he propose bridging what the president recently described as a yawning credibility gap between the Government's protestations that British farmers must not be disadvantaged and their inability to deliver?

Mr. Forsyth: The position on the green pound is that we achieved a settlement that was very good compared with other countries; only two other countries within the Community did better. As to agriculture's financial position, the hon. Gentleman may be aware that the latest bank figures show a fall in the burden of debt carried by farmers in Scotland. In the year to May 1988 it was down 3·5 per cent. in current money terms and down 7 per cent. in real terms. The figures show increasingly careful financial management among other farmers, which is welcome.

Mr. Eadie: When the Minister met the president of the National Farmers Union, did he have an opportunity to discuss the massive cutbacks in research and development in agriculture? I believe that the total figure is about £75 million. Can the Minister tell the House how many jobs in Scotland will be involved in the cutback, and will he put in the *Official Report* all the institutions in Scotland that will suffer a cutback in employment?

Mr. Forsyth: The hon. Gentleman seeks to present a transfer of responsibility for funding from the state to industry as a cutback, for reasons best known to himself. The overall position on future levels of public spending on agricultural research and development is, as he knows, still under consideration, and no final decisions have been made.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: Is my hon. Friend aware of the particular difficulties facing the pig industry in Scotland, particularly in areas such as Grampian, where it is an important part of the agricultural economy? Is he further aware that the problem is caused largely by the increase in overseas protein prices? This follows a very

difficult period in relation to monetary compensation amounts. There is deep concern in the pigmeat sector in Scotland, as indeed there is throughout the United Kingdom.

Mr. Forsyth: As my right hon. Friend will know, one of the causes of concern in the pigmeat sector involved the removal of MCAs. He will also know that the recent settlement met our major objectives. It improves the competitive position of United Kingdom pig farmers relative to nine of the 12 member states, and virtually eliminates the pigmeat MCA gap.

Revenue Support Grant (Scotland)

3.31 pm

The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Malcolm Rifkind): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I wish to make an announcement about local authority expenditure and revenue support grant in Scotland for 1989-90.

I propose that the provision for local authority current expenditure in 1989-90 should be £3,930 million. This level of provision is 8 per cent. more than provision for the current year, and £240 million over provision for 1989-90 as set out in the public expenditure White Paper. The figure is also 4·6 per cent. above authorities' adjusted budgets for 1988-89. It includes full provision for the extra administrative costs of operating the community charge, as estimated by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities.

I propose that aggregate Exchequer grant should be set at £2,500 million. This is £129·5 million or 5·5 per cent. more than the settlement allowed for this year, and local authorities in Scotland and local taxpayers should accordingly find it a very satisfactory settlement. In reaching it I have taken into account the views that the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities expressed to my hon. Friend when it met him on 8 July. The settlement is based on authorities' own budgets for the present year. Grant has been increased by more than the rate of inflation. If authorities do not increase their real level of spending next year, community charges should therefore be set at levels no higher than those that we have illustrated for this year.

I hope that authorities will respond very positively to the settlement in preparing their budgets for next year.

Mr. Donald Dewar (Glasgow, Garscadden): I thought that there was a distinctly smug air about the Secretary of State as he made his announcement. Perhaps he has been influenced by the version of what he said that appeared in this morning's Scottish press, presumably busily leaked by his own information department.

Those reports have inevitably given a misleading gloss on the facts. As I understand it—perhaps the Secretary of State will confirm this—he has taken the 1988-89 budget and added 4·6 per cent. to cover inflation. Does he accept that pay settlements in the local authority pay sector have been running above that, and that when that is combined with the additional burdens to be met—such as poll tax administration, the establishment of school boards, the AIDS campaign and a number of other matters—the increase is wholly inadequate? Would it not be fair to say that an increase of 6 per cent. is necessary to guarantee the present level of services and the increased demands to which I have referred?

The statement refers to an increase in grant. Is it not a fact that there is a fall in the grant percentage from 55·4 per cent. in the current year of the Government's assessment of local government expenditure before penalty to under 55 per cent. in 1989-90? Is it not correct that if the grant percentage figure for the year that we are discussing had been maintained at the same level as last year, £30 million of additional grant would be available to local authorities?

Is not the Secretary of State being hopelessly complacent about the implications of the settlement for the poll tax? Will it not lead either to a further reduction in services or probably to an increase of about £30 per head for the average individual poll tax payer? Does he not accept that it now looks, unless there is a very big reduction in the services offered to often needy groups, as though the average individual poll tax in Scotland will be around the £300 mark, not the £250 mark that Ministers have been talking about?

Does the Secretary of State accept that there is no reason to welcome the new revenue support grant? Judging by today's announcement, it represents another chapter in an all too familiar and dreary story. Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman contemplate the damage that has been done by persistent and sustained cuts in the settlement, which have led to the grant percentage falling in the last eight years from 68·5 per cent. to the present miserable level, representing a cumulative loss of £3,000 million to the people of Scotland?

Mr. Rifkind: In the last two or three years, as the Government have announced generous rate support grant settlements, the hon. Gentleman's attempts to identify bad news from good news have become increasingly unconvincing. The hon. Gentleman is correct when he says that the provision is up by 4·6 per cent., but I think he will appreciate that what is more important to local authorities than provision, which is indicative of what the Government feel that local authorities ought to spend, is the level of grant. That is up by 5·5 per cent.

The hon. Gentleman asked about community charge administration. COSLA's estimate of the costs of administering the community charge is £25 million. In the current year and next year that amount is to be fully accommodated within the settlement that I have made.

The grant percentage includes factors such as loan charges and capital from current revenue. I do not have the precise figures immediately available to me, but that is the cash that local authorities have received. Apart from grant going up by more than the rate of inflation, the fact is that, because grant penalties will no longer apply, every pound of grant that goes to the local authorities will remain with them. We shall not see, as has been the case under successive Governments, a proportion of the grant being returned to the Government because of excessive spending. The hon. Gentleman ought to recognise that fact.

I cannot for one moment understand the basis of the hon. Gentleman's predictions about community charge levels. I appreciate that the Labour party has its own reasons for making as much as possible out of the issue by scaremongering. However, as a result of the generous grant settlement that I described in my statement, unless local authorities choose to increase their real spending, community charges should be set at levels that are no higher than those that we have illustrated for this year.

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): I thank my right hon. and learned Friend for his statement. Does he accept that the additional money that is being made available to local authorities will stop them criticising the so-called cuts? Does he agree that local authorities will be able to increase their expenditure while maintaining the level of community charge at no more that 5 per cent. above current rates?

Mr. Rifkind: My hon. Friend is substantially correct. The level of the community charge will vary from locality to locality, depending on the present level of spending. Only if a local authority chooses to increase its real level of

[Mr. Rifkind]

spending will it be necessary to impose an additional burden on the community charge payer. The point of reforming the local government finance system is to introduce accountability between a local authority and the community in its area. If the community wishes additional services to be provided, it will have to contribute more towards their cost. That is the basis of responsible and democratic local government.

Mr. Archy Kirkwood (Roxburgh and Berwickshire): Even for local authorities to maintain their existing level of services, assuming that the police and fire authority pay increases have to be taken from it, will the Secretary of State confirm that any pay awards above 4·6 per cent. in the year 1988-89 will require to be found either through additions to the poll tax or by decreasing services?

Mr. Rifkind: I hope that local authorities will take that into account. One of the problems in the past few months has been that local authorities in Scotland agreed on an increase in teachers' salaries which was considerably higher than the Government recommended and more than was agreed for teachers in other parts of the United Kingdom. If local authorities, at their own discretion, choose to increase teachers' salaries by more than the Government are recommending and more than is being applied elsewhere, that will be an additional burden on those local communities, and that must be brought home to them.

Mr. Alick Buchanan-Smith (Kincardine and Deeside): I congratulate my right hon. and learned Friend on his generous settlement. Can he confirm that it is more generous than those for England and Wales?

Mr. Rifkind: I said that the increase in grant will be £129·5 million, which represents a 5·5 per cent. increase in grant compared with last year. The increase in grant for England was 4·6 per cent. and for Wales 5·1 per cent.

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): Will the Secretary of State reflect on what he has been saying? Will he come clean and admit that the proportion of revenue expenditure incurred by local authorities subvented by central Government has diminished considerably during his period of office? Does he accept that he is talking about an uptake of 100 per cent., but no one really expects a 100 per cent. payment of community charge, especially if we relate it to people like me who will not pay? The proportion is likely to be between 80 and 90 per cent. Therefore, the level of community charge in Scotland will be close to what my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) said—in excess of £300. Will he confirm that?

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman pays rates at the moment. If he refuses to pay the community charge, he is saying that he wishes to do well out of the change. He is refusing to make his contribution to the cost of local government and is expecting other people to bear the burden of that. If the hon. Gentleman describes that as a position of principle, he has some very odd principles.

Mr. Allan Stewart (Eastwood): Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that in their reaction to his statement today Opposition Members have brought their traditional whingeing and whining to a fine art? Is not an increase in provision of 8 per cent. and an increase in grant of 5·5 per cent. generosity almost to the point of excess? I hope that my right hon. and learned Friend will confirm that the Government are still in favour of controlling public expenditure. However, does he agree that the increases will knock on the head the wholly irresponsible so-called forecasts about the community charge to which the Scottish electors were treated before the district elections?

Mr. Rifkind: I agree with my hon. Friend that this is a very generous settlement. If he feels that it is too generous, and if he would like Eastwood district council to be excluded from its benefits, I shall be happy to consider that.

Mr. Andrew Welsh (Angus, East): Is it not the case that this so-called generous settlement should be put in the context of the withdrawal of £2,000 million from local government by the Government since they came to office? While we are grateful for small financial mercies, is this not an admission that COSLA and the local authorities got their sums right in regard to expenses for implementing the poll tax and the Government got it wrong? When will the Government start listening to the men and women who run local authorities rather than imposing centralist solutions?

Mr. Rifkind: I wish that the hon. Gentleman would make up his mind. He started by saying that the Government were acknowledging that COSLA had got it right, yet he concluded by asking when the Government would start to listen to COSLA. The hon. Gentleman cannot make both points simultaneously, otherwise he will end up even more confused than usual; but perhaps in the case of his political party that is a perfectly legitimate position for him to adopt.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): It seems that the Government are offering more individually to the constituents of Scotland than they are to my constituents and that money is being transferred from my people to the people of Scotland. Can my right hon. and learned Friend tell the House how he feels that this will reduce the invidious and malignant influence of Socialism on Scotland and, if not, what does he suggest?

Mr. Rifkind: My right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for the Environment and for Wales have announced generous rate support grant settlements, as have I. It is not unusual for there to be slight differences between the three territories, and I do not think that any dramatic conclusions should be drawn from any differences. The real message is that the Government are playing their full part responsibly to meet the needs of local authorities throughout the United Kingdom.

Mr. Ron Brown (Edinburgh, Leith): Is not the right hon. and learned Gentleman employing double standards when he attacks the public and hon. Members for saying that they will not pay the poll tax, or the so-called community charge? Is that not hypocrisy, bearing in mind the fact that the Government justify legalised corruption in the form of tax avoidance, which goes on among the rich? Is it not time that the working class fought back by not paying this Tory tax, which does not have any backing in Scotland or, I believe, in England?

Mr. Rifkind I suspect that the hon. Gentleman and those of his colleagues in the Labour party and the

Scottish National party who wish to campaign for a policy of ignoring laws of which they do not approve will find that they are going against the grain of Scottish opinion and will be treated with contempt by the Scottish people. No hon. Member campaigned during the last general election on a manifesto commitment to break the law. The hon. Gentleman did not tell his electorate that that is what he intended to do and I think that he would have got a pretty raw answer if he did.

Mr. John Marshall (Hendon, South): Will my right hon. and learned Friend confirm that, as a result of this settlement, a far higher percentage of local authority expenditure in Scotland will be grant aided than is the case in England? Does he agree that the lesson of the settlement is that those who make irresponsible wage settlements should not expect to be bailed out by the taxpayer? Does he agree that it is high time that Scottish local authorities sought greater value for money through competitive tendering?

Mr. Rifkind: I agree with my hon. Friend about competitive tendering. He is right to say that the various countries of the United Kingdom receive different amounts of grant from the Government. It is not some arbitrary matter. It reflects the different needs of those countries and the revenue which can be expected from the local community if a comparable burden is put on the system of taxation. At one extreme is the Western Isles, where a high proportion of expenditure is met by grant. In other parts of Scotland, where economic circumstances are different, much less expenditure is met by grant. That principle applies throughout the United Kingdom.

Mr. Dennis Canavan (Falkirk, West): Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman answer the point raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas)? When determining revenue support grant, what estimate has been made of the number of people who cannot or will not pay poll tax, bearing in mind the fact that an increasing number of people seem to be coming to the conclusion—the justifiable conclusion—that the only way in which to stop the poll tax is for enough people to say, "We refuse to pay"?

Mr. Rifkind: I notice that those who hold that view have decided to campaign on the interesting slogan, "Can pay but won't." It appears that the campaign is based not on hardship or allegations of inability to pay but on purely political prejudice. This and, I suspect, any other responsible Government do not make estimates based on the likelihood of the hon. Gentleman and his friends refusing to obey the law.

Mr. Phillip Oppenheim (Amber Valley): Would these professions of poverty not be more credible if more Scottish councils showed themselves more willing to save money by contracting services out and going to competitive tender?

Mr. Rifkind: Local authorities throughout the United Kingdom are increasingly being required to do that. The process consistently shows substantial benefits for the local community, and it enables local authorities to provide better services for the community at reduced cost. That is something which all right-minded people support. Competitive tendering makes sense for local authorities and the Health Service. Everybody does it with their own personal finances, and there is no reason why representatives of the community should not apply similar criteria.

Mr. Jimmy Hood (Clydesdale): Is the Secretary of State aware that at the last general election I campaigned against the poll tax, made no secret of the fact that I would not pay that iniquitous and immoral tax and doubled my majority?

Mr. Rifkind: No doubt the hon. Gentleman will want to continue to pay his rates or will insist on contributing a sum equivalent to his rates to some worthy cause. Hon. Members who claim to be acting on the basis of principle but who end up in the circumstances suggested by the hon. Gentleman are unlikely to gain any significant respect.

Mr. Neil Hamilton (Tatton): Does my right hon. and learned Friend accept that English Members will be astonished by the relatively high proportion of local government spending in Scotland that is paid for by the taxpayer because that proportion is much higher than in our constituencies? Would my right hon. and learned Friend be equally as astonished at the inkling of the dinosaur mentality of the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar), who intimated that the inevitable consequence of a reduction in grant percentages —I know that my right hon. and learned Friend has not announced that today—is that the community charge would be higher or that local government services would be reduced? It has not occurred to the hon. Member for Garscadden that local authorities might be able to become more efficient. Is that the opinion of the hon. Member for Garscadden because the Labour party's paymasters in Scotland are, by and large, the local authority unions which want to keep their noses in the trough and their hands in the taxpayers' pockets?

Mr. Rifkind: Undoubtedly there is a combination of motives which sometimes leads to the effect to which my hon. Friend has referred.

Mrs. Maria Fyfe (Glasgow, Maryhill): I did not promise in my election address to shoot the Prime Minister, but I am constantly urged to do that by my constituents. When does the Secretary of State intend to announce the share out of the grant settlement? We would be interested to know whether that will be carried out fairly according to need or whether the Government will exercise the political prejudice which they have exercised so often in the past.

Mr. Rifkind: The political prejudice to which the hon. Lady has referred has meant, with regard to distribution, acting in the closest consultation with COSLA and in the vast majority of cases accepting COSLA's proposals for distribution. If that is political prejudice, it is a rather interesting kind of prejudice which is apparently shared by the hon. Lady's friends among local authorities.

Mr. Alistair Darling (Edinburgh, Central): What account did the Secretary of State take of rising interest rates which have a major impact on local authority expenditure? Does he not accept that, if interest rates continue to rise as they have, they will push the poll tax well above the Secretary of State's bogus figures unless local authorities begin to cut services, or is that really what the Secretary of State would like to see happen?

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that the increase in grant that I have announced today is above the rate of inflation. He is also aware that interest rates, when they relate to the loan charges of local authorities, very often lead to adjustments in the support for local authorities. The hon. Gentleman has referred to the worst example that he could possibly have thought of in referring to changes in interest rates affecting local authorities. Traditionally those have been accommodated by central Government.

Mr. John McAllion (Dundee, East): The level of rate support grant percentage is fairly important because if it has been reduced it represents a further shift of the burden of taxation from central Government to the backs of poll tax payers. Will the Secretary of State stop ducking the question and confirm or deny whether the level of RSG percentage this year represents a reduction or an increase over last year's?

Mr. Rifkind: As I have already said to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar), that kind of calculation does not just——

Mr. McAllion: That means yes.

Mr. Rifkind: If the hon. Gentleman would allow me to answer his question as I allowed him to ask it——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I think it was I who allowed the hon. Gentleman to ask the question.

Mr. Rifkind: I accept your rebuke, Mr. Speaker.

The level of grant is the crucial requirement for local authorities. That is increased by more than the rate of inflation. The percentage relates to the percentage of the figure for provision. That is an indicative figure. It also takes into account loan charges and capital from current revenue. As I said to the hon. Member for Garscadden, I do not have the figures available for loan charges or capital for current revenue. However, the important point for local authorities is the actual cash that they receive. If that cash is more than the rate of inflation, it is undoubtedly one of the more generous settlements that they have received in recent years.

Mr. John Home Robertson (East Lothian): The settlement is supposed to take Scottish local authorities through the first full chaotic year of the Government's new poll tax. Has the Secretary of State taken account of the built-in inefficiency of the tax and the fact that the majority of Scottish people do not want it to work? What advice is he giving local authorities about the level of shortfall in collection for which they should budget? Should it be 10, 15 or 20 per cent.? How can they manage their budgets in the coming year, given the uncertainty that the Government have created?

Will the Secretary of State respond to the specific point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar)? Is not the grant settlement a lower percentage of the Government's estimates of local authority expenditure than that for the current year?

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman asks the Government to make estimates based on people allegedly not paying the community charge or having a lack of enthusiasm for it. *[Interruption.]* The hon. Gentleman referred to inefficiency and said that people do not wish to pay the community charge. Despite the Labour party's campaign to frustrate the registration process—that was one of the examples used during the passage of the Bill to show the inefficiency of the system and how it would not operate effectively—here we are, two months before the target date for the completion of registration, and it is over 90 per cent. complete in the majority of areas. As a consequence, it can be seen without fear of qualification that the Labour party's campaign has been a complete shambles.

Personal Statement

3.57 pm

Sir Anthony Meyer (Clwyd, North-West): Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a personal statement.

There have recently been reports in the press and on television based on a letter written by me to the Chairman of Ways and Means in which I made comments about the hon. Member for Neath (Mr. Coleman) in his capacity as Chairman of the Welsh Grand Committee. That letter was not made public by me, but the views expressed in it have passed into the public domain.

I recognise that it is not appropriate for me, as a fellow member of the Chairmen's Panel, to be associated with the comments that have become public, and I also recognise that what I said in connection with the incident which provoked my letter was based on a misunderstanding. In these circumstances, I wish to withdraw any reflection upon the chairmanship of the hon. Member for Neath, and to apologise to him unreservedly for the embarassment caused to him by this incident.

Points of Order

3.58 pm

Mr. Andrew Bowden (Brighton, Kemptown): As you, Mr. Speaker, are aware, an ever-increasing number of questions are being tabled for oral answer. The Department of Health and Social Security is being split into separate Departments. As has so often happened in the past, with the luck of the draw, during social security Question Time one side of the Department has not had a fair share of the time to give answers. Will you, Mr. Speaker, inform the House whether any action will be taken to ensure that questions for the Department of Health and those for the Department of Social Services are split?

Mr. Speaker: I thank the hon. Gentleman for raising this matter and for giving me notice of it. I appreciate that these are important matters for those who have an interest in oral questions on health or social security. They fall to be dealt with not by me but by the Government after consultation through the usual channels. Like the hon. Gentleman, I venture to hope that an early solution can be found so that the tabling of oral questions can go ahead in a satisfactory manner on Friday this week.

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. In answer to question No. 6, the Minister of State, Scottish Office, the hon. Member for Galloway and Upper Nithsdale (Mr. Lang), mentioned my wife viz her intentions about the poll tax. Given that my wife, fortunately or otherwise, is not an hon. Member, I found that reference to be in appalling bad taste. I do not expect an apology from the hon. Gentleman because I do not expect decent behaviour from a representative of the sleekit, baggy-trousered outfit that runs the Scottish Office.

Mr. Speaker: I am surprised that the hon. Gentleman did not participate in Scottish Question Time.

Fuel and Energy Provision

3.59 pm

Mr. John Hughes (Coventry, North-East): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to require the provision of essential fuel and energy to each home, to guarantee appliances, to prevent the entry to premises without prior recorded legally authorised notice, to prevent the unauthorised removal of a fuel measuring device, to abolish standing charges; and for connected purposes.

The purpose of the Bill is to eradicate the danger that people on low incomes experience when they are denied a requisite of life. The problems of the poor, the hardships that affect them and their impossible financial circumstances are best conveyed by a letter from one of my constituents. He wishes me to inform the House that he is living in the first home that he can call his own. He says:

"I have lived here two years and I am just starting life as living the meaning of life. I will explain as I go along.

Suddenly I find myself without a job and, not surprisingly, I am in a situation where I am sensitised to the very feeling of financial impoverishment.

And the inhumanity of Gas and Electric companies sending insulting and threatening notices to cut off such people as me without money to meet such demands because of state improverishment.

The very fact that British Gas or the Electricity Board can have permission to make a forced entry into a destitute family's home vexes me.

Whilst companies may have the right to be paid, it is abominably offensive to do the things they do.

Who is the real offender and culprit behind non-payment?

Is it not the state and the heads of state who legislate how much support and unemployment benefit which a family should receive?

And other legislation which affects people in hopeless situations.

I have answered the door this morning to an Electricity Board official, who wanted to cut off the supply.

So I refused him entry, which is the only thing that anyone could do.

As my unemployment benefit is £47 per week, from that I have a direct deduction of £8 per week for gas arrears before unemployment.

That leaves me £39 to pay a £40 per week mortgage; to pay for electricity, the rates, to eat and to pay for everything necessary to run a home.

I only eat what is cheap.

Yet I am unable to respond to the normal domestic situation.

If a light bulb blows, I cannot replace it.

I pay no electricity; I pay no rates or the inevitable things like house insurance.

You must know about it, unlike some, especially those of the Thatcher breed, who know little of what I experience.

So what happens when I appear in court for non-payment?

And I answer the man with the questions over the dock, whom the state appointed to judge me?"

Time denies me the opportunity to read all my constituent's letter, which defines the circumstances of the fuel poor, for which the Government have shown little concern. This is confirmed by the almost total absence of any discussion about the standard of housing and energy efficiency issues. His letter most accurately describes the appalling circumstances of the millions who were given no consideration when £2 billion was given away in tax handouts—tax handouts funded by social security changes and implemented by a majority of Members. They have led to 3,238,000 householders, who were also required to absorb increased fuel prices, being £3·43 worse off. They mean that 3,238,000 householders were unable to achieve an affordable warmth last winter, and will have less money for fuel this winter, and their fuel poverty will be intensified.

That fuel poverty will be further compounded by a British Gas with the sole objective of getting the highest return on capital and bonanza dividends for shareholders, a British Gas that no longer has a social role towards the poor, the low-income groups, the elderly, and the disabled, whose dependancy has beem described as a deadly drug. That mercenary attitude has already been emulated by the Central Electricity Generating Board, even before it has been stolen from the public.

The Government's security changes and the privatisation of fuel supplies have created an alien environment, an environment that can kill, when, without compunction, gas is disconnected as British Gas intensifies its policy of making life hard for the low-income customer, whom it considers troublesome, as they use little gas and generate high administration costs

In our so-called civilised society, there is a hostile and dangerous environment where the elderly and low-income families with young children are at risk of fires or explosions, as they continue to use dangerous cooking and heating appliances. They are frightened to have them checked, and are unable to replace them if they are condemned as unsafe. Day by day, they are forced to live with that worry and fear. It threatens their health and well-being, and it exists because what can be described only as a usurer Government have abolished a special payments system and replaced it with a cash-limited loans fund.

As we near the end of this Session of Parliament, the subject that dominates the conversation is the holiday plans of Members and their families—plans that may have been in the pipeline a year or perhaps months, and that contrast starkly with the unmade plans of millions in our impoverished society. They cannot plan a year ahead, a week ahead or even a day ahead, and they fear what lies five months ahead to winter. They are unemployed; elderly; retired; they are sick; disabled or are families with young children. Their circumstances force them to spend 13 hours a day in their homes. They will spend 20 per cent. of their income on fuel. They will exist in temperatures that would not be acceptable to a shop worker, a factory worker or an office worker and would most certainly be unacceptable to the majority of hon. Members.

Those millions fear what is five months ahead, when winter is with us, because we force them to live in circumstances that contrast so extremely with ours, here in this cosseted, centrally-heated seat of Government. This coming winter, they will exist in a Government-created hell, without heat, which will result in 30,000 deaths. They will die of cold—and it will not be on the ski slopes, and they will not be buried under a snow avalanche. They will die simply because their Government stole their heat.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. John Hughes, Mr. Dave Nellist, Mr. Ronnie Campbell, Mrs. Alice Mahon, Mrs. Audrey Wise, Mr. Win Griffiths, Mr. Pat Wall, Mr. Terry Fields, Mr. Bob Cryer, Ms. Mildred Gordon, Mr. Harry Barnes and Mr. Tony Banks.

Fuel and Energy Provision

Mr. John Hughes accordingly presented a Bill to require the provision of essential fuel and energy to each home, to guarantee appliances, to prevent the entry to

premises without prior recorded legally authorised notice, to prevent the unauthorised removal of a fuel measuring device, to abolish standing charges; and for connected purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 28 July and to be printed. [Bill 210.]

Mr. Speaker: I remind right hon. and hon. Members on both Front and Back Benches that debates on the motions today may last for one and a half hours each.

Immigration

4.8 pm

Mr. Roy Hattersley (Birmingham, Sparkbrook): I beg to move,

That the Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules (HC 555), which was laid before this House on 7th July 1988, be disapproved.

This is a tawdry little measure, made all the more squalid by the circumstances of its introduction. Its effects on the life of the nation as a whole will be imperceptible, but the suffering and hardship that it will cause to a small number of families living in Britain will be immense. Its immediate origins go back over a year to the general election and a promise given by the Home Secretary to a Tory candidate in a marginal seat—a promise to be tougher on immigration and to impose tougher immigration restrictions.

We oppose the changes because of the hardship and suffering that they will cause and because they are part of the Government's political strategy on race and immigration. The Government believe that they gain electoral advantage by first depicting the ethnic minorities as a danger, and immigration as a threat, and then by claiming to be the only party that will face the danger and overcome that threat with suitably harsh policies.

This morning the Minister of State went on radio to refute the charge that the Government are intentionally increasing and exploiting fear about immigration. He did so first by announcing that, on the sub-continent of India, there are 1,000 million potential immigrants to this country. He used that figure twice. He then went on to refer to the risk of Britain being "flooded" by immigrants. Finally, he went on to warn about the perils of "mass immigration". To some of us the opinions of the National Front are not made any less odious by being expressed in the style of Bertie Wooster. It is instructive to measure the Minister's scaremongering against the proposals that we are debating.

Paragraph 3 of the "Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules" prohibits the entry of second wives. That measure is geared specifically to the custom of a small group of Moslem men who are presently in this country lawfully. Each year, that provision will prevent 25 women from entering this country—25 women out of the 1,000 million potential immigrants with which the Minister of State tried to make our flesh creep this morning.

That provision will stem the "flood" at the rate of one immigrant a fortnight; it will reduce mass immigration by two a month. It is not, however, the provisions of paragraph 3, for all its pettiness, that are the most objectionable part of the statement. The Government will ask the House—I have no doubt that the most supine Back Benchers ever to support a Government will readily agree—to break a solemn promise given by a Conservative Home Secretary in 1971. In that year Mr. Maudling was explicit:

"I do not intend that the position of those already in this country, the rights of those already in this country to bring in their dependants, shall be changed. That is what we promised in the election."—[*Official Report*, 8 March 1971; Vol. 813, c. 47.]

That right is now to be abolished and that promise is to be abandoned. The excuse for that action is that the promise was made to men only and that it referred to the right of men living in this country before 1973 to bring in,

[Mr. Roy Hattersley]

without restriction, their wives and families. The excuse is that that promise was not made to women. As always with Tory immigration policy, when they claim that they are about to achieve equality, they achieve a sort of equality by increasing the problems for one group rather than reducing the difficulties of another. Men settled in this country before 1973 are now to be subject to the primary purpose rule. It is about that rule that I shall principally speak during the few minutes that I shall allow myself.

I believe that the fact of marriage should, in itself, be the sole qualification for entry into this country and that residence and settlement should be automatically allowed as long as the marriage proves to be a stable relationship. However, the primary purpose rule, as presently defined, is more objectionable than the refusal of that simple principle alone. It is deeply and additionally objectionable for three distinct reasons. First, it requires a husband or a wife to prove to an immigration officer's satisfaction that there is no other reason for the marriage than the marriage itself. That task of proving a negative and proving the reasons why they did not enter into the marriage—proving it to the subjective satisfaction of a junior official—is, in many circumstances, immensely difficult. For young men and young women, nervous in the face of bureaucracy, inexperienced in how to deal with officials and sometimes struggling with language difficulties, that task is often impossible. I have no doubt that the Home Office intends that it should be. I shall demonstrate that the primary purpose rule is not supposed to be a check on improper, arranged and inoperative—in the best sense of the word —marriages. It is meant to be a barrier to entry to this country in all circumstances.

Ms. Clare Short (Birmingham, Ladywood): Will my right hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Hattersley: I shall give way a couple of times, but preferably not too often because of the short length of this debate.

Ms. Short: I wonder whether my right hon. Friend remembers a press article that appeared some months ago. It stated that the Minister's officials had said that the rule is penalising genuine marriages and is allowing through only those who understand the complicated rule of giving the right answers. Those officials said that couples with genuine marriages had been prevented entry to the United Kingdom, and that the officials were recommending a change in the rules.

Mr. Hattersley: There are many problems with this subject and were there time I should like to consider them, but one of them is the nature of the questions that are sometimes asked. By any reasonable analysis, those questions are trick questions and they encourage people to give the wrong answers. I shall deal with the attitude of Ministry officials explicitly in a moment—their attitude is my third objection to the primary purpose rule.

My second objection, however, is the way in which that rule is presently applied. The Court of Appeal, in the judgment in Kumar, requires the Home Office and its officials to take into account the nature of the marriage after it was contracted when applying the primary purpose rule—not just how that marriage came about, but how it turned out when the partners lived together in happiness and in a proper relationship.

The evidence of appeals to the Home Office adjudicators demonstrates, beyond doubt, that the Home Office is not following that judgment and instruction from the court. Too often the primary purpose rule is taken simply to mean the circumstances in which the marriage was contracted. As a result couples with genuine marriages, real partnerships, are kept apart for one year, two years or three years until the long, protracted period of appeal is concluded.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): That is not how it works.

Mr. Hattersley: I am willing to give way to the hon. Gentleman who represents all of the opinion that I most detest on this subject. The hon. Gentleman prefers to mumble his opinions rather than to speak in the debate. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. Let us have an orderly debate.

Mr. Marlow: I shall answer the right hon. Gentleman's challenge. My hon. Friends and I represent the opinions of the ordinary people of our country, which he most certainly does not.

Mr. Hattersley: I agree that people do not come more ordinary than the hon. Gentleman, but there is more to it than that. The third objection to the primary purpose rule is a crucial matter of principle.

Mr. Tim Janman (Thurrock) *rose*——

Mr. Hattersley: I made it clear that I would give way twice. We have 86 minutes left to debate this matter and, in courtesy to the House, I do not propose to give way again.

My third objection to the primary purpose rule is the most important because it relates to an issue of principle. The primary purpose rule is now being used not to decide whether a marriage is genuine, but to hold down the numbers of immigrants coming to this country.

Six weeks ago, together with representatives of the Immigrant Widows Campaign, I discussed the primary purpose rule with the Home Secretary. The supervising under-secretary—a civil servant—was terrifyingly frank about the intention of the primary purpose rule. He said that it was intended to slow down the rate of entry. When I challenged that view and insisted that the only possible justification for such a rule was an attempt to detect and deter bogus marriages, the Home Secretary supported his official. I noted his words at that time, which were:

"The people out there would not understand if a lot more husbands came in."

The truth is that the people out there are assumed by the Government to be as racially prejudiced as the average Conservative Back Bencher. Perhaps some of them are, but the rest—the decent majority—are now being encouraged to develop prejudices by the constant representation of the black and Asian British as a problem and a threat. That is why the measure removes the right of some men and women who have stayed longer than their visas allow to appeal against deportation even on compassionate grounds. The measure removes the right of British citizens——

The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. Tim Renton): I think the right hon. Gentleman is about to leave the subject of primary purpose and I want to ask him a question about it before he moves on. He will remember that in the Second Reading debate on the Immigration Bill in November he specifically said that he thought the primary purpose rule should be replaced by a quota. Eight months have passed. Has he developed his thoughts on that matter? What would be an appropriate quota?

Mr. Hattersley: I have made my position clear today. It is, and will remain, that the fact of marriage should be the qualification for entering this country, as it is in others. Quotas do not arise. There should be a right. The Minister must understand that, in a free society, it is not a right if it exists only in law and we do not allow people to exercise it in practice. A man married to a British citizen should be allowed into this country. If the Minister wants to talk about quotas, what quotas does he propose for husbands entering this country from the EEC? There are no quotas for them. The Minister thinks of quotas only in the context of black or brown—or West Indian or Indian sub-continent—quotas. He knows perfectly well—he has encouraged me to develop this subject—that the way in which the primary purpose rule now operates is such that the French citizen living in Great Britain has the right to bring a husband or wife into this country, yet that right is not available to British citizens living here.

Mr. Nicholas Budgen (Wolverhampton, South-West): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Hattersley: The situation I have described is absurd. The quota, the primary purpose rule, or the limitation is supposed to operate only against the husbands and wives of black and Asian British citizens —and no on else.

Mr. Budgen *rose*——

Mr. Hattersley: I keep saying no. I shall tell the hon. Gentleman again, if he wants me to.

The desire to represent the black and Asian British as a problem and a threat is the reason why the measure removes the right of British citizens to present themselves at Heathrow or Dover and request entry into their own country unless they provide immediately, and have on them at the time, proof positive of their nationality.

No one can honestly doubt how this will work. When a man arrives at Heathrow and claims to be a British citizen and is turned away, he will not be a white South African patrial; he will be a Moslem youth, born in Birmingham and taken as a child to Pakistan. The same will happen to a girl from Jamaica who was born here but went home to live for a period with her parents in Kingston. This is another proposal that explicitly and specifically operates against the black and Asian British. I heard the Minister on the radio this morning saying——

Mr. Janman: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is a short debate. I heard the right hon. Gentleman say that he was not going to give way. If the hon. Gentleman is patient, perhaps he will be called.

Mr. Hattersley: I am attempting to observe your suggestion, Mr. Speaker, and it is up to other hon. Members to do the same.

The Minister says from time to time that these rules are non-discriminatory because they apply to every group in the community. Some rules which apply to every group in theory discriminate against one group in practice. Were the Minister to promise to penalise everyone called Khan or Hussain, he might try to argue that all Scotsmen called Khan and all Welshmen called Hussain would be similarly penalised, but it would be the Moslem British who suffered. That is how the rules work out: no matter how general they appear on paper, in practice the black and Asian British suffer. That is why we propose to vote against the statement.

I want to add a final footnote about this shabby little measure. It is clearly no coincidence that the Government announced yesterday their acceptance of DNA testing—so-called genetic fingerprinting. In the view of virtually every expert, the pilot study on that system was wholly unnecessary and, to most people's minds, was merely an excuse for delay. It has now been widely said—I hope the Minister will tell me whether it is true—that the evidence from the pilot study has been in his hands since at least last autumn.

Mr. Renton *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Hattersley: Not so? Had the DNA test been applied from the moment when it was available it would have allowed into Britain families whose claims have been denied even though they have the right to be here——

Mr. Jeremy Hanley (Richmond and Barnes): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Hattersley: No.

The acceptance and implementation of the test have been held back until other barriers to immigration have been erected. The first barrier is the cost, which has risen from £50 a family to £60 a person. The second is today's abolition of the automatic rights of men who have lived here since 1973. That makes the Government's proposal all the more squalid and tawdry and it is why we shall vote against it with passion and enthusiasm.

4.27 pm

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): I will not be taking interventions.

The proposals must be seen against a background of immigration policies over the last generation. It is a background of ever increasing availability of access to cheap international travel and of ever increasing awareness of the cornucopia of wealth that exists in the Western world for those of the Third world who can contrive to gain entry to it.

Devices and abuses are rampant. Conservative Members offer every support to the Government and to our hard-pressed immigration services in their efforts to thwart dishonest access to our society. Ours is a society which, in a negatation of democracy, has had its identity threatened in the past by a massive invasion of tribes and cultures which it neither willed nor supported. Our society's political defences were breached by the immediate enfranchisement of the invaders. It was undermined by the perverted idealism, empty racist cant —a more parliamentary word might be cynicism—and unprincipled vote-grubbing of the Opposition. I am pleased to see that the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) is in his place.

Mr. Keith Vaz (Leicester, East) *rose*—

Mr. Marlow: I shall not give way.

Freedom of speech has been barred by the thought police of the race relations industry, an incubus on good race relations spawned by Socialists for their own ends and providing lucrative jobs for the boys and for the agitators with whom they have aligned themselves—

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is it a point of order or of disagreement?

Mr. Winnick: My first point of order is this. This is a narrow debate on the immigration rules. I wonder whether what the hon. Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow) is saying meets that criterion.

My second point of order is this. The hon. Gentleman has referred to invaders, which is a deeply offensive term to millions of people who live in our country——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Member may not make those sorts of points. The debate is on the immigration rules and the hon. Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow) must relate his speech to them. He has been speaking for only two minutes, and no doubt this has been his preamble.

Mr. Marlow: I intend to be brief and, for the benefit of the Opposition, to get through as quickly as possible.

As the rules are set out, all our citizens are rightly equal before the law. There should be no negative or positive discrimination. No one should use our society while belonging to another. Those who have gained access should be the most fervent in their commitment, if only to discharge their obligation for the privilege that they have gained. To coin a slogan, Asian citizens could well drive British cars.

I support the rules in so far as they go——

Mr. Allan Rogers (Rhondda) *rose*——

Mr. Marlow: I shall not give way, and the hon. Gentleman knows why.

I support the rules in so far as they go, but I wish that they went further. There is much talk—we have heard it today from the Opposition—about the reunification of families, a benign objective which I support. But if one family member has left his native land for Britain, we do not, as far as I know, prevent him from returning to the bosom of his family. However, we are rightly anxious about who should have access to our country—minimising those from a different cultural background.

Certain rights have been granted and they should be modified. If two parties to a marriage share a common language, not English, surely it is more appropriate, more humane and more enlightened for the happy couple to settle in the land of their common language. We need to introduce a system of language tests. I am sure that my constituents, and the majority of the constituents of Opposition Members, would support that.

Secondly, the illegal acquisition of abode in our country, although the motive may be flattering, is theft, and thieves are criminals. There is pressure for the introduction of a system of identity cards to support the fight against crime, and if that helps in the apprehension of those criminals, so much the better.

Immigration, for most categories of migrants, should be considered not a right but a privilege—a privilege to be earned, not casually dispensed; a privilege the allocation of which must be firmly supervised. That, as we all know, although some Opposition Members would deny it, is our democratic duty.

4.31 pm

Mr. Keith Vaz (Leicester, East): I will not comment on the speech of the hon. Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow). I was told before I came to the House that it had a number of ranters and ravers and we have just met the ultimate ranter and raver. He is a silly man and his speech, dangerous though it was, should be consigned to the dustbin of history.

Let me deal now with the rules and the Immigration Act 1988 which will take effect on 1 August. Yet again, the Government have come before the House with a proposal that is pernicious and attacks Britain's black and Asian community. Yet again, they have come before the House with a proposal that will divide families and split communities, and put the black community at odds with the police.

I served on the Standing Committee which considered the Immigration Bill for 62 hours along with other colleagues. All our reasonable and moderate amendments were rejected by the Minister. The completion of all the stages of that Bill was marked yesterday with a fiasco of a party held on the 7th floor of the Home Office—a party, incidentally, that cost only £20. One wonders whether one should go to such a party. However, the passing of the Act and the rules were not celebrated with a party in my constituency among the many people who come to my surgeries and those of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Leicester, West (Mr. Janner) and others.

Mr. Hanley *rose*——

Mr. Vaz: I shall not give way.

No party took place in the queues abroad in places such as Karachi and Islamabad where people have been waiting for many months, and possibly years, for an interview. The rules and the Act are undemocratic and unjust. They break promises made by successive Governments, Labour and Conservative, since 1971, and they introduce fees that have never existed before for certain cases.

I want to draw the attention of the House to one particular change in the rules. Rule 169 initiates something called supervised departure. It gives wide, undefined powers to the Secretary of State. Certain circumstances are referred to, but it is not clear what they are. There is no time limit on the period before a person is removed from Britain. Those who are to be deported are in a better position than those who undergo supervised departure. Under immigration rules 170 and 171 a person who is liable to deportation has a right of appeal. That does not apply to someone who has to undergo supervised departure.

The rules and the Act must be seen in the context of the Government's legislation over the past few years, including pernicious legislation such as the introduction of visas. An absurd situation has been created whereby constituents of mine who have applied for a visa to come to Britain to visit relatives or to attend a wedding have been refused admission and have then become locked into an appeal procedure that takes several months, possibly

years, to complete. That means that by the time the appeal has been completed, even though it is successful, any wedding that was to have been attended will already have taken place.

The rules and the Act must be looked at in the context of the proposals published last week by the Home Office on the registration of the rights of Members of Parliament to intervene in immigration cases. We must look at them in the context of the new fees that were introduced on 1 June this year. The previous charge was £50 per family; it is now £60 per applicant.

There is clearly a need for legislation. There is clearly a need for Government action on immigration policy. I urge the Minister to start by looking at the length of queues in many of the sub-continent posts. For example, in New Delhi a woman waiting for her fiance has to wait eight months for an interview. In Bombay, it is nine months, in Dacca seven months, in Karachi 11 months, and in Islamabad 19 months.

We also have the figures for other posts abroad. I understand from figures that have been published by the Foreign Office that an applicant in Athens has to wait less than a week, in Copenhagen less than three weeks, and in Paris less than a week.

Ms. Short: We should also put on record the fact that a new hidden queue is growing in Britain of families who have been interviewed abroad, who have already waited a year, or perhaps two if it is a second application, and then are kept waiting for more than a year for their sponsor to be interviewed here. The Government will not admit to that. They will not give the figures in reply to parliamentary questions. That is a hidden, secret queue which is making the waiting process longer and longer.

Mr. Vaz: My hon. Friend has much experience in these matters and that leads me on to my next point—the crisis that exists at Lunar house.

On 16 November when the Home Secretary introduced the Immigration Bill he talked about providing a better customer service. Throughout the Immigration Bill Standing Committee the Minister talked about customer service and good value for money as if he were a junior manager with Marks and Spencer. The report of that good customer service was made public on 18 April this year when the Select Committee on Home Affairs described the operation of Lunar house as a scandal. It said:

> "We consider that the Home Office's failure to open and acknowledge promptly the 207,000 letters lying unopened or unacknowledged on 21 February 1988 to be scandalous and the overall aim of dealing with all applications for registration by December 1989 to be totally unacceptable."

Sir Brian Cubbon, a permanent under secretary of state at the Home Office, described to that Committee the mistakes made by the Home Office. Since this is the first opportunity that the Minister has had to speak on that report,. I hope that he will apologise to the House for what has occurred.

If the Minister listens carefully he will hear the weeping of those in my constituency and elsewhere who have been waiting for friends and relatives to visit them. Mr. Dulkon, who lives at 93 Doncaster road, has been told that his family cannot visit him because there is no guarantee that they will go back—no matter that they have provided affidavits and other information. He will hear the weeping and the tears of people such as Mrs. Jogia of 148 Brandon street who has been waiting for nine years to be reunited with her husband. He will hear the weeping and tears of children, husbands and wives who will be unable to enter the country.

The Government's immigration policy, as reflected in these rules and the Immigration Act 1988, is uncaring, uncompassionate and uncommitted to the family. They thrive on the misery, hardship and anxiety of black and Asian people. Even at this late stage, I urge the Minister to withdraw the rules. I warn him that if he does not he will never be forgiven.

4.40 pm

Mr. Nicholas Budgen (Wolverhampton, South-West) : There used to be some sort of reluctant agreement between the two great parties about the need to have something in the nature of the primary purpose rule. The right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) has now moved away from that. He said that wherever there is a marriage it should give rise to the right to come into Britain. When he first put forward that argument he realised, for he is a wise and well-informed man, that that could give rise to a substantial increase in immigration. He covered himself by saying in a vague way that there would be some form of quota. He knew that it would be unpopular with his constituents if it were known that he was advocating a major increase in immigration.

There is no doubt that the primary purpose rule creates sadness and hardship at the margin. Any immigration control is bound to do that. Anything other than completely open ports, allowing the citizen of another country to join a fellow citizen, is bound to create some form of sadness. It is easy to say, pointing to one person or another, that that is harsh and that therefore the whole rule should be swept away. The House should realise that if Britain were to adopt the generosity being suggested by the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook, it would lead to a major increase in immigration. It would lead not only to an increase in primary immigration but would give rise to secondary immigration.

People coming into this country by reason of marriage would also have the consequential right to bring in their dependants. That is well understood. The right hon. Gentleman understands it because he covered himself by talking vaguely about quotas. Most of all, it would give rise to a major increase in immigration because of the system of arranged marriages. I am not arguing against arranged marriages. As one gets older and looks at the breakdown of so-called love marriages, one wonders whether there might not be a great deal to be said for arranged marriages. However, arranged marriages give rise to massive increases in immigration to Britain. As the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook knows, it would create a great deal of resentment, which would rub off on to the black and Asian community which is already lawfully in Britain. It cannot be in anybody's interests.

Mr. Christopher Gill (Ludlow): Will my hon. Friend accept that there are many people living in my constituency, who previously lived in my hon. Friend's constituency, who already resent the fact that they are almost exiles in their own country because of the way in which the character of our towns and cities has been altered by successive Governments' policies on immigration over the past 40 years?

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. I remind the House that we are discussing the proposed changes in immigration rules and not immigration generally.

Mr. Budgen: My hon. Friend used to live in my constituency and I have no doubt that——

Ms. Short: He is talking about himself.

Mr. Budgen: Perhaps he is, but he is well aware of the views of many people in the black country.

A major increase in immigration would create tension. That is the limited point I am making and the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook——

Ms. Short: Does the hon. Gentleman agree that if we allow international travel, and we have the European free market and people travel around the world and meet each other, there will be more marriages across national boundaries? If the hon. Gentleman's argument is to hold up, that too will create a problem.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I remind the hon. Lady that we are discussing specific changes in immigration rules.

Ms. Short: We are talking about provisions for the control of marriage and immigration under the rules. The argument of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, South-West (Mr. Budgen) is that if we do not control marriages from the Indian sub-continent there will be unending immigration. In order to get married, one has to have a partner here willing to marry someone from abroad. That practice is changing and young people who grow up here are looking increasingly for partners who also grew up here. Therefore, the hon. Gentleman's argument is deeply flawed. There is not an infinite potential. There are two partners to every marriage.

Mr. Budgen: The hon. Lady is talking about the contraction of what is fashionably called a love marriage. I am confining my remarks to the arranged marriage and arguing that, whatever its advantages—they may be substantial—it could give rise to a considerable increase in immigration.

I want to take up another point raised by the hon. Lady. The arranged marriage creates considerable tensions within Asian households in Britain. Many hon. Members have some experience of the Asian community in Britain and I am one of them. For the past 14 years I have spent half the time that I spend on constituency cases dealing with what are described as immigration problems. One of the most frequent features of those problems is the father who says, "I would like to arrange for young Mr. Somebody from Jallunder to come to this country. Will you please do that because I have arranged a marriage between that gentleman and my daughter?" The next week along comes the daughter and says, "I know that my Dad came to see you last week. Please do not allow that gentleman to come to Britain because"——

Mr. Vaz *rose*——

Mr. Budgen: I will give way when I have finished the sentence.

That daughter then goes on to say that she has been brought up in this country and that for better or worse she believes in the concept——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Will the hon. Gentleman help me by informing me to which of the proposed changes in the rules his speech relates?

Mr. Budgen: The primary purpose rule. I am trying to debate the point properly put forward by the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook. Second generation Asians do not wish to see unrestricted entry to Britain by reason of arranged marriages. The right hon. Member for Sparkbrook believes that he is currying favour by suggesting a relaxation of this rule, but he may find that it is unpopular with a large section of the young Asian community.

I accept that any rule is bound to be seen at the margin as restrictive, unkind and even unfair. I suggest to the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook and the House that, unless we have something approaching the primary purpose rule, we shall see a re-emergence not only of great tension within Asian households but of fears within the indigenous population. Sadly, the primary purpose rule is an essential tool of the control of immigration to Britain.

4.49 pm

Mr. Alex Carlile (Montgomery): The immigration rules are supposedly a system of rules which enables cases to be examined on their merits. As time has gone by, a number of amendments have been made, as we can see in the preface to the statement of changes, which have meant that cases are considered much less on their merits than was originally intended and much more on the basis of political prejudice.

The extravagant exaggeration by the Minister on the radio this morning has done little to enable the public to consider the problems of immigrant families upon their merits and, indeed, has done a good deal to worsen the perception of the problems faced by families who wish to bring spouses and others into this country.

The Minister starts from the premise that there is an enormous desire for mass immigration to the United Kingdom, but there is no real evidence of a desire to enter the United Kingdom in huge numbers, except, possibly, the potential desire in the future of white people from South Africa to enter this country in large numbers. I shall be interested to see, if and when that happens, what will be the reaction of the Government, if they are in office then.

The Government claim to be the party of the family, at least from time to time, but, as described earlier by the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley), this measure, although modest, does no credit to the Government's attitude towards the family. Their attitude towards the family, in relation to immigration and particularly the primary purpose rule—we are here concerned with paragraph 1B of the statement of changes—is shown by the operation of the new DNA screening system. Of course, I welcome the Government's acceptance of the DNA screening system. I hope that they will not try to take over the system, but will leave its operation in the hands of the company which has skilfully developed it and which can offer the tests at the reasonable cost of about £115.

However, what I find incomprehensible about the Government's attitude to the DNA screening system is that they are not prepared to save money by paying for the tests. If one takes, on the one hand, the cost of the traditional, bureaucratic method of dealing with applications and, on the other hand, the one-off cost of £115 of

producing a sure result from DNA screening, it is quite clear, even at a glance, let alone with close examination, that the DNA screening system is much cheaper. The Minister should therefore go back, look at the system once again and come to the conclusion that, where people have eventually penetrated the long queues mentioned earlier and are able to undergo DNA tests, the Government should economise by paying for those tests.

Ms. Short: The hon. and learned Gentleman will know that it is possible to obtain legal aid to pay for the DNA test when someone has waited a long time, been through the complex and costly bureaucratic system that currently exists and has been refused by officials. Many hon. Members have come across cases that have then succeeded, which is an even more wasteful procedure. Public funds are going into DNA screening, but there are now double spending levels, which could be done away with if we administered the test immediately someone applied for it. That would save time and money for everyone concerned.

Mr. Carlile: The spending of which the hon. Lady spoke is probably at a quadruple or quintuple level because people have had to go to the extent of obtaining legal advice. The Government should adopt the system, not halfheartedly, but wholeheartedly.

I wish to make two other points about the statement of changes. The first relates to new paragraph 90 and new paragraph 150A. Those two new paragraphs specifically exclude rights of appeal. New paragraph 150A excludes as clearly as possible any appeal on the merits. If the Minister were listening, I would be asking him why, particularly in new paragraph 150A, the Government have decided specifically to exclude a right of appeal on the merits. The rules will lose their respect, not just among the legal community, but throughout the world, if they are seen to be the fist of Government rather than a system that ensures fair play.

The second matter that I wish to raise relates to new rule 56 in paragraph 5 of the statement of changes. Is the Minister satisfied that that rule will not prove unfair to legitimate political refugees in the United Kingdom? Those refugees will include people who may well have restructured their lives, for example, journalists from South Africa who have come to this country because they could no longer live with the political system there, but who in restructuring their lives and settling here have only been able to obtain employment abroad. Those people may well be disadvantaged because it may be difficult for them to return to this country for any length of time within a period of two years.

There is no evidence of the need for the changes and no justification for them. The Minister could have made far more constructive changes by, for example, paying for DNA screening for applicants. The statement of changes is merely the annual pandering to political prejudices in parts of his own party.

4.56 pm

Sir Dudley Smith (Warwick and Leamington): I shall be reasonably brief, but I should perhaps declare an interest because I represent about 7,000 members of the Sikh community in my area and have done so for quite a number of years. As the years go by, one becomes accustomed to dealing with their problems, and there have been many problems. We cannot just listen to Opposition Members. It needs saying that the race relations system in this country is much better than it was and, certainly in my area, harmonisation has extended very much to the Sikh community, the vast majority of whom are now well integrated. Although there are always exceptions, many people are well satisfied with their situation.

I wish to make two important points in view of the comments of other hon. Members. My hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton, South-West (Mr Budgen), in his excellent and accurate speech, spoke about the people who wish to enter this country. From the beginning of next month, people who want to bring a family or come here for marriage purposes will have to show that they have support and accommodation and that the marriage was not entered into primarily to evade the immigration procedures. As my hon. Friend rightly said, we have all encountered cases in which the girl has come along and said, "I don't want to be married under the arranged marriage system." I wish to take the matter a little further. I am sure that my hon. Friend and other hon. Members have encountered cases in which the people who originally said to us, "Will you arrange for that man to come in to marry my daughter?" have come back and said, "Will you get rid of that man because he married my daughter and came here primarily"——

Mr. Vaz: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Sir Dudley Smith: No, I shall not give way because Opposition Members have not given way to us. Hon. Members know that I normally give way, but this is a short debate.

Those people have come back and said that they have realised that the young men had come into this country primarily to evade the immigration rules, had paid scant regard to their daughters, gone off to another part of the country and totally abused the rules and regulations. I have had dozens of such cases, as I am sure have other hon. Members. That does no favour to the genuine cases, those people who want and are entitled to come here and wish to make a success of it. That needs to be understood by the House.

Secondly, those who overstay in future will not be able to plead compassionate reasons—*[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short) and others may not like what I am about to say, but it is the truth. They should ask some of my constituents——

Ms. Short: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Sir Dudley Smith: No, I shall not give way. I shall be even less ready to give way if the hon. Lady continues to shout at me.

There have been instances where important compassionate grounds have existed, but if we are honest and place our hands on our hearts, we know that many others have been bogus. Like many other hon. Members on both sides of the House, I have received applications that have been based on compassionate grounds. However, having examined the details and exercised my judgment, I have been sure that the grounds were bogus. It is right that new rules should be introduced in fairness to those who make genuine applications.

I am sure that my hon. Friend the Minister of State is aware, like many others, that, following the changes that were made to the rules a comparatively short time ago,

[Sir Dudley Smith]

almost 99 per cent. of those who visit the United Kingdom for a holiday or other special reasons are now returning without any problem. That is an excellent record. It is one to be valued and the minority populations are to be commended. It is welcomed by the Sikh leaders in my constituency. We know now that those who visit the United Kingdom will be honest and arrange to return to their own country at the proper time. The more that we can ensure that that happens, the better.

The references of the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) to "shabby" and "squalid" when describing the statement of changes do nothing to improve race relations. Instead, he foments bad relations. It seems that he wants to do so. We must work for a better understanding with sensible and reasonable guidelines. The right hon. Gentleman, who holds the important position of shadow Home Secretary, should realise that Britain is a small island in global terms. We have a large population and over the past 30 or 40 years we have been extremely generous in terms of the number of people that we have allowed in from the Commonwealth, especially the new Commonwealth. I am glad to say that the vast majority have settled extremely satisfactorily. These immigrants have done a good job and they have integrated. I am not prepared to allow the right hon. Gentleman to pretend that the Government are doing everything that they can to work against the interests of these people. However, enough is enough. We have been promised over many years that, having accepted such a large number of immigrants, immigration would tail off. It is beginning to do so.

Mr. Janman: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Sir Dudley Smith: I shall not give way to my hon. Friend because I wish to be brief.

Immigration is beginning to tail off, and it should now begin fundamentally to come to an end. If it does, there will be far more hope that further efforts towards achieving the better integration of those who have come here will be successful and better appreciated by those who are here. I am talking of those who are reasonable and sensible, who do not try to politicise the situation. I welcome what my hon. Friend the Minister is trying to do. I think that he is on the right lines.

5.4 pm

Mr. Paul Boateng (Brent, South): The spectre raised by the hon. Member for Warwick and Leamington (Sir D. Smith) of all the grateful Sikhs doing obeisance to him because the Government have introduced the statement of changes is the most perverse and wild fantasy. It is nonsense to suggest that the Afro-Caribbean or Asian communities, or any people of good will, would welcome a measure of this nature. It is a sordid and squalid measure. Above all, its great evil is that it is socially divisive. It is the consequence of that division—the rules will create rifts in our society and exacerbate existing rifts —that the House should be mindful of when considering the statement of changes.

The clearest example of that danger was provided for us by the speech of the hon. Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow). The language that the hon. Gentleman used and the tone in which the speech was delivered demonstrated the great evils of measures of this sort. I have some sympathy—I see some of my hon. Friends recoiling in horror at my use of the word "sympathy"—for the Minister of State and the position in which he finds himself.

Mr. Greville Janner (Leicester, East): No.

Mr. Boateng: I knew that that would be the response. I have some sympathy with the Minister for having to introduce a measure of this nature. He is sitting on a volcano in his party. It is a volcano of pus that every now and again is bound to erupt on the Government Benches. When it does, the only way in which someone in his position can survive is to introduce a measure of this sort. Whether he introduces it or not, the pus is still there and it creeps through. That pus was represented by the speech of the hon. Member for Northampton, North. How dare he describe black people in this country—Afro-Caribbean or Asian people—as invaders. Afro-Caribbeans and Asians are here specifically at the Government's invitation. They were invited to come here after the war to do the dirty work which many people in this country were not prepared to do. That is why Afro-Caribbean and Asian people are in this country. Having come here, done that work and made a valuable contribution, they are required to respond to rules and regulations that are socially divisive and damaging.

Mr. Janman: Is the hon. Gentleman not aware that the invaders to whom my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow) refers—he correctly referred to an invasion—are indeed invaders because the British people have never given any British Government a mandate to allow the invasion to happen?

Mr. Boateng: That is an argument that the hon. Gentleman should put to the predecessor of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, South-West (Mr. Budgen). It was Enoch Powell who issued an invitation to women like my mother-in-law from Barbados, and others from elsewhere from the Commonwealth, to work in Britain in the National Health Service. It is an argument that the hon. Gentleman should address to his right hon. and hon. Friends instead of throwing it in the face of Opposition Members.

We then heard talk about people being made aliens in their own land. I have news for the House. The Afro-Caribbean and Asian people who will be affected by the rules and regulations say, "This is our land. We intend to stay here come what may." The Government can put all the rules and regulations on the statute book that they want. They can introduce measures of greater and greater oppression. I believe that the majority of people in this Britain, in this country of ours, black or white, are opposed to measures of the sort that we are now discussing. They know what the social consequences will be. The Minister of State must be aware of the consequences.

Mr. Sydney Bidwell (Ealing, Southall): In the mid-1950s, when there was full employment, there was active recruitment of labour from the Indian sub-continent. Many doctors came here to work in the National Health Service. Indeed, Governments had to put a bar on their coming here. There was active recruitment of medical staff in the Caribbean. A most active member of the Government during that period——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. Let us return to the changes to the rules.

Mr. Boateng: My hon. Friend has considerable experience of these matters and his analysis is right.

When we examine the rules against the backcloth of the history to which my hon. Friend has referred, we find measures that, by any rational analysis, are completely unsupportable. It cannot be right to deny people the right of appeal. It cannot be right to require people to go through the sort of hoops that the primary purpose rule imposes on them. It cannot be right to construct an edifice that causes delay, obstruction and administrative chaos, to which the rules and regulations before us will add. The rules and regulations are unfair and they will prove to be unworkable. It does our country and the House no credit that they are being discussed in this way.

We must reflect on the impact that the rules and regulations will have on the reputation and on the perception of our country as being a place where equity counts for something, where it is considered right to be just and to give people access to the courts and review of decisions that affect people's future, their liberty and their quality of life.

What is so sad and sickening about these measures is that, even when the Government recognise the need to make changes, and acknowledge, as they did yesterday in relation to DNA tests, the benefits that changes can bring, still there is a nasty piece of meanness lurking in the background. It is that meanness in terms of who is to pay, and in terms of where the burden will be felt, that suggests to me that the House should rise up and express a degree of protest.

Mr. Janner: Is my hon. Friend aware that there is another kind of meanness, which is vicious, and not far removed from the proposed changes to the rules? It is that people who have been excluded in the past but who would have been admitted had the DNA rules applied and who were wrongly kept out and not allowed to join their parents because the Government had got it wrong will not now be permitted to enter the country, even though the DNA rules have been accepted? That is partly due to the changes that the Government propose making.

Mr. Boateng: If that is so, that will be of grave concern to hon. Members on both sides of the House who are concerned about fairness. It is for the Minister to answer specifically my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Leicester, West (Mr. Janner), who has raised an alarming possibility. I am grateful to him for pointing out that danger.

In addition to the burdens imposed by the new rules and regulations, there will be another imposition in the form of the requirement that people should pay for the oppressive rules to which they are subject. Not only has the application fee been increased from £50 to £60 but each and every member of a family will have to pay that amount. It does not take much of a sympathetic imagination to anticipate the impact of that financial imposition on a family on the sub-continent. They will already have scrimped and saved to accrue £50, and then £60, and now find that for a normal family application they will have to pay £300. It does not take much of an imagination to grasp what that will mean. How can it be justified? Will the Minister justify to the House that degree of meanness? If so, we await his justification, but we have not heard it so far.

What is left behind is the suspicion that these measures are not about revenue or meeting genuine administrative costs, but about ensuring that there is yet another obstacle in the way of families wishing to come together. That, from a party claiming to be the party of the family. We ask the question: what family? Is it only white families that the Government care about? Do they not care about Asian and Afro-Caribbean families? Do they not care about people who just happen to have a different colour skin?

Those are profound moral questions. We have listened to the debate and have not found any answers. It must be appreciated that there are many millions of people outside this Chamber, in the wider world and in this country, who care that we should make the right decision. In this instance, the right decision is to throw out these rules and regulations. They are not worthy of the House, and they are not worthy of our country.

5.13 pm

Mr. Nicholas Baker (Dorset, North): The reason why I welcome these rules is that they are part of the containment of mass immigration that I see as threatening our society. The hon. Member for Brent, South (Mr. Boateng) said very forcibly—because he obviously strongly believes this—that this country does belong to members of the Afro-Caribbean community who have come here to live permanently. Of course he is right. It is because he is right that I also believe it is necessary to maintain strong control over immigration at the borders. If the hon. Member for Brent, South does not share that belief, I find it difficult to understand how he can have had any experience of inner cities. I view these rules as a continuation of the process of containment.

Because of the way in which we have mishandled immigration policies in the past, the damage done by mass immigration still poses a threat to the cohesion of our society. We face a number of social and racial problems. Earlier in the debate it was said that some immigrant communities are regarded as problematical. That is rubbish. It is sometimes in the host communities that problems are created. It does not matter in which section of the community the problems lie; they result from major changes to our country's racial content and from mass immigration.

Another reason for containing mass immigration relates to the population. The first experience of my hon. Friend the Member for Warwick and Leamington (Sir D. Smith) in inner cities was in Peckham, as was mine. He referred briefly to the over-populated nature of this country. If Opposition Members cannot see that many of the problems our country has today derive from heavily concentrated populations and sheer numbers of people —of whatever kind or race—they are blind to reality.

The burden of the problems we are now debating has fallen overwhelmingly on those living in inner cities. The fact that those problems are concentrated among a particular group of people ought to make us more concerned to limit massive immigration rather than pretend that it is not a threat.

Mr. Janman: My hon. Friend spoke about containment, but we appear to be closing the stable door after the horse has bolted. Is he aware that one in three children

[Mr. Janman]

born in Greater London is of ethnic extraction? The national ethnic research group estimates that the country's ethnic population now totals 4·2 million, which is nearly 8 per cent. of the population and twice the Home Office figure.

Mr. Baker: My hon. Friend makes his point extremely well. In the past, we have allowed totally unplanned mass immigration, which has produced problems that have not been properly assessed. As a society, we have also failed to provide for the reception and care of immigrants who have come into our communities, and the problems have been exacerbated as a result.

I welcome the proposed changes. It is important to close the loophole. I support the ending of discrimination between male and female spouses. Unless I misheard him, I understood the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) to attack that provision dealing with polygamous marriages. I was interested to hear one raunchy—if one may so describe him in acceptable parliamentary language—African bishop suggesting this week to the Church of England's General Synod that it ought to support and allow polygamy within the Church of England. However, I do not believe that that is acceptable to the Church of England or to British society. I support the rules as a necessary continuation of the containment of mass immigration.

5.18 pm

Mr. Pat Wall (Bradford, North): I begin by congratulating the Minister of State. Any Minister who has managed to survive the absolute chaos at Lunar house in relation to British nationality applications, and the equal chaos surrounding the Passport Office, must have done very well to survive also the Prime Minister's midsummer roundabout. The Minister must have some special talents that he has still to exhibit.

Unlike Conservative Members, I shall deal specifically with the rules. I refer, as did my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Leicester, West (Mr. Janner), to one rule in particular, and ask the Minister for an explanation. I refer to paragraphs 9 and 11 of HC 555, dealing with deportation. One of the matters that struck my hon. Friends during the Second Reading and Committee stage of the Bill was the whittling away of people's deportation rights. This rule is being introduced against the background of the threatened deportation of Tamils, including Virag Mendis, back to a country where there is absolute chaos, widespread killing, destruction, torture, kidnapping and disappearances.

The rule suggests that in certain circumstances—and I ask the Minister to define them—people can be given a supervised departure. I think that we are entitled to know what that means. After they have been "departed" it seems that those people can be excluded from re-entry, although they may wish to return as students, business people or members of any other legitimate category, for an unspecified period. Perhaps it is my suspicious nature, but I have a feeling that the rule is aimed at political people. It is intended to ensure that those who may have political beliefs that are embarrassing to the Government are excluded. I should like a full explanation of this mumbo-jumbo, because I do not think that many people know what these terms mean or in what cases they will apply.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) was absolutely right to deal with the primary purpose issue. Conservative Members like to talk about numbers: they like to quantify. Some are particulary happy when they can talk in terms of hordes. The principle of the primary purpose rule, irrespective of the numbers involved, is entirely unfair, unreasonable, impractical and arbitrary. Under this rule, someone who can prove that he or she does not want to come to Britain in any circumstances and has just been married will be allowed in. That is nonsensical and entirely subjective.

Along, no doubt, with far more experienced hon. Members, I advise constituents after examining their cases that they have little chance, and they then sail through. Similarly, when I tell them that I can see no objection, they are rejected. Even someone with the most genuine marriage who will have no problems relating to accommodation or other needs is threatened by the rule. As there is already a rule that the marriage must show itself to be genuine, there is absolutely no reason for the primary purpose rule. The Minister should have altered it, or withdrawn it entirely.

Like many hon. Members, I am very suspicious of a system that makes people wait for one, two or three years on the Indian sub-continent—after which their case is referred back here—then wait another year or 18 months for an appointment and a further eight months for the result of the interview. The system has deliberately been made cruel and difficult. Young people in their 20s, men and women, come to our surgeries and say, "I am married to someone whom I have known for years, and the marriage is one of genuine affection." When we know the decent, nice families involved and witness their worry and heartbreak we realise what such delays mean in human terms.

I wanted to ignore some of the bigots on the Conservative Benches, but I must take up one remark. It was asked, "Why do they not go back if we will not let their husbands in?". What would that hon. Member think if he were a Bradford girl of 20 or 22 who had lived here since she was two or three—[HON. MEMBERS: "Born here."]—who has lived only in Britain and knows only the British way of life, and who has a child who goes to a British school and knows only British education? How can Conservative Members suggest that she should go back to a village in Bangladesh, sit on the floor and collect fuel and water every day? What arrogant, cruel, rotten nonsense that is.

5.24 pm

The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. Tim Renton): I thank my hon. Friends for their support for the rule changes during the past hour and a half. Let me say at once what a contrast their remarks have provided, even in such a short debate, to the barren speeches of Opposition Members, full of hatred and lacking in any positive suggestions.

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Renton: No. I have only a few minutes.

Even by his standards, the hon. Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Vaz) was stupendously silly about the small

party given last night by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary. He and his fellow party poopers—the hon. Members for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden), for Bradford, North (Mr. Wall) and for Hackney, North and Stoke Newington (Ms. Abbott), I understand—instead of attending the small party, paraded outside the Home Office and formed a picket. Doubtless the picket carried placards saying, "Reshuffle Renton".

It caused great surprise to civil servants attending the party to have microphones thrust into their faces and to be asked their views. It is a normal courtesy for a senior Minister on such an occasion to give a small party to thank the civil servants for the work that they have done. No doubt the cost of answering the question posed by the hon. Member for Bradford, West about the party was a good deal more than the cost of the party.

As it has been difficult sometimes to remember what we are debating this afternoon, the subject is the rule changes that followed from the Immigration Act 1988, which we debated at length in Committee earlier in the Session. The rule changes effectively implement the Act and accompany the separate order made by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, which brings sections 1 to 5 of the Act into force. Taking those parts of the Act that came into force, automatically on 10 July and those now being brought into force the result is that from 1 August the whole Act will have been implemented, with the exception of section 7(1) and paragraph 1 of the schedule.

The implementation of section 7(1), which concerns European Community nationals exercising their rights under the treaty of Rome, will take place as soon as we are able to bring forward an Order in Council under the European Communities Act 1972 to replace the relevant parts of the immigration rules. The preparation of the order is a complex matter. It will take some months yet. Rather than implementing the rest of the Act, we decided to bring most of it into force now and to change the rules at this stage. We shall complete the process when the Order in Council is ready. Our aim is, if at all possible, to take the opportunity of the further changes to the immigration rules, which will then be necessary, to consolidate the rules into one document. A strong wish was expressed for that in Committee, and I think that it will be welcomed by all.

With only one exception, the statement of changes contains nothing that is not entirely consequential on the provisions of the Immigration Act 1988. That exception relates to the definition of public funds contained in the rules. It is necessary to update the definition to take account of the changes to the social security system brought about by the implementation of the Social Security Act 1986. The revised definition involves changes in nomenclature only; no changes of substance are involved.

Mr. Vaz: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Renton: No, I will not give way to the hon. Gentleman.

The question of primary purpose occupied a great part of the remarks of the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley). My hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton, South-West (Mr. Budgen) rightly pointed out that a large increase in immigration numbers was likely should we have no clause to make certain that marriage was not used simply as a means of obtaining settlement in this country when it would not otherwise be available. I remind the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook that it was the Labour Government who in 1977 produced the first test of this sort to control marriages of convenience. It was never said in 1971 that section 1(5) would remain in force in perpetuity. The intention was to offer reassurance to those men of working age who were already here at that time that they could bring their existing wives and children to join them here, but it has proved to have much wider effects than that, which are both discriminatory and damaging to effective immigration control.

Those who assumed at the time that the 1971 Act was passed that they would be protected by section 1(5) have now had over 15 years in which to bring their families here. After such a period, it is surely wholly reasonable to draw the line and to say that from now on everybody who wishes to bring a spouse or a child to settle here should be on the same footing.

Mr. Hattersley: Will the Minister make a definitive statement on the primary purpose rule? Is it the intention to distinguish between genuine and bogus marriages, or is it the intention to limit the numbers coming to this country?

Mr. Renton: I shall return shortly to the right hon. Gentleman's demand for a quota. We shall have to explore it because it is the only new Labour party policy on immigration that we have heard of for many months.

Ms. Short: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Renton: No, I shall not give way. There is very little time left.

I should have thought that the Government's publication of the detailed report on DNA testing, in answer to a question from the hon. and learned Member for Leicester, West (Mr. Janner), would have been welcomed, but instead the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook cast doubt on it.

The hon. and learned Member for Montgomery (Mr. Carlile) asked about the cost. That is not an easy question to answer. We are talking not about £115, plus VAT, for one sample but about a cost of between £400 and £500 for a family. Our firm view is that that cost should not be borne by the taxpayer. We accept the principles that underlie the DNA test, but we shall have to work out with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office how the queues of applicants for the DNA tests are to be managed and how the cost is to be most fairly borne, bearing in mind that it is not to be borne by the taxpayer.

The hon. and learned Member for Montgomery also asked about paragraph 150A. That paragraph goes no further than section 5 of the Act, which was the subject of very full debate earlier this Session. The present appeals system has, in our view, been abused by many people who have sought to extend their stay here by arguing at their appeal against deportation factors that should not be allowed to outweigh the fact that they have overstayed or have broken the conditions of their stay. That is why we are making these amendments.

I agree with the hon. Members for Leicester, East and for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short) that the past year has put great pressure on the immigration and nationality department. We have simplified the rules. About 20 per cent. of the cases handled by the immigration and

[Mr. Renton]

nationality department will be dealt with automatically. We have introduced the new Immigration Act and today we are introducing further immigration rule changes.

I take this opportunity to thank the staff at Lunar house for all that they have done to help in this difficult year, but at every stage the Opposition have taken the opportunity to vote against what we are doing. It is only fair to ask about their motives.

What is the motive of the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook? In his remarks this afternoon and in the speech that he made in Manchester last night he returned to accusations of racism. Is it because he feels that it is necessary to prove his credentials in the election campaign that is taking place inside the Labour party? Does he wish to prove his credentials as someone who is willing to shout "Racist" from the rooftops against every attempt by this Government to improve the fair but firm operation of the immigration controls? *[Interruption.]* The right hon. Member for Sparkbrook giggles, but if that is his motive I regard it as pitiful.

In the *New Statesman* of 15 July the black section of the Labour party——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I do not think that the black section of the Labour party has anything to do with the changes to the immigration laws.

Mr. Renton: With respect, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the quotation is relevant. Perhaps you will allow me to refer to it. The black section accuses the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook in particular of being its worst enemy and the beneficiary of godfather politics. Is it for that reason that we have seen this sudden increase in the extreme remarks of the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook? Our motives in introducing the legislative changes of recent months have been entirely honourable. *[Interruption.]* If the right hon. Gentleman is making a rude gesture to me, I have to inform him that that is not appropriate behaviour in this House.

Mr. Hattersley *rose*——

Mr. Renton: Our motives are that we should have a quicker system that is conscious of everybody's rights, that will be able to interview fiancées and spouses more quickly in this country and that will help us to act more speedily to decide the claims of applicants for refugee status and ensure that those who have a genuine and well-founded fear of persecution in their own country are provided with a safe haven here without having to wait agonising years for a decision. Those are the reasons behind the changes that we have introduced.

The Labour party's motives are suspect. It tries to face two ways at once on this issue. For that reason it ends up by voting even against the simplest measures to improve the operation of the immigration controls in this country. Our motives, on the other hand, are straightforward and honourable. It is to make the immigration rules operate fairly and more effectively and speedily that I recommend the rules changes to the House.

5.37 pm

Mr. Hattersley: You will recall, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Minister of State promised to say something about the figures. He has intentionally failed to do so. That leads me to the conclusion that all reasonable people will hold that his only concern is to limit the number of black and Asian people coming to this country. It is a deplorable policy and we shall vote against it.

Question put:—

The House divided: Ayes 205, Noes 259.

Division No. 447] **[5.38 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane	Galbraith, Sam
Allen, Graham	Galloway, George
Anderson, Donald	Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Archer, Rt Hon Peter	Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
Armstrong, Hilary	George, Bruce
Ashdown, Paddy	Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Ashton, Joe	Godman, Dr Norman A.
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*	Golding, Mrs Llin
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*	Gould, Bryan
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*	Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Barron, Kevin	Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Battle, John	Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Beckett, Margaret	Hardy, Peter
Bermingham, Gerald	Harman, Ms Harriet
Bidwell, Sydney	Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Blair, Tony	Haynes, Frank
Boateng, Paul	Heffer, Eric S.
Boyes, Roland	Hinchliffe, David
Bradley, Keith	Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*	Holland, Stuart
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*	Home Robertson, John
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*	Hood, Jimmy
Buckley, George J.	Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Caborn, Richard	Hoyle, Doug
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*	Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*	Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.	Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Canavan, Dennis	Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*	Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Cartwright, John	Illsley, Eric
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*	Janner, Greville
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*	John, Brynmor
Clay, Bob	Johnston, Sir Russell
Clelland, David	Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Cohen, Harry	Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Coleman, Donald	Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Corbyn, Jeremy	Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Cousins, Jim	Kennedy, Charles
Cox, Tom	Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Crowther, Stan	Kirkwood, Archy
Cryer, Bob	Lambie, David
Cunliffe, Lawrence	Lamond, James
Cunningham, Dr John	Leadbitter, Ted
Darling, Alistair	Leighton, Ron
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*	Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Davis, Terry *(B'hem Hodge H'l)*	Lewis, Terry
Dewar, Donald	Litherland, Robert
Dixon, Don	Livsey, Richard
Dobson, Frank	Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Doran, Frank	Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Duffy, A. E. P.	Loyden, Eddie
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth	McAllion, John
Eadie, Alexander	McAvoy, Thomas
Eastham, Ken	Macdonald, Calum A.
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*	McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*	McKelvey, William
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*	McLeish, Henry
Fatchett, Derek	McNamara, Kevin
Faulds, Andrew	McTaggart, Bob
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*	McWilliam, John
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*	Madden, Max
Fisher, Mark	Mahon, Mrs Alice
Flannery, Martin	Mallon, Seamus
Flynn, Paul	Marek, Dr John
Foot, Rt Hon Michael	Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Foster, Derek	Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Foulkes, George	Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Fraser, John	Martlew, Eric
Fyfe, Maria	Meacher, Michael

Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steinberg, Gerry
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Frank Cook and
Mr. Adam Ingram.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl'ts)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Couchman, James
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fishburn, Dudley
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Fox, Sir Marcus
French, Douglas
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Sir Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Sir Charles
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rost, Peter
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Waldegrave, Hon William

Walden, George
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. David Lightbown and
Mr. David Maclean.

Question accordingly negatived.

Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984

5.52 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Douglas Hogg): I beg to move,

That the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (Codes of Practice) Order 1988, a copy of which was laid before this House on 13th July 1988, be approved.

This is a short debate and I should like to focus on five issues and then try, at the end of the debate, to deal with points made by hon. Members.

I wish first to emphasise the distinction between the codes of practice order which we are debating now and orders that will be laid subsequently under section 60(1)*(b)*of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. The code that we are debating is laid under section 67(5) of that Act and it is the code referred to in section 60(1)*(a)*. The code regulates the manner in which the taping of interviews takes place. The code does not of itself make the taping of interviews mandatory. The taping of interviews is made mandatory by orders made under section 60(1)*(b)*, none of which has yet been made.

Secondly, I should like to describe the Government's approach to taping. The Government have decided that the entire interview should be taped, but in the great majority of cases the courts will have before them a written summary of interviews. There will be a master tape. There will also be a second tape—the working tape—which will be the source of all copy tapes and any transcripts that may be ordered. In appropriate cases, which I anticipate will be fairly rare, transcripts will be available. This approach has been tested for two years in six trial areas, and the process was overseen by the national steering committee. The conclusions of the trial have been reported and show that our approach is practicable and beneficial.

Thirdly, I should like to consider the introduction of taping under orders that will be made under section 60(1)*(b)* of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. We intend to phase taping in over five years. We hope and intend that it should be standard practice by the end of 1991. By the end of this year, we expect taping to be prevalent throughout 10 force areas and to be used in all force areas. We anticipate that we shall lay commencement orders, if I may so describe them, in the coming Session.

Fourthly, I should like briefly to mention the effect of breaches of the code. There are two significant effects which the House would like to bear in mind. Non-compliance with the code constitutes a disciplinary offence. That is provided for in section 67(8) of PACE. In appropriate cases, non-compliance with the code could lead to the exclusion of all or part of the interview evidence. It depends on the exercise by the judge of his discretion.

Fifthly, I should like to consider terrorism and cases brought under section 1 of the Official Secrets Act 1911, which are those that concern espionage. Hon. Members will have noted that those categories of offence are exempted from the code. We do not intend, at least for the moment, that they should be subject to the taping requirements. There are two reasons which need to be mentioned. First, they were not the subject of any trials. That is not the substantive objection, however, which is that we fear that if the full tape was made and its contents became available to terrorist organisations it would

compromise national security. We also fear that if an interviewee saw that the entire interview was being taped, that interviewee would be reluctant to proceed with the giving of information.

Mr. Gerald Bermingham (St. Helens, South): What the Minister has just said will create considerable alarm among many practising lawyers because the implication is that, if transcripts of interviews in terrorist investigations are not made available to the defence, there must be some secreting of information about interviews. Moreover, the purpose of taping is to have a true and accurate record of what is said in an interview. Why should a terrorist trial, which is a criminal trial in another form, be treated any differently?

Mr. Hogg: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the provisions of paragraph 3.2 on page 2 of the code. He will see that only some terrorist trials are excluded from the scope of the taping requirement. In very broad terms, IRA and Northern Ireland related cases are excluded from the scope of the taping requirement, as are cases involving international terrorism. However, United Kingdom oriented terrorism, other than cases with a Northern Ireland dimension, are subject to the taping requirement. That should make the position factually plain.

On the specific point raised by the hon. Member for St. Helens, South (Mr. Bermingham), we must make a judgment about what is in the national interest. In the course of any interview between a terrorist of the kind to which the code refers, and to whom I am directing my remarks, and the interviewing officer, the interview will be prolonged. It is quite probable that the interviewee will disclose many matters which we would not wish terrorist organisations to know—for example, his sources.

Let us assume that there is a full tape recording of the interview which contains much sensitive material, in particular about sources, possible leaks or possible plants within, for example, the IRA. Our fear is that that tape could become known to a terrorist organisation. Although the vast majority of lawyers are wholly honest, we cannot exclude the possibility that some may deliberately, or under duress, be induced to give information to terrorist organisations. We must guard against that. In essence, that is the justification for the restriction to which I have just referred.

Mr. Alex Carlile (Montgomery): Does the Minister agree that, in existing circumstances, if someone is interviewed for a terrorist offence, at the very least a contemporaneous record of the interview will be kept? The whole of that record will be disclosed to the defence lawyers unless there is misconduct on the part of police officers in concealing part of it or misconduct by the Crown Prosecution Service—which is most unlikely to happen. What distinction can be made between keeping a contemporaneous record and making a tape recording? Bearing in mind problems with regard to interviews in the Birmingham pub bombing case and other cases, does he agree that a tape recording is a much surer way of giving true evidence to the court?

Mr. Hogg: I asked myself that question. The answer is that the premise is not wholly sound. As the hon. and learned Gentleman will be aware, guidelines are issued by the Attorney-General which permit the editing of such information held in contemporaneous documents. That is more easily done than editing tapes.

The nature of contemporary records means that they are directed to things that are regarded as probative and relevant. Therefore, it is quite common for the contemporary written document not to be an inclusive record of the interview because those making the written record take the view that much of the "sensitive" material is not admissible, probative or relevant. Therefore, that material would not necessarily have to be included in the written account. If the defence counsel took a different view and wanted to bring before the court material not included in the written record, that would be possible through cross-examination. Although I often share the hon. and learned Gentleman's views, on this occasion I believe that he is mistaken.

Sir Eldon Griffiths (Bury St. Edunds): My question is diametrically opposed to the points raised by the hon. Member for St. Helens, South (Mr. Bermingham) and the hon. and learned Member for Montgomery (Mr. Carlile). My hon. Friend the Minister is right to want to safeguard national security by some method of exclusion. However, the worst method of exclusion would involve editing tape. I am glad therefore that my hon. Friend has set his face against editing tape. If that were to happen, it would compromise the whole taping integrity that we are seeking.

How on earth is the ordinary police officer conducting a taped interview to distinguish between terrorism which, although taking place within the United Kingdom, is connected with Northern Ireland and terrorism that involves the affairs of the United Kingdom but not Northern Ireland? That is an almost impossible distinction for an officer to make.

Mr. Hogg: I thank my hon. Friend for his support. I believe that trying to resolve the problem by editing tape is extremely undesirable.

We could approach the problem by taping a summary of the evidence which would be read over at the end of the interview. That summary would be taped. As the hon. and learned Member for Montgomery (Mr. Carlile) will recall, the Royal Commission on criminal evidence and procedure, which originally recommended taping interviews, recommended taping a summary, not the entire interview. The Government have gone beyond the Royal Commission's original recommendation. We intend to explore methods of resolving the kind of difficulties to which both the hon. Member for St. Helens, South (Mr. Bermingham) and the hon. and learned Member for Montgomery have drawn attention without resorting to taping the entire interview.

I want to deal with the difficult point raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Sir E. Griffiths). The definitions are included in paragraph 3.2 on page 2 of the code. I notice that my hon. Friend the Member for Bury St. Edmunds is holding a copy of the code. That paragraph is clarified to some degree by the notes to that section and will be further clarified by training and the circular that we intend to issue to the police service.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bury St. Edmunds will bear in mind the fact that the procedure will apply at a fairly senior level because we are talking about a small number of very serious offences. I believe that senior

[Mr. Hogg]

officers will readily be able to make the distinction. I accept that the definition in paragraph 3.2 needs reading several times to master its meaning. However, once one has grasped the meaning, its practical application will not be difficult.

Sir Eldon Griffiths: I apologise for intervening again. By raising the matter now, I hope that I can shorten my contribution to the debate.

My hon. Friend the Minister will be aware that, as a matter of practice, when a police interview of this type is being conducted, information emerges, much of which may be unknown to the police officer at the commencement of the interview. While the officer is pursuing inquiries related to a suspected terrorist offence affecting a Northern Ireland matter, during the interrogation matters pertaining to other types of terrorist offences may emerge. For example, information may arise about the middle east. We all know about Libyan arms going to Northern Ireland. Alternatively, matters may arise affecting this country, for example, the potential assassination of a Minister or a member of the royal family. No police officer can make that judgment at the commencement of the interview. However, the definition requires him to make that kind of judgment. That is impracticable.

Mr. Hogg: Plainly the House will listen with great sympathy to any point made on this subject by my hon. Friend the Member for Bury St. Edmunds. He has a wide experience of these matters. However, I think that he is wrong. I do not deny that one could construct a case in such circumstances. My hon. Friend has a fertile and imaginative mind and I have no doubt that he could do so. In the majority of terrorist cases, one has a shrewd idea of the nature of the offence and whether it is related to Northern Ireland or Libya or whether it is a United Kingdom-directed act of terrorism that is unconnected with Libya or Northern Ireland. It is a mistake to suppose that police officers embark on an interview without having a pretty shrewd idea of the nature and motives of the terrorist organisation that they are investigating.

I recognise that there may be a difference of opinion on this issue, but I hope that the Government's approach is right in principle and practicable in its application. That is my belief, but clearly the House will wish to consider carefully what my hon. Friend has said.

Mr. Tim Rathbone (Lewes): Is it the Government's intention that people suspected of being involved in drug smuggling should be included in the category of international terrorism? No doubt there are strong links between those involved in drug smuggling and international terrorism. Many people—I would be one of them—would describe international drug smuggling as a form of terrorism because it cuts to the root of every community and some nations' ability to rule. If that did not occur to the Government when drawing up the rules, as my hon. Friend develops the application of the rules, will he consider whether they should embrace drug peddlers?

Mr. Hogg: I commend to my hon. Friend the text of paragraph 3.2 of the code of practice. A narrow meaning is there given to the word "terrorism". That narrow meaning derives from section 14(1) of the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984. It is defined thus:

> "'Terrorism' means the use of violence for political ends, and includes any use of violence for the purpose of putting the public or any section of the public in fear."

The proper answer to the question asked by my hon. Friend the Member for Lewes (Mr. Rathbone) is that one must determine the primary purpose behind the offence. If it is drug smuggling, it is not a terrorist offence, even though by a process of seepage it may ultimately benefit a terrorist organisation. If the primary purpose and character of the offence being investigated is terrorism, the exclusion or inclusion applies. One must ask, "What is the purpose or character of the offence being investigated?"

I make a final point to my hon. Friend the Member for Lewes, and it is relevant to the question asked by my hon. Friend the Member for Bury St. Edmunds. The effect of a failure to comply with the code or rules is not fatal to the prosecution, nor should it result in the interviewing officer facing criminal proceedings. Either it could constitute a disciplinary offence, or it could trigger the exercise of a discretion by the trial judge to exclude all or part of the evidence. In the circumstances described by my hon. Friend the Member for Lewes, the discretion would not be exercised in favour of the defendant.

I have spoken for longer than I intended because a number of specific and technical questions have been asked. I hope that the House will forgive me for having spoken at such length. I intended briefly to introduce the code and to reply later to the specific questions asked by hon. Members.

6.14 pm

Mrs. Ann Taylor (Dewsbury): Labour Members welcome the introduction of the code of practice, which should lead to better protection for the suspect and the provision of an accurate record of events during police interrogation. I agree with the Minister that the entire investigation should be taped. I hope that he will agree that problems would arise if, for example, an interview of a terrorist were to be partially taped.

Although we agree with the general principle of the order, a number of questions need clarification and we have some concerns. Our first concern, which the Minister rightly foresaw, is about the exemptions in the proposals. Interviews of suspects held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act 1974 or section 1 of the Official Secrets Act 1911 will not be recorded. I did not find the Minister's remarks on that matter very reassuring, and the points made by the hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Sir E. Griffiths) and the hon. Member for Lewes (Mr. Rathbone) about the difficulties of interpreting paragraph 3.2 of the guidelines were valid. It will be difficult to prejudge the intentions behind a crime in the way that the Minister suggested.

One point of hope arose from the Minister's remarks. He said that the guidelines will include those exemptions at least for the moment. That perhaps implies that the Government have an open mind on the issue, but I should have thought that if the Minister was seriously considering the matter he would make an announcement about possible field trials if that is why the exemptions are not being included at present.

Suspects questioned under the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984 are held under

draconian powers. They give much scope for abuse, yet the Minister said that suspects will have fewer safeguards. Suspects held under the Act are held for longer than other suspects and can be denied access to legal advice for 48 instead of 36 hours under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act. If the arrest and detention powers are exceptional, Labour Members would argue that the safeguards should be more, not less, stringent.

If the Minister is concerned about the sensitive nature of information likely to be contained in the interview of a suspect held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act or section 1 of the Official Secrets Act 1911, surely measures could be taken to protect that information other than by denying a safeguard on a blanket basis. As hon. Members who are legal practitioners said—they are always keen to speak in these debates—tape recordings will merely be a more efficient method of note taking. Surely there is more need for true and accurate records when problems arise under the Prevention of Terrorism Act than when they arise in normal trials. The Minister should have acknowledged that if there is discussion about the validity of interrogations difficulties may arise. The hon. and learned Member for Montgomery (Mr. Carlile) said that difficulties in the Birmingham Six and the Guildford pub bombing trials might not have arisen if there been tape-recorded interviews.

As well as the points of principle, there are practical but perhaps minor points that I hope the Minister will consider. One of the practical problems with the guidelines is the provisions for deaf people who are being interviewed and interrogated by the police.

We have been approached by the Royal National Institute for the Deaf, which is concerned about some of the implications for deaf people. Reading paragraph 4.4 of the guidelines, I can see potential problems. The RNID is particularly concerned about two matters. First, the profoundly deaf generally use sign language, and the RNID is concerned that there should be a proper recording of what the deaf person has said or communicated. Therefore, it is recommending that such interviews should be videotaped rather than tape recorded. Has the Minister considered that aspect, as videos are being considered for other purposes? We discussed the point in the Standing Committee on the Criminal Justice Bill.

In paragraph 4.2c. there is a requirement that any persons in the room during the interview should identify themselves, so any sign language interpreter would be required to do the same. The RNID recommends that the person be required to state the degree of his qualification, so that the suspect, or his or her representative, will have the opportunity to request a more qualified interpreter, should that be found necessary. There are many letters of qualification for interpreters, and, like anyone else, deaf people should have full confidence that what they are saying is being interpreted correctly.

Will the Minister consider whether the latest equipment for deaf people could be adapted for this purpose? All hon. Members have seen my right hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent, South (Mr. Ashley) use the technical magic box to read what is being said almost as soon as it is said. He can follow the proceedings of the House, and I wonder whether such equipment could be used when deaf people are being interrogated and interviewed by the police.

There are concerns, some of which relate to the access of solicitors to the taped interviews. Solicitors should be allowed to hear an interview or part of an interview that has taken place before they have had a chance to advise the client. For the solicitor and for the accused, it may be extremely important that the solicitor knows exactly what has taken place before his or her arrival and the advice of the solicitor may be dependent on hearing what has gone on. If tape recordings exist, it would seem sensible to allow solicitors access to them. There may be occasions when that would not be possible or practical—for example, if there were a kidnapping inquiry, or somebody's life was thought to be at risk if the interrogation did not continue swiftly. In those circumstances, it would be foolish to insist on the solicitor's right to hear the tape taking precedence over anything else. However, the norm should be established that solicitors should have access unless there are good reasons to the contrary.

Has the Minister considered allowing solicitors to take their own tape recorders into interviews? Obviously, solicitors will take notes, but if the proposed new method is to be used for the police, it could also be used by solicitors. That might increase confidence in the system and reduce requests for access to tapes later—a point that concerns the Minister.

The code does not allow access to the tape recording of interviews where the case is not proceeded with, or charges are dropped. I hope that the Minister will clarify why he does not intend to provide such access. It is important that he does so, because it might be useful to have a record, especially if allegations were made later about the conduct of the police during that interrogation. We also want to know what provisions there might be for the destruction of any tape recordings that are made when the suspect has been released or the charges withdrawn. I hope that the Minister will be able to clarify these important points.

Field studies have shown that requests for full transcripts are infrequent, and, generally, the provision of a summary is sufficient for both sides, although there has to be agreement between both sides, because it is important that the defence and the prosecution agree the contents of any summary and that the drafting of such a summary is accurate. The police will have responsibility for that. What training will be provided to ensure that police officers required to carry out that aspect will have appropriate skills? The document—for example, in paragraph 4.5—sets out various points at which the police may take certain action. I do not quibble with the fact that there will have to be some discretion, but if there is discretion, there has to be training and there has to be some mechanism to ensure uniformity in the operation of these provisions.

I hope that the Minister will assure us that there will be full monitoring of the procedures once they are introduced, including the provisions in paragraph 3.3, which deal with the failure of equipment or the non-availability of suitable rooms. I hope that where such problems happen too frequently, there will be an examination and an investigation as I hope that there will be of any trend towards more interviews taking place outside police stations, with the result that they are not covered by these rules.

All these are significant difficulties. If the new rules are to operate properly, to improve the situation and give proper protection for the defence, they must be carefully

[Mrs. Ann Taylor]

monitored and we have to make sure that there are no loopholes that could undermine the intention behind the new rules.

I understand that the defence is to be charged—probably £5—for the acquisition of any transcript. Perhaps the Minister can explain the reasoning behind that decision, because it is part of the prosecution evidence. Moreover, in requesting a full transcript, I understand that the defence is required to notify the prosecution that it has done so. If the defence does that, it will be informing the prosecution that it intends to challenge the interrogation in some way, thus disclosing part, at least, of its case. That breaks with the principle that the prosecution has to prove its case and the defence need not show its case.

What the Minister has said today will take us somewhat further and we welcome the general direction in which he is going. I have raised some important points with the Minister, and I hope that he will consider them before the full introduction of tape recording of interviews. I hope, too, that the Minister will think clearly about the exemptions that he is creating, because they will cause many difficulties. I hope that the Minister will tell the House that he has reconsidered those points and that he will accept what I have said about the need for careful monitoring if the system is to work successfully.

6.29 pm

Mr. Ivan Lawrence (Burton): I am one of those legal practitioners who are keen to contribute to this debate because, since I first became a Member of the House, I have been asking Governments to introduce the sensible measure of tape recording interviews with suspects. I have re-read some speeches on this subject that are now 14 years old and I am pleased that I will be relieved of the burden of pressing this particular campaign so that I can consider others.

The wonder is that it has taken so long to introduce tape-recorded interviews. In June 1972 the Criminal Law Revision Committee recommended an experiment on the feasibility of such recordings. It was not until February 1975 that a committee was set up to consider the matter and it took nearly two years to decide what everybody knew—that it was perfectly feasible to have a tape recording experiment. In July 1977 the matter was relegated to a Royal Commission. The rest is history, but I believe that my congratulations to the Government should also include special congratulations to my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan), who gave the process a big kick forward when he was Home Secretary.

I support the tape recording of interviews with suspects because I believe that that one measure, possibly more than any other, will improve the procedures of our criminal trials. It will ensure that more of the guilty are convicted and that fewer of the innocent are dragged through an unnecessary criminal trial only to be acquitted.

With tape recordings there will be less opportunity for the police to allege, falsely, a confession and there will be less opportunity for an accused person to allege, falsely, policy dishonesty. Because police officers will be less often challenged as liars and less often thought to be dishonest, their standing in the community will rise and so will their morale. It will be easier to recruit the best people to the police service. Fewer police officers will be tempted to be dishonest once we have nation-wide tape-recorded interviews and, as we know corruption often follows from dishonesty, in future years our police force will be even less corrupt and much more honest than some of the allegations that are made daily in our courts would suggest.

If the circumstances surrounding the making of a statement were less open to criticism, more people would plead guilty and more would feel obliged to shorten the length of their criminal trial. Therefore, it would take less time to try a case and trials would come on sooner after arrest. Witnesses' memories would have less time to fade and their evidence would become more reliable—fewer acquittals would occur as a result of that alone.

In short, crime will become easier to fight because the conviction of the guilty will become more certain and, therefore, there will be a stronger deterrent to crime. The money that is saved by shortening the process of our criminal procedures will more than outweigh the present costs of the system, without tape recording.

Since I first spoke about this matter, we have had the benefit of the field test by the Home Office research planning unit. That unit has published a report in the names of Carole Willis, John McLeod and Peter Naish. It is important to place on record the conclusions, to date, that have been drawn from the field tests throughout Britain. First, a higher proportion of suspects have become the subject of court proceedings. That, combined with the greater success of the police in bringing people to trial, is likely to mean that the process of convicting the guilty will become more efficient.

Secondly, there is no evidence that the police have been avoiding the use of tape recorders. On the contrary, the report suggests that they are more likely to carry out interviews at police stations which have them. That is welcome news to those of us who were once worried that the police would be the biggest obstacle in the way of tape-recorded interviews.

Thirdly, tape-recorded interviews tend to be shorter and there will be considerable benefits as a result of the police time that is saved.

Fourthly, there has been an increase in the number of admissions and confessions—some of us expected that. However, I understand from the figures that have been bandied about that, in the test case areas, the increase in guilty pleas is as low as 2 per cent. Perhaps my hon. Friend the Minister will say whether that is the definitive figure because 2 per cent. seems to be a much lower increase in the number of admissions and confessions than we had, I think, expected.

The fifth conclusion of the unit is that more information is vouchsafed by suspects about other offences they have committed. Sixthly, suspects that are not charged are released more quickly. Those of us who are concerned about the civil liberties of the individual innocent of a crime will greatly welcome that.

The seventh conclusion is that there has been no decrease in the quantity or quality of the information obtained from suspects. The opposite is true and there has been an overall improvement in the information gleaned from suspects. Its eighth conclusion is that there has been a reduction in the police time spent on such interviews; and, finally, there has been a small reduction in the average length of trials at both the higher and lower courts, presumably because there have been fewer challenges to

the truth of such interviews. In future, challenges will be likely to relate more to the interpretation of the words used in the interview rather than to the dishonesty of the police officers taking part in it.

The conclusions of the Home Office research planning unit amply justify the Government's actions and the hopes with which those of us who pressed for tape-recorded interviews imbued the debate.

May I conclude by asking the Minister some questions and expressing two thoughts. What are the anticipated nation-wide costs of the installation of tape recorders in major police stations? What savings does the Minister anticipate from the shortening of criminal trials, given the considerable reduction in criminal trial expenses that will result? What action is being taken towards the next step, video-recorded interviews? I believe that one can now buy a video tape recording unit for about the same cost as the audio tape recording machines were themselves when we originally discussed this matter. As the price plummets, it must become more feasible and more sensible—even as a cost-cutting exercise—for police stations to have a video recording facility.

In common with other hon. Members, I have some doubts about why the benefits that would flow from tape-recorded interviews should be denied to those who are charged with or bring charges of terrorist offences. Has my hon. Friend's conclusion been reached on the advice of the Northern Ireland police and prosecution authorities or solely on the advice of the police? Upon what basis has my hon. Friend reached his conclusion? If that basis is not that convincing, I hope that he will reconsider his attitude towards future terrorist interviews.

My one regret is that we did not get all this moving earlier. If we had done so, there would have been less pressure to interfere with the established procedures of our criminal trials. Perhaps people would have been less worried about the abolition of the peremptory challenge of jurymen, and less desirous of the need to increase sentences by appealing to the Court of Appeal. One could go through a gamut of actions—almost panic-stricken actions—that the Government have taken to try to end the increase in crime. They have interfered with the traditional procedures of our criminal trials, yet they have been broadly resisted by those who know most about the functioning of our criminal system as a result of practising in the courts.

Perhaps the success so far—and, I hope, the continued success—of tape-recorded interviews will have this one effect: that it will slow down any movement that my right hon. and hon. Friends may think they observe in the country to interfere with the traditional right to silence. As the House may know, I am not opposed to some limited interference with that right, but I hedge that with this qualification: before we do anything as drastic as that, we should see whether the procedures that my hon. Friend is introducing with this measure are successful. If they are, we need not disturb the traditional procedures which have served this country so well over many years.

I end by offering my congratulations, thanks and best wishes to my hon. Friend for the success of this measure.

6.40 pm

Mr. Gerald Bermingham (St. Helens, South): I shall follow on from where the hon. and learned Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence) left off. I, too, have an interest in these matters. It occurs to me that there is no rhyme, reason or logic about excluding one type of criminal trial from taping.

A terrorist offence in Northern Ireland or in the United Kingdom is given a criminal trial. When someone is accused of a terrorist offence, the defence is served with all the documents relating to the interviews, usually in the form of contemporaneous notes. In some cases, nothing is said in an interview; in others, a great deal is said. If the Minister implied in answer to my intervention that, in the past few years, when interviews have been taped, they have been carefully and selectively edited, that is an appalling admission. Surely he did not mean that. If not, why should things change merely because the method of recording has changed from contemporaneous notes to tape? Perhaps the Minister will say a little bit more about that in due course.

I want to make one or two points of a practical nature. My first is a cri de coeur about the tapes themselves. There was recently a move to change the sort of tape that is used. I pray that that will not happen. The tapes that were used in the experiments were the sort that can be put in a Walkman or a car radio. Sometimes interviews are several hours long and, having to travel long distances to court, many a lawyer has done so listening to the tape of an interview, perhaps looking for some discrepancy between it and the summary that he or she has been given. Perhaps the client has said that he did not imply this or that, and gave an explanation. If an interview lasts for three hours, it takes three hours to listen to it—a practical point.

Sometimes, when tapes are required to clarify a point, and they are of the type that can be used in Walkman sets or car radios, prosecution and defence counsel can sit in the car park and play the relevant part of the tape, thereby eliminating the need for an adjournment and speeding up matters. So I pray that the Home Office will see sanity and stick to the current sort of tape.

The hon. and learned Member for Burton also referred to my second point. Trial surveys have shown that the length of interviews decreased when tape recording was used naturally and logically. When a contemporaneous note is written down, it takes an awfully long time to complete. Asking questions and receiving answers orally is naturally quicker. But another problem has arisen; it is admirably demonstrated if one listens to the tape of an interview. I refer to the number of superfluous questions which are asked in the course of an interview. A number of senior police officers have told me that the police service would like a little assistance with the costs of training detective officers in the methods and procedures of using tape. I hope the Minister will assure the police authorities that such training will be available and that its costs will be met. Training a police officer to ask questions quickly saves a considerable amount of time: the interviews become succinct and to the point. Most cases are simple and straightforward, and, with a little teaching, considerable savings can be made.

I want to draw one more matter to the Minister's attention. I have already mentioned it to him privately and warned him that I would do so again tonight. Following the decision in the case of Alladyce which, when there is a breach of the code, leaves discretion to the judge under section 78 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, will the Minister consider the wording of present codes, particularly as they relate to interviewing techniques?

[Mr. Gerald Bermingham]

It is becoming apparent that, while we have sought to cure one great ill—allegations and counter-allegations about interviews—another has begun to develop. It is nicknamed "the Scotch allegation", because it first broke out in Scotland, where they were a little ahead of us in interviewing techniques. I refer to the supposed confession, made either at the moment of an arrest, or on the way to the police station, or in conversation in the police station before formal interview. As the code is drafted, any interview in a police station must be recorded either by contemporaneous notes, which the defendant is shown and asked to sign, or by way of tape under the new code. It never ceases to amaze me that, when a conversation has taken place and been recorded in a police officer's notebook as soon as he reaches the police station, and it is said to contain some confession, it is beyond the wit and wisdom of police officers to present that written record to the suspect, to tell him that that was what he had said in the car, and to ask him to sign it. That would at least go halfway to overcoming what are increasingly becoming time-consuming arguments in the courts. Will the Minister take that on board? There is clearly a loophole in the current code of practice. It could easily be tidied up, and all of us would benefit from that in the long term.

It has often been said that tape recording of interviews will go a long way to eliminating the courtroom banter and barrage of allegation and counter-allegation about what has been said. This has been a long time in coming. Let us hope the order will be brought into effect quickly and that, throughout the length and breadth of the country, tape recording will become the norm rather than the exception.

6.48 pm

Sir Giles Shaw (Pudsey): I join other hon. Members in broadly welcoming the thrust of the code of practice and the order. I want to say two things about them, one of which my hon. Friend the Minister will understand, knowing of my previous interest in this matter.

I had hoped that the process would be relatively quick once the system was established and tested and the Government had made up their mind, as I had little doubt they would. I am rather sorry that my hon. Friend has told us that it will take another five years before the new system is properly distributed throughout the police service. I ask him to think again about that. Why will it take another five years? There are fewer stations now. Custody stations have been established, and that must have reduced the potential number of interview centres. The Crown Prosecution Service has also been established. Why should this take so long if the change is funded? Surely my hon. Friend, probably aided and abetted by the Lord Chancellor, will be most anxious to provide additional funds so that the courts' time is not wasted and we enjoy the efficiency that I am sure the new system will produce.

My second point has to do with exemption. I am not entirely happy with what my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary said was the reason for it. We have had real benefits from moving to tape recording. My hon. and learned Friend the Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence) was right to list them and the conclusions of the test area panel that was set up by the Home Office.

Northern Ireland was not one of those test areas—no doubt for fairly good reasons. It is saddening that there should be further disparity between the police and court procedures that are available in the Province and those that are available in other major centres of significant criminal activity. The more that such disparities exist, the less welcome they will be to many people who believe strongly that the rule of law is the way to fight terrorism and that it is the only method by which to argue the popular case against terrorism, even in the Province of Northern Ireland.

I hope that, as my hon. Friend the Minister has previously suggested—a matter to which the hon. Member for Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor) referred—he will tell the House that the matter will be subject to review. The fewer the disparities that exist, the greater will be the chance for a system of common justice and common police practice throughout the United Kingdom. That will be in the best interests not only of the Province and the rest of the United Kingdom, but of the reputation and probity of the police force.

Mr. Seamus Mallon (Newry and Armagh): Is it not ironic that, following Lord Justice Bennett's investigations at Castlereagh and Armagh holding centres, he recommended that interrogations should be videotaped and tape recorded? Now we find that despite that recommendation what will happen in the north of Ireland will derogate from what is happening elsewhere.

Sir Giles Shaw: I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will take due note of that intervention. It is eloquent evidence to be weighed in the balance when he makes his decision.

The overall benefit of what my hon. Friend has offered the House is considerable and I congratulate him on bringing in the order.

6.53 pm

Mr. Seamus Mallon (Newry and Armagh): I am aware that there is pressure of time on all of us, so I shall confine myself to one point. A debate on the Northern Ireland order will follow in the next Session of Parliament, but it is essential that we consider the matter that was raised by the hon. Member for Pudsey (Sir G. Shaw) and by almost all other hon. Members who have spoken.

I refer to the exclusion of terrorist trials from the order, which is of great import. Where separate series of legislation operate in the north of Ireland and in England and Wales, there is bound to be an overlap. There can never be a clear distinction between, on the one hand, the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 and, on the other hand, the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1974 and the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984. They will, of necessity, overlap and it is impossible to make a clear distinction between them. Serious problems will arise after people have been apprehended under the emergency legislation or the Police and Criminal Evidence Act. We shall have a difficult time because of that.

The central point, which has been made ably by other hon. Members, is that the protection of this code of conduct is being denied to those who need it most—those who are arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act or the Prevention of

Terrorism Act, which represent the greatest derogation from the normal legal practices in the rest of western Europe.

It is essential that we should consider those matters briefly and I ask the Minister to do so. I hope that if he has discussions with his Northern Ireland counterparts he will at least consider that point.

In Northern Ireland 90 per cent. of the incidents of stop and search take place under emergency legislation. Sixty per cent. of detention, questioning and custody cases take place under the emergency legislation. Well over 50 per cent. of cases involving the search of premises take place under the emergency legislation. We have only to look at the problems that arise from the interrogation of suspects and at Lord Justice Bennett's report and the millions of pounds that have been paid in compensation to see the need for such protection.

The explanatory document which accompanied the Northern Ireland order says:

"The police are under a duty to observe these codes and non-compliance will constitute a disciplinary offence."

It would not be stretching it too far or using poetic licence to say that under the emergency legislation the police are not under a duty to observe those codes, and non-compliance would not constitute a disciplinary offence. Human nature being what it is, there must surely be a tremendous temptation to any police service not to abide by the highest rules and codes of conduct by which they would operate under a different piece of legislation. The police are presented with a choice between wearing two hats—whether to be the good cop when pursuing a case under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act or a not-so-good cop when working under the emergency legislation. That is the difficulty that the police face. Human nature being what it is, if a policeman is not under a duty to observe the codes and if non-compliance is not a disciplinary offence, he may not obey them and he may act differently in those two situations.

Let me deal with another matter and put it into the practical terms of Northern Irish life. If a person sitting here stole £1 million he would be dealt with under a different piece of legislation from a young boy of 16 years of age who was suspected—nothing more—of complicity in an offence that came within the terms of the emergency legislation. That young boy would not have the benefit of the codes of practice that the man sitting here would. That cannot be right. That does nothing for the difficult situations in which the police have to operate. It does nothing for the person who has been arrested and interrogated. Nor does it help the position of the courts. Without parity between the two sections of legislation there could be two different approaches, not just by the police service but by the court service, and that would be dangerous.

My last point highlights a difficulty and an anomaly. One of the greatest problems in Northern Ireland at present is a type of Mafia racketeering. That has now reached endemic proportions and it is difficult to say whether it is a criminal offence to be dealt with under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act or whether it occurs within a paramilitary organisation and should be dealt with under the emergency legislation. It will take the wisdom of Solomon to make such a distinction. Living, as I do, close to the areas where it takes place, I know that there is no known way in which that distinction can properly be made.

If I were a racketeer making millions of pounds a year, as some of those people do, not connected in any way with any paramilitary group, but acting for my own greed, I would have the protection of the codes. In a different set of circumstances, that protection would not apply. That will create a difficult, if not impossible, situation for the police, the courts and everybody else who has to deal with the situation. I hope that in the intervening period the Minister will impress upon his colleagues in the Northern Ireland Office that if we are not to make a nonsense of this in Northern Ireland, we should have a statutory code of practice for every type of offence.

6.59 pm

Mr. Tim Rathbone (Lewes): I welcome the code of practice. It is an important part of the original Act. I shall make three short important points. First, I shall reiterate my concern about the identification of a terrorist act. The hon. Member for Newry and Armagh (Mr. Mallon) mentioned racketeering. Racketeering, and drug trafficking, which is another form of racketeering, can be part of a terrorist activity. Terrible complications will arise from the form of words used in the code of practice. I, like others, ask my hon. Friend the Minister to continue to include that in his review.

My hon. Friend the Minister will be aware that the original Act placed considerable additional burdens on our police force and the order establishes further the operations of that Act. The taping of entire interviews, even if it reduces the length of interviews or the time that police officers spend in interviews, the provision of transcripts where necessary, the provision of summaries, the training that will be required and the supervision necessary to ensure that the code is complied with, will all place considerable extra work on our police forces.

My hon. Friend the Minister said that the practice will be phased in over five years, hoping that it will be standard practice in 1991. However, it is expected to be used to some extent by all police forces by the end of this year. He mentioned five test areas where the practice is presently being carried out. I wonder whether one of those is within the Sussex police force area. As he will be aware, the Sussex police force is under considerable strain. In a recent written answer he mentioned that the Sussex police force had requested seven additional officers in the current year. He inadvertently misled the House because the request was for 27. The request for seven was a hangover from last year and the force requested an additional 20 this year. It could be said that the Sussex police force is now 27 officers under strength.

The difficulties it faced were well illustrated by the report of the chief constable for Surrey on violence in rural areas. Sadly, the report has not been available to the House. For some reason it has been suppressed. The chief constable has been instructed not to publish it or make it available. My hon. Friend the Minister should rescind that instruction because the report would be of great interest to many hon. Members.

Mr. Michael Marshall (Arundel): My hon. Friend knows that he speaks for all Sussex Members in outlining the difficulties. For example, at the recent mayor-making ceremony in Arundel we were unable to have any traffic control by policemen for the parade of Scouts, Brownies and other worthies because the police were being diverted to other duties due to shortages.

Mr. Rathbone: Absolutely. Some of those police will be operating the provisions of the Act and it is important that they should do so. That is why I raised that point.

I plead with my hon. Friend the Minister to reconsider the question of terrorism and to look into the application of the Act by the police and the burdens that will fall on them. Once again, I plead with him to increase the Sussex police force by the number requested.

7.4 pm

Mr. Alex Carlile (Montgomery): I join in the welcome that has been given to the code. The sooner universal tape recording is available, the better. I agree with the hon. Member for Pudsey (Sir G. Shaw) who said that five years is an unnecessarily long time for the introduction of tape recording throughout all police areas.

I shall begin with two practical points. First, the tape recordings appear to be causing no real difficulties in the courts. However, the summaries are causing difficulties. There have been cases in which issue has been taken as to the accuracy of the summary as a reflection of the gist of the tape recording, or at least its most relevant parts. There is a need for officers to be trained in pre-cising tape recordings. Anybody who has tried their hand at sub-editing knows that it is extremely difficult to sub-edit prose. To sub-edit a long and often boring recording of question and answer is a difficult task. Officers need special training to ensure that court time and their own time is not wasted in controversies as to the accuracy of the summary.

Secondly—this is another practical point and a simple one—I wish to put in a plea that the playback equipment should be standard throughout all police force areas. I understand that, largely, that will be so but that there are a minority of areas using a different form of playback equipment. If lawyers at all levels are to have a fair chance of considering in full the tape recordings before trial, they will have to purchase equipment that will play back the recordings in a way that will make them easy to hear. The nature of the tapes means that on some ordinary commercial tape recorders it is not always easy to hear clearly the recording of the interview because of the second track that can intervene in a rather disturbing way. Therefore, solicitors' offices and barristers' chambers will have to buy the appropriate equipment. In the provinces and in London, barrister' chambers and solicitors' offices may be dealing with numerous police areas and it is important that there should be standard equipment in use.

I shall deal with the exceptions. On section 1 of the Official Secrets Act, I am sure that the Minister will recall the Cyprus spy trial. It was the longest spy trial there has ever been in England and Wales. The main issue was the accuracy and fairness of alleged confessions obtained by military police. If for security reasons edited summaries had been produced, if there had been tape recordings, there would have been a failsafe. The judge would have been able to hear the tape recordings to ensure that the summary was accurate. I should have thought that in circumstances such as that a great deal of time could be saved and, on balance, the public interest would be served if a tape recording was available.

In relation to terrorist offences I suggest that there is an even more overwhelming argument for the use of tape recordings. With the Brighton bombing, the Guildford pub bombing and other less celebrated cases in the general area of terrorism there have been challenges to the accuracy and fairness of interviews carried out. Convictions have rested substantially upon the view taken by a jury of interviews that were not tape recorded. Much of the continuing controversy in relation to at least three terrorist cases is dependent largely upon the view taken of police interviews. Necessarily, the interviews will be recorded contemporaneously in any event. It may be that editing will later be carried out as to what goes before the jury. However, it is not for the police to decide what it is in the public interest to edit. Now that we have an independent prosecution service and serious cases are handled at a senior level, surely there is an overwhelming argument for the entire interview to be recorded and for the Crown Prosecution Service, if anyone, to decide the nature of any editing that should take place.

Sir Eldon Griffiths: It is certainly not for the police to edit but it could well be up to the police to exclude material because of evidential factors in a terrorist issue.

Mr. Carlile: I do not agree with the hon. Gentleman. It is not for the police to make them. It is for the Director of Public Prosecutions to make them.

If it is possible to devise a means whereby we can be sure of what was said, we should employ that means. We have that means. It is relatively inexpensive and it is being introduced in relation to all other offences, except terrorist offences and offences under section 1 of the Official Secrets Act. There is a strong logical argument for applying the same standards to the most serious offences. I ask the Minister to think again over the next few months while the tape recording equipment is being introduced into the vast majority of police stations. I suspect that the judges would greatly welcome the introduction of tape recordings in relation to all offences and that the public interest would be served thereby.

7.10 pm

Sir Eldon Griffiths (Bury St. Edmunds): I too welcome the measure because it honours the undertaking given to those of us who soldiered in the vineyards of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act Committee. I also welcome it because it is a case in which technology goes to the aid of justice. I pay tribute to my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence) for the campaign that he and others fought for the measure to be introduced. I freely concede that many police officers were originally sceptical about it, but they have been convinced by the practical experiments that have taken place. It is now overdue that we should make the practice universally available. I associate myself with the comment of my hon. Friend the Member for Pudsey (Sir G. Shaw) in asking whether the process must take five years. I suspect that I know some of the answers and I shall allude to a couple of them.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I am responsible for the confusion. It is my fault and I apologise. We expect the practice to be in place by the end of 1991, five years from the beginning of 1986.

Sir Eldon Griffiths: I am much obliged to my hon. Friend. His comment coincides with my inevitably limited experience of this matter. The police service is installing the equipment as rapidly as it can in most parts of the country and, for the most part, it has become an enthusiast in doing so.

The House should be under no illusions that, although there is much benefit for the system of justice and for the police service, the measure lays new burdens upon the police. I make no apology for saying to the House that we are asking police officers to make available facilities that, in many cases, they do not have. In many of our bridewells, suitable rooms are not available and it is an expensive and difficult business to provide them when the police have many other priorities. We ask the police to do a great deal in dealing with burglary and rape. These additions will inevitably take police officers off the beat. They will spend less time interviewing, whether or not the interviews are recorded—that is the gain—but no one should be under any illusions that it is not an additional burden upon the police service.

All of the requirements of the code enter at once into the police discipline code and any infraction can be used to bring a police officer before his senior officer. Many of the matters involved are fairly technical. The police must be properly trained, not only to use the equipment, but to make the difficult summaries. The hon. and learned Member for Montgomery (Mr. Carlile) was right when he said how difficult it is to take the unexpurgated language contained in an audio recording and translate it into a summary that will be acceptable to people with the perception of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Burton and of the hon. and learned Gentleman himself. However well the police do the job, it will be challenged in many cases because it will be convenient for the defence to make that challenge. I want to underline what a difficult task we lay upon young police constables. They will be asked to do the job of translating thousands of words of often extraneous and not totally audible matter into summaries that will satisfy a court of law.

The loading of the police service with paperwork is becoming a major problem. I am glad that the task forces set in motion by no less a body than the Audit Commission are now trying to reduce the paperwork in which the Metropolitan police are drowning. The west midlands force has made a good start in reducing the paperwork. The force orders of the Metropolitan police run to about 18,000 pages. I may need to be corrected; it is possibly 13,000 pages, but it is of that order of magnitude and police officers are supposed to operate within that environment. All that lays more problems upon them. They must have the necessary training and number of staff. Against that background, it is a bad time for the official side of the police negotiating board to be attacking the pay of the young police officers who will have to do the job.

I wish to conclude, as many other hon. Members have done, by addressing the extremely difficult problem of derogating from the code of practice in respect of terrorism and official secrets. I declare some interest in that matter as I have had some experience of police officers having to conduct interviews with terrorist suspects. I hope that hon. Members, particularly those who are not lawyers and do not practise in the criminal courts, are under no illusions about the difficulties of conducting an interview with a suspected terrorist, particularly one who may be a hardened practitioner who knows how to handle an interview, in some cases better than the police officer himself.

I hope that the House will be under no illusions about what it is really like to conduct an interview with an alleged rapist or with someone who has been charged with interfering with a child. We had a debate on that matter some weeks ago. Police officers conducting such interviews about sexual molestation of children or the rape of women, and doing so on an audio recording, will find it an exceedingly difficult task. They already find it a difficult task, but reducing those interviews into a summary for a court of law is an exceedingly difficult task.

The Government have thought about the question of terrorism and have got it right in principle, but not in detail. A police officer, particularly a special branch or CID officer dealing with terrorist cases that cost lives, and perhaps experienced in the mutilations that arise from terrorist action, would be in breach of his duty if he permitted the tape recording to continue when he sees that, as a result of an interview, material would be available that would either exclude further intelligence that the police are pursuing or, if it were made available to the defence lawyers, could aid the very terrorist whom he is seeking to catch and convict.

I am totally opposed to dealing with the problem by editing the tape. That would make nonsense of everything that we are seeking to do, but it must be right in certain circumstances that a police officer can shut off the tape if it is beginning to trespass into those areas that could cause further loss of life. The Government are therefore right to derogate from the generality of the order in respect of terrorist offences. The same goes broadly for the Official Secrets Act, although I am sure that that point will be further debated when we come to the Official Secrets Act reform.

I find myself parting from the Government in respect of the exact method by which they have sought to define the matter that can be excluded from taping. It is too difficult for a police officer, as he proceeds with an interview, to have to decide whether the matter that he is pursuing is terrorism connected with Northern Ireland, international terrorism or domestic terrorism connected with the United Kingdom, in which case his interview must continue. It is to make too many different distinctions for many police officers. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will take further advice. He should examine further the definitions before he asks the police to practise them.

7.20 pm

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I have only two minutes in which to respond to those who have spoken. I hope that the House will forgive me if my replies to individual hon. Members are not especially full.

Like other hon. Members, I do not like a disparity between classes of offence. However, having considered the matter carefully, and bearing in mind the views of the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the Northern Ireland Office, I am satisfied that we are right to make the derogation. We must recognise that the sort of information that becomes available in the course of an interview following a terrorist offence can do much to damage national security.

The hon. Member for Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor) talked about the deaf. As I am short of time, I shall respond quickly to the issues that she raised. The issue is covered in part by the fourth clause of the code. Deaf people have a right of access to an interpreter. I do not believe that it is necessary for the interpreter to state his or her qualifications, if only because a bad interpreter will be of

[Mr. Douglas Hogg]

no use to anyone, not least to the police. Solicitors can use their own tape recorders when interviews take place, but I would not encourage the practice.

I say to my hon. Friend the Member for Lewes (Mr. Rathbone) that we believe that the net effect on police manpower will be beneficial. The hon. Member for St. Helens, South (Mr. Bermingham) talked about interviews in cars. He has a point, and we shall consider it when amending code C. I undertake that we shall consider the arguments that he has advanced.

There are serious training considerations. There will be monitoring by the inspectorate. Monitoring, too, is a serious matter——

It being one and a half hours after the commencement of proceedings on the motion, MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER, *pursuant to the Order [22 July], put the Question.*

Question agreed to.

Resolved,

That the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (Codes of Practice) Order 1988, a copy of which was laid before this House on 13th July 1988, be approved.

Teachers' Pay and Conditions

7.22 pm

Mr. Derek Fatchett (Leeds, Central): I beg to move,

That the Education (School Teachers' Pay and Conditions) Order 1988 (S.I., 1988, No. 1055), dated 15th June 1988, a copy of which was laid before this House on 17th June, be revoked.

The debate is about the implementation of the report of the interim advisory committee on school teachers' pay and conditions. It is important to understand the background to the debate and to the order.

Last week, during our debates on the Education Reform Bill, we were told by the Minister of State that we were deliberately creating anxiety among teaching and non-teaching staffs about the Government's powers in relation to employment laws. It was asserted by the Minister that the Secretary of State would not contemplate reducing employment rights. As we understand the background to the order, we know how worthless such assurances are. The Secretary of State removed from teachers the most basic of employment rights, the right to bargain collectively with their employers. We would argue that the basic right to bargain collectively is an essential prerequisite of a healthy pluralist democracy.

Mr. Greg Knight (Derby, North): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Fatchett: I have only just started.

Mr. Knight: It is on the very point that the hon. Gentleman has raised.

Mr. Fatchett: Very well.

Mr. Knight: Will the hon. Gentleman tell us how he can bargain collectively when not one Labour Member, apart from himself, is in the Chamber?

Mr. Fatchett: I shall continue with my speech. The intervention was not even worthy of the hon. Gentleman's standards.

To take away the right to bargain collectively—it is a right that has been exercised for many years by teachers and their organisations—is a damaging step away from democracy. When the Government give an assurance on employment rights, as they did last week, we must remember their record with the teachers and GCHQ, which tells us that their assurances have no meaning.

The Government have been condemned internationally for their action in removing collective bargaining rights from teachers. They were condemned by the International Labour Organisation, which concluded that the Government's actions were not in conformity with the fourth article of convention No. 98. The Government have rightly been condemned by the ILO and by international opinion because they have no regard for the democratic, industrial and employment rights of teachers. That is why we are debating the order.

We are unhappy about the order because of its genesis. We do not think that it tackles the major problems facing the teaching profession, but we shall not use the debate as an opportunity to negotiate on behalf of teachers. The Chamber is not a place for negotiation. The necessary negotiations between the employers and teachers' organisations should take place elsewhere, with a clear, defined and recognised role for Government. Because we

believe that the Chamber is not the place for wage negotiations, and because we believe that the right to bargain is an intrinsic right in a healthy democracy, an incoming Labour Government will restore collective bargaining rights to teachers and their organisations. As I have said, we shall not take the opportunity tonight of negotiating in detail the teachers' pay awards.

Can the Minister of State give the House and the teaching profession an indication of the progress that is being made in establishing collective bargaining rights for teachers? It would be interesting to hear the Minister respond positively and constructively to the ILO's decision. It would be interesting also if the Minister were to accept that the Government should feel embarrassed that an international organisation has so severely condemned the Government. It would be interesting, further, to hear the Minister dissociate herself from some of the comments which were made by some of her hon. Friends last week. When the ILO was mentioned, they found it a matter of some amusement and the opportunity to engage in ridicule. It would be useful if we were to hear the Minister show respect for the ILO and to give a sign to teachers and their organisations that the Government will restore to teachers the right of collective bargaining.

There are detailed criticisms that we would wish to make of the report and the Government's action in relation to it. The first criticism and major comment is directed to the sixth paragraph. The hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey), with his keen interest and knowledge of these matters, will no doubt have read the report. He will be able to tell me that the first conclusion reached—a crucial conclusion—was

"that teachers' morale is low. This is not only, nor perhaps principally, a matter of pay, though pay was at the heart of the industrial dispute and it would be foolish to imagine that since the 1987 pay increase it has ceased to be an issue."

The hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth and the Minister will recognise that without high morale and teacher commitment we shall not have high standards of performance and of education.

For the first time in Britain's history in the post-war period we have a Government who have presided over a reduction in education standards. If they are to make an improvement, and if our children are to be provided with the opportunities that they deserve, we shall need a teacher force with a high morale and a sense of commitment, and having the feeling that its professionalism and service are recognised by both society and the Government.

Mr. Paddy Ashdown (Yeovil): In responding to the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey), perhaps the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) missed the point. He is right to say, as the report does, that it may not be chiefly and principally a question of pay. The hon. Gentleman is right to point out its importance, but the principal reason why teachers' morale is low is surely the way in which they are treated by the Government. The principal act against teachers has been the removal, without any attempt to replace them, of their rights to negotiate pay and conditions. That is the Government's responsibility, whatever the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth) may snigger about.

Mr. James Pawsey (Rugby and Kenilworth, *rose*——

Mr. Fatchett: No, I cannot allow a series of interventions on that point.

I agree with the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown). I was making the point——

Mr. Pawsey: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Do you not agree with me that there is a substantial difference between a giggle and a cheerful smile? I was trying to give the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) an encouraging smile, because I agree with much of what he says. That was completely misinterpreted by the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown), who——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. Mr. Fatchett.

Mr. Fatchett: Sometimes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can understand your burdens in carrying out your office.

The hon. Member for Yeovil made an effective point. He will recall that my opening remarks referred to the background to the order, which was the Government's summary action in taking away the basic rights of teachers and their organisations to collective bargaining. That is crucial to the collapse in teachers' morale. For nine years, the Government have taken every available opportunity to undermine teachers' professionalism and status.

Tonight, the Minister needs to reassure the teaching force that she recognises that collapse of morale, that the Government are prepared to take action that will deal with it, and that they are prepared, as part of that action, to restore collective bargaining rights. Until the Government do that, as anybody with experience of education and of what is happening in our schools will know, teachers' morale will stay low. The Government's decision to take away their collective bargaining rights was seen by teachers as being central to the esteem in which the Government themselves hold the teaching profession. The report does not relate to that collapse of morale sufficiently, in terms of taking any action to restore it—although it is right to detect it.

There is clear and growing evidence that we are faced with recruitment and shortage problems. There is evidence also that the Government have little idea as to how they are to deliver the national curriculum or of how many teachers they will need for that purpose. The hon. Member for Yeovil may recall that on a number of occasions in Standing Committee we asked whether the Government were prepared to give figures of the number of teachers needed to deliver the national curriculum. First, we were told that there were some mysterious but brilliant calculations on the back of a fag packet in the DES. We now realise that it was probably written on the back of the hon. Member for Dartford, (Mr. Dunn). Later we were told that by the end of this year the Government would provide figures, but I suspect that when we reach the end of this year they will have no more idea then than they have now of how many teachers will be required. If they have, they will not publish those figures, because that would reveal the difficulties of staffing and recruitment that they face.

There is worrying evidence in the interim report which a sensible Government concerned about education standards would act upon. The following point is made on page 29:

"We judge that overall the numbers recruited were just about adequate in 1987-88, but there are already signs that recruitment is becoming more difficult."

Within 48 hours of the report's publication, figures from the teacher training clearing house revealed a 17 per cent.

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drop in the number of applicants for mathematics teacher training, a 20 per cent. fall in physics applicants, and an 18 per cent. decline in geography applicants. Those are three crucial subjects forming part of the national curriculum, and all are suffering from a major recruitment shortfall. Again, there is no evidence from the Government, although all the warning signs are to be found in the interim report, that they have a recruitment strategy.

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): The hon. Gentleman is being very unjust. Under this Government there has been a tremendous improvement in the pupil-teacher ratio over the past nine years.

Mr. Martin Flannery (Sheffield, Hillsborough): Nonsense.

Mr. Greenway: It is absurd to say that that is nonsense. The pupil-teacher ratio has improved substantially.

Mr. Fatchett: The hon. Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway) is being complacent if he relies on just one set of statistics. Conservative Members know that the crucial point is that we shall face acute shortages of teachers in key subjects and that we are already facing a recruitment shortfall. Until the Government deal with those problems, there will be difficulty in delivering high quality education to our youngsters. The hon. Gentleman ought not to be complacent about that difficulty.

Mr. Flannery: What has been said by the hon. Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway) is partially true, but it is not in any way due to the present Government. The number of primary pupils dropped, while the numbers in the secondary sector, where there were plenty of teachers, increased—so much so that the present Government could not let them all enter universities, for example. The better pupil-teacher ratio to which the hon. Gentleman refers existed when the Government came to office. It was merely a development of the circumstances that then obtained. Ever since, there have been fewer teachers, and there is now a shortage and worse pupil-teacher ratios.

Mr. Fatchett: My hon. Friend is right in his analysis that there was a demographic decline in terms of student numbers so that the pupil-teacher ratio improved. That occurred not because of the Government's actions—over their nine years in office they have cut the real level of spending per child—but because local authorities have increased their expenditure in real terms, though often threatened with penalties and rate capping by the Government for doing so.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke) *rose*——

Mr. Fatchett: I cannot give way because I must make progress. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will understand that one or two other hon. Members wish to contribute to the debate.

There are two major criticisms of the Government and their reaction to the teaching profession. First, they have no strategy for dealing with the collapse in morale. Secondly, they have no strategy for dealing with recruitment and staff shortages. Until the Government understand those problems and devise a strategy, education standards will continue to decline. It is easy enough for the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth to snigger, but for those youngsters who are suffering under that decline in education standards brought about by Conservative Members there is no second chance. Life provides only one chance in terms of education. The Government are not investing in youngsters, to give them a full range of opportunities. There is need for a strategy and to ensure that teachers enjoy a status and salaries that befit their professionalism and contribution to society.

I remind the Minister that all the evidence shows that it was because of the teachers' contribution that pupils were able this year to complete their GCSE work. If she will talk to youngsters throughout the country, and will study the analysis by the National Association of Head Teachers published yesterday, she will reach the conclusion that it was teachers doing more than was expected of them contractually that kept the GCSE on the road. It would have been useful if the Government, financially and in other ways, had made a contribution to GCSE similar to that made by hundreds of thousands of teachers. The simple fact is that teachers have kept it alive while the Government have under-resourced it and other parts of our education system.

Typical of that under-resourcing is the limitation that the Government have imposed on the interim advisory committee report. Page 2 of the report comments that the limitation to £300 million was a recommendation that the committee found excessively limiting. The Government, however, have taken that limitation a stage further. The fact that the recommendations produced a figure above £300 million has given them an opportunity to impose, via the back door, further cuts on local education authorities. By agreeing not to fund the full amount of the teachers' pay increase, they will ensure that we lose both teachers and other resources that are necessary in the classroom.

There are parallels in the Health Service relating to the nurses' pay increase and the treatment of non-medical staff. The Government have behaved in the same way throughout the public sector. Local education authorities will have to foot part of the bill, and in doing so they must lose teachers or resources. The Government should have provided the additional money asked for in the report: that would have been an indication of their commitment to good education for our youngsters.

We are debating this order because we feel that the Government must provide some hope for teachers that their professionalism will be recognised. So far they have not provided that hope, and there is no indication that they will do so. We wanted the debate also so that we could demand that teachers be given the right that belongs to millions of other workers to bargain collectively with their employers. We should be mature enough, as a society and as a democracy, to allow our teachers and their employers —with a role for Government—to negotiate their pay and conditions. Until that happens, it is a sad day for Parliament and for democracy when we have to debate such an order in this way.

7.42 pm

The Minister of State, Department of Education and Science (Mrs. Angela Rumbold): I suppose that the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) got at least one thing right: the order arises from the work of the interim advisory committee on school teachers' pay and conditions. The committee was set up in July 1987, in accordance with the requirement of the Teachers' Pay and

Conditions Act 1987. Its members were chosen from a variety of backgrounds, with a correspondingly wide spectrum of experience. The result was a generally well-balanced and independently minded body which was recognised by all shades of opinion.

In October 1987 my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State gave the committee a remit setting out certain detailed issues which he asked it to consider. Among those issues were changes in pay levels and allowances, and possible modifications to salary differentials and teachers' duties. It is true that the remit also included a financial limit of £300 million. That constraint, however, provided an important discipline for the committee's work, and was set against a background of concern about the general level of pay increases and the inflationary pressures that might be created. That concern has proved justified, and there remains a general need for lower pay settlements throughout the economy.

The committee proceeded to consult fully with local authority associations, teachers' unions and bodies representing the interests of voluntary schools, among others. In March this year, it presented its findings and recommendations in the report. The report was unanimous and was widely welcomed for its impartial assessment of teachers' pay, duties and working time. It examined the need to recruit, retain and motivate teachers of the right quality.

I must tell the hon. Member for Leeds, Central—who touched on the problems of recruitment as he saw them—that the committee made it clear that, having looked carefully at the need to recruit, retain and motivate, it detected no suggestion that overall recruitment and retention was inadequate, and it specifically mentioned that the wastage rates were low. But, as the hon. Gentleman dwelt at some length on the matter of recruitment, perhaps I should set his mind at rest with some additional information. We are currently seeing a 19 per cent. increase in the number of people wishing to enter primary school teaching, and they are being recruited as students.

It is true that we have not yet seen the improvement that we saw last year in the numbers wishing to teach in secondary schools and taking part in PGCE or other graduate courses. None the less, I remind the hon. Gentleman that it is quite common at this time of year for young people who have just graduated from university not to decide instantly about their career prospects. We have noted in the past—and it is perhaps slightly more noticeable this year—that in general young graduates have not yet reached a conclusion at this time about what career to pursue.

This afternoon, however, I talked to TASC—the teaching as a career unit within the Department which examines teacher recruitment—and I can report an interesting and, in my view, encouraging trend. Within the past month, we have received no fewer than 650 inquiries from people up and down the country—and even from abroad—about the possibility of coming into, or returning to, the profession. That should go some way to allay the hon. Gentleman's anxieties.

Mr. Ashdown: As the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) said, this is a key issue. Is the Minister telling us that the Government are satisfied that it will not be a problem? She must have made some decision this afternoon.

Mrs. Rumbold: It would be the crassest of mistakes for any Minister to say from the Dispatch Box that he or she was entirely certain that the future for teacher recruitment was satisfactory. We shall, of course, continue to monitor the position and check that adequately trained responsible people are entering the profession. But I cannot stand here this evening and give guarantees to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown), and I have not the faintest intention of doing so.

Mr. Ashdown: With respect, that was not the question that I asked the Minister. Will she now tell us that the Government, according to their own judgments—and she has talked this afternoon about how she made judgments—are satisfied that there is a reasonable prospect that there will be sufficient teachers?

Mrs. Rumbold: The Government remain confident that the measures that we are taking at present will encourage as many people as possible to come into the profession, both as mature students and as graduates straight from university. We shall monitor the position, and we shall be vigilant in ensuring that there are enough teachers to meet not only present but future requirements. That is part and parcel of the Department's work. It is a duty that we have not shirked in the past, and I cannot see us shirking it in the future.

Mr. Harry Greenway: I have every confidence that the Government will continue to maintain their high pupil-teacher ratio. Opposition Members who keep intervening presided over education, in the days of the Lib-Lab pact and the last Labour Government, at a time when there was a tremendous mismatch between what was provided in the classroom and the need for specialist teachers in certain subjects. It ill becomes hon. Members who sit on the SLD and Labour Benches to speak as they have spoken this afternoon.

Mrs. Rumbold: I am grateful for my hon. Friend's intervention. That is true. However, I do not want to point the finger at any Administration for any mismatch within the profession, particularly at the time when there was turbulence in the schools.

I have already made the point that the interim advisory committee's report was unanimous and widely welcomed, but it is also important to say that it tackled the issues in ways that were clear, concise and constructive. Neither the unions nor the management have made serious criticisms of the way in which the committee tackled its task.

On 19 April my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science published the report and began the statutory consultation process on its recommendations. On 26 May he confirmed that after careful consideration he had decided to accept in full the pay recommendations of the interim advisory committee. The Government believe that the IAC's proposals were both sensible and fair, coming as they did on top of the 25 per cent. pay increase that teachers received on average between March 1986 and October 1987.

The proposals implemented by the order gave all teachers a 4½ per cent. rise in their basic pay from 1 April this year. Teachers on the main scale will receive a further 4 per cent., on average, in September as a result of their annual increments. In addition, there is a 7·5 per cent.

[Mrs. Rumbold]

increase in the London allowances—backdated to July 1987—increases in the value of incentive allowances and an acceleration in the introduction of the A allowances.

A teacher who was formerly on scale 2, for example, who receives an A allowance from this September will receive an overall increase of 14·5 per cent. during this year, made up of the increase in all scale points, an increment and the value of the incentive allowance.

The report effectively endorsed the new pay structure, duties and working time for teachers that were introduced last year. The IAC's positive attitude towards the use of incentive allowances as a reward for good teachers has been welcomed on all sides, especially by the local education authorities. The report recorded the local authority representatives as saying that the new incentive allowances provided "a useful managerial tool" which could be

"flexibly applied to secure a range of different objectives."

Mr. Ashdown: Will the hon. Lady give way?

Mrs. Rumbold: I should be grateful if the hon. Gentleman would let me make a few more points. Then by all means I shall give way to him. He knows that I always do.

The interim advisory committee recognised the importance and usefulness of the incentive allowances by recommending that the value of each allowance should be increased and that the proposed rate of introduction of the A allowances should be accelerated. The Government accepted the recommendations, even though they took the total beyond £300 million. The planned expansion of 36,000 A allowances will now take place over two years rather than three. That means that 50 per cent. of teachers in primary schools and 60 per cent. in secondary schools will receive incentive allowances or be heads or deputies by September 1989.

Mr. Ashdown: The hon. Lady mentioned 14·5 per cent. Will she tell the House what the increase will be if we take away the increments that teachers were already due to receive?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I remind the House that this is a short debate. When hon. Members seek to catch my eye the Chair will be bound to take into account the frequency of interventions. The hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) has intervened four times. He should bear that point in mind if he seeks to catch my eye.

Mrs. Rumbold: The answer to the hon. Gentleman's question is that it is about 6·5 per cent.

Mr. Ashdown: No. It is 4·25 per cent.

Mrs. Rumbold: The hon. Gentleman cannot even add up. It is 6·5 per cent.

The interim advisory committee made no recommendations that required changes to the part of the school teachers' pay and conditions document of 1987 dealing with the duties and working time of teachers, but it made various comments on mid-day supervision, cover for absent colleagues and teachers on short notice contracts. The Government believe that local education authorities will want to consider carefully the views expressed by the committee on the conditions of service of teachers.

The hon. Member for Leeds, Central also referred to negotiating rights for teachers and linked that important matter to the morale of the teaching profession as a whole. The interim advisory committee did a very good job this year but, by definition, it is an interim arrangement. It remains the Government's aim to introduce new arrangements for the determination of teachers' pay and conditions.

With this objective in mind, the Government put forward certain proposals for the future determination of pay and conditions in the form of a Green Paper that was published last October. The Green Paper aimed to survey the relevant issues and set out a range of possible solutions. It proposed a teachers' negotiating group with a separate committee to deal with heads' and deputies' pay and conditions. That was a consultative paper which did not set out final decisions.

A large number of comments have been received as a result of the Green Paper and we are giving them careful consideration, but I am bound to say that the various comments suggest that there will be difficulties in reaching agreement. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has held brief discussions about future machinery for the determination of teachers' pay and conditions with the teacher unions and local authority employers in the context of the meetings held this year about the IAC report. He will be offering further meetings in September, when I hope we shall look to the time when longer and more detailed discussions can be held.

Because of the differences of view among the various parties, it would have been impossible to have new, permanent and acceptable machinery in place in time for the 1989 pay settlement. For the sake of the country as a whole, we must not risk a return to the sort of chaos that has been so damaging to the teaching profession, the pupils and the schools. The interim arrangements have given us a chance to review the whole question of teachers' pay determination. We must use that opportunity to work towards machinery that is acceptable, workable and permanent. It must reflect the interests of parents, teachers, central and local taxpayers and, above all, the children.

Mr. Fatchett: We have had a number of assurances from Ministers at the Dispatch Box that the provisions will be interim and temporary. Can the Minister give a clear commitment that the 1990 pay round will be determined by some form of collective bargaining process?

Mrs. Rumbold: If the hon. Gentleman had been patient and waited for two minutes, he could have saved the House some time. I was about to say that the Teachers' Pay and Conditions Act 1987 made provision for the interim arrangements to last until 1990. We have always made it clear that that was the target date for establishing new permanent machinery. It remains so. My right hon. Friend therefore confirmed last week that the interim advisory committee would advise on the pay settlement for 1989. We are grateful for the fine work that has been done by Lord Chilver and his committee during the last year. We look forward to a further year of thorough analysis by the committee.

Mr. Fatchett: I deliberately asked the Minister about 1990 because that is the time when the interim arrangements run out. The Minister said that it is still the Government's target to change the arrangements after

1990. Will the Minister give a clear commitment now that the Government intend to restore collective bargaining for teachers' pay after 1990? Will she confirm that that is an intention, not a target?

Mrs. Rumbold: Through the negotiating machinery and discussions with unions and the local authority employers, the Government intend to establish sensible negotiating arrangements. We do not want to return to the kind of chaos that reigned before the interim advisory committee was set up.

Mr. Flannery: Who caused it?

Mrs. Rumbold: The hon. Gentleman asks me who caused it. It happened over a period of years. I do not think that the hon. Gentleman will want to go any further into that matter. As I have said, the Government are looking to a firm arrangement, and the target date is 1990.

I now turn to points raised by the hon. Member for Leeds, Central about the International Labour Organisation. Much noise has been made about all this. Hon. Members may not, however, be aware that the ILO has recognised that we are already taking steps towards new and lasting machinery. The committee on freedom of association of the ILO has noted that the consultations now under way will give the United Kingdom Government an opportunity to make legislative amendments.

The ILO is, of course, fully aware of the timing of the interim arrangements as set out in the Teachers' Pay and Conditions Act 1987. It is aware of our intention to set up new machinery for the determination of pay and conditions by 1990 and it has not asked that matters should proceed on any different timetable.

As a signatory to the International Labour Organisation convention, we are considering what the ILO has said and will keep this in mind as we move towards new machinery for determining school teachers' pay and conditions.

The order which we are debating this evening brings into effect the provisions relating to remuneration and other conditions of employment as set out in the school teachers' pay and conditions document of 1988. I recognise that the Opposition felt bound to pray against this order if only to give the hon. Member for Leeds, Central a chance to have a good old rant at me. But I cannot conceive that they expect the debate to result in anything other than approval of the order. Teachers want their pay rise and the Opposition cannot seriously intend to deny it to them.

The making of the order and the publication of the school teachers' pay and conditions document of 1988 followed extensive consultation. During the consultations, very few comments were made on the text either of the order or of the document.

Finally, one of the most encouraging signs during this school year has been the fact that teachers, despite all the comments from the newspapers, the unions and from many others that their morale is supposedly low, have worked closely with pupils without disruption. The evidence of a changed atmosphere has been highlighted by the introduction of the GCSE and the willingness of everyone to co-operate in making it successful. That is a tribute to the teachers' professionalism and the way in which they wanted to make it a success and put their pupils before other considerations.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: The proof of the pudding is in the eating. Does my hon. Friend agree that when one considers the union membership figures and sees that the National Union of Teachers has lost 74,000 members, the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers has lost 32,000 teachers, yet the two most professional and most moderate unions, the Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association and the Professional Association of Teachers, have increased their membership by 50,000 and 43,000 respectively in the past nine years, it is clear that professional teachers know exactly where their interests lie?

Mrs. Rumbold: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. Professional teachers are voting with their feet and joining organisations that represent their interests and put their professionalism and the interests of their pupils well above their own personal interests or the interests of some collectivist group that rants against the Government.

I am sure that all teachers would rightly be aggrieved if the order were to be revoked and if they were to lose their pay increase. I hope that the Opposition will not press the matter to a vote, but if they do I must ask the House to vote against the Opposition motion.

8.3 pm

Mr. Barry Jones (Alyn and Deeside): The ILO has put the Government on the spot. I urge them to respond urgently, do the decent thing and let us have voluntary negotiations. My hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) was right to dwell on morale. The teaching force has been treated very badly by the Government. During the past few years it has been pushed from pillar to post, and I know that the teachers are still smarting from the loss of their free collective bargaining. I was glad to hear my hon. Friend's policy commitment on behalf of the Opposition.

In my constituency, I have encountered a great deal of resentment and frustration in the teaching force. In many visits to schools throughout Wales, in my constituency and in my LEA of Clywd I repeatedly encounter frustrated head teachers who feel that they and their staff must do more with less for children, the parents and the community. The pressure from local education authority headquarters, and from parents, is growing and is relentless. The staff and the profession are always under pressure to deliver. Most head teachers that I speak to about their problems want, above all, extra staff to deliver the highest standards that they are determined to give to parents and children.

At the heart of the many problems that we face in the service are the massive cuts in the rate support grant over the past nine years. Cuts in RSG in England and Wales have borne down severely on the education service. It is argued that in the Principality some £750 million has been lost in rate support grant since 1979. Much of that grant is earmarked for the education service.

In my constituency and my county of Clwyd, there are now major limitations in nursery schooling. In my constituency, in Buckley, a closure is causing uproar among parents.

The Minister did square up to the issue of teachers' pay and tried to respond to the questions of my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, Central. But the award just is not enough, because 4·25 per cent. barely maintains the purchasing power of a year earlier, and in effect it

[Mr. Barry Jones]

continues the erosion of the teachers' relative position. It is well below the 6 per cent. negotiated for teachers in Scotland. I do not crib at the Scottish teachers getting that amount, but if the Minister is able to respond, will she say why the teachers in Scotland have obtained a 6 per cent. increase, whereas those in England and Wales will get only 4·25 per cent?

I wish to raise one or two matters covered by the report of the interim advisory committee on school teachers' pay and conditions which was chaired by Lord Chilver. It is an interesting and revealing document which highlights many of the problems faced by the service, and which it would face under any Government. My hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, Central dwelt on the question of morale which is very important if our children are to have the best possible education now and if our country, in the run-up to the next century, is to reorder its economy and cope with the increasing competition in industries throughout the world. The document states:

"We judge that commitment is good"

—among the teaching force—

"but we were concerned to find—especially during our visits to schools—that the morale of many teachers is low."

It continues:

"Many teachers complain of a lack of public appreciation and recognition; they feel that they have been blamed for all the faults of the education system, and expected to implement a succession of initiatives, for which resources and training are limited."

The resentment at limited resources and training is widespread. I do not believe it to be an exaggeration to say that many teachers who I meet frequently are seething with resentment.

The report also considers co-operation and says:

"the co-operation of teachers is essential if the planned changes in education are to be delivered in the classroom. In our view, teachers deserve a fuller measure of public understanding for the difficult role which they will be expected to play in those reforms, and an expression of public appreciation, encouragement and confidence in them."

The Secretary of State and the Minister should take more opportunities to say what the report is saying.

Mr. Mark Fisher (Stoke-on-Trent, Central): They never take such opportunities.

Mr. Jones: Indeed not. The Government have taken the big stick to the profession. They have forgotten that the harder they hit, the lower morale will be, so our children will not get the very best in state schools. I want the Government to end their constant sniping at teachers. They should take the lead and attempt to raise teacher morale.

On quality, the report says:

"there is evidence of a mismatch between the demands of the curriculum and the qualifications of teachers; too many secondary classes are already having to be taught by non-specialist teachers, and the problem seems likely to be exacerbated by the demands of the national curriculum."

I do not believe from any of the utterances of Ministers that I have heard recently that the Government have faced up to the fact that, although they want more from teachers, they are not providing sufficient staff in certain areas. The curriculum is narrowing. That is a feature of secondary schools in Wales and I should be astonished if the same were not true in England. I do not believe that the Government understand the seriousness of the mismatch between the demands of the curriculum and the qualifications of teachers. Teachers and parents tell me of their great regret at the narrowing of the curriculum.

The Government have misjudged the mood of teachers. It appears that they have also underestimated parents' anxieties about the shortages of books and equipment in many schools as instanced in the harrowing details in Her Majesty's inspectorate's annual reports for England and Wales. The Government are understating teachers' difficulties. A large majority in the House has made the Government careless and arrogant, but before long they will pay dearly for their misuse of power.

8.13 pm

Mr. James Pawsey (Rugby and Kenilworth): Perhaps the best answer that I can give the hon. Member for Alyn and Deeside (Mr. Jones) is a quotation from a speech which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science made only today. The hon. Gentleman accused the Government of sniping at teachers and said that that should stop. My right hon. Friend said:

"I pay tribute to the way very many teachers have responded, despite the difficulties in recent years in the relationship between the Government and some of the teacher unions. I welcome the fact that these difficulties are behind us, and that the teaching profession as a whole has accepted last year's settlement on pay and conditions".

The debate arises on an Opposition motion, but when the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) rose to open the debate, not one member of his party was present. Indeed, not one member of the SLD was present. There was nobody here to support him. Having heard the hon. Gentleman's speech, I understand why none of his hon. Friends were here. His speech was pedestrian and lack-lustre even by his unexacting standards.

I was pleased to read in a parliamentary answer of 22 June that Lord Chilver has agreed to continue for a second year as chairman of the interim advisory committee on school teachers' pay and conditions. His recent report is detailed and constructive, and it should be commended by the House.

Teacher motivation has attracted the House's attention. While pay is important, it clearly is not everything. It has been said that teachers' morale and motivation have been adversely affected by uncertainty about who is in charge in a school—the local education authority and its officers and elected members, governors with a strong parental element or the head teacher and staff. Each of those groups has duties and responsibilities, but they overlap from time to time. I can illustrate the point by referring to last year's pay report. Few teachers read it because its circulation was somewhat haphazard. The report did not reach the people who were most affected by it. Teachers were left unsure, and to the tender mercies of their trade unions' propaganda and the sometimes ambiguous statements of local education authorities.

Management in schools sometimes leaves something to be desired. An important issue which faces teaching is the need for a clear chain of responsibility so that teachers know who is in charge of the day-to-day running of a school. The vacuum left by the absence of responsibility, authority and good communication is filled by speculation and uncertainty, and where there is uncertainty, rumour will abound. The delegation of more power to schools under the Education Reform Bill will help in that respect.

Lord Chilver and his colleagues on the advisory committee have identified an area that needs attention. I listened with some interest to Opposition Members speaking about negotiating rights. We have heard it all before, but I do not believe that anybody would argue for the return of the discredited Burnham committee. It was a shambles of disagreement and a recipe for dispute. A joint negotiating council would be much the same—it would merely be a son of Burnham. In the end, Burnham was sustained only by the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service. The advisory committee's report proposes an increase of about 4·25 per cent. on average, which my right hon. Friend has accepted.

Mr. Ashdown: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Pawsey: I shall——

Mr. Ashdown *rose*——

Mr. Pawsey: In a minute. The hon. Gentleman is far too impetuous. I can see that he is giggling all over his face, to use his preferred phrase, but he must contain himself for a moment. It is honestly a pleasure to see the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) here participating in our debates. I understand that he has other matters preying more deeply on his mind, but it is good to see him.

Mr. Flannery: The hon. Gentleman was here last night and the night before.

Mr. Pawsey: I will not disagree with that. Why should I? The report to which I referred recommends substantial increases in the number of incentive posts which carry allowances and provide a boost to the good, conscientious teacher. I am happy to say that good, conscientious teachers still remain the majority in their profession.

Most teachers are dedicated to the children in their charge and to their profession. I want to refer to an article that appeared in *The Times Educational Supplement* on 24 June. The article refutes a point made by the hon. Member for Leeds, Central. The article states:

"Certainly the recent pay review has stemmed the flow of good teachers out of schools especially those who work outside London. But it would be an insult to the vast majority of the teaching force if it were suggested that they come into teaching essentially because of money. Most consider their work to be a vocation."

How I applaud the sentiments in that article.

One virtue that springs from the abolition of Burnham and the introduction of the interim advisory committee is that the recruiting and propaganda platform provided by Burnham no longer exists. That platform was used for those purposes by some unions. Interestingly, the unions are no longer as militant as they were. That point was made by my hon. Friend the Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett) in his interesting observations.

I notice that the loss of membership in the National Union of Teachers coincides with a reduction in militancy by that union. The more militant, the fewer members. I urge hon. Members to consider that. The dislocation that occurred over 18 months including the half-day strikes was damaging not just to our schoolchildren—and God knows, that was bad enough—but to teachers and their profession. The dislocation reduced their prestige and in turn adversely affected morale.

Pay is not the only and overriding issue. However, the 16·4 per cent. award last year helps to ensure that teachers are appreciated. However, teachers have concerns other than pay. For example, they are apprehensive about school discipline. They are also apprehensive about certain changes in the Education Reform Bill.

Teachers require more reassurance and appreciation. As I said earlier, most teachers do a splendid job. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has a persuasive manner. I am sure that he will use that manner to good advantage when he meets members of the profession. I am certain that unless we enjoy the good will of the teaching profession, we shall have difficulty carrying through the reforms in the Education Reform Bill.

I am quite convinced that the Education Reform Bill will substantially improve the quality and standard of state education, where the majority of our children are educated. I am convinced that we shall have the full support of the teachers in this country.

8.23 pm

Mr. Paddy Ashdown (Yeovil): I listened to the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey) today, as I have listened to him for so long in Committees, with interest, but not much agreement, However, he did get one matter right and he should be congratulated on that. He was blunt enough and accurate enough to give the real increase in teachers' pay. He was right to say that it is 4·25 per cent.

It would benefit the House if he were to take the Minister aside. She is clearly as inaccurate and off the record as she has been so often before. She said that the award was 6 per cent. Of course she was wrong. She has been wrong before. As she will not listen to Opposition Members, it would benefit the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth, hon. Members on both sides of the House and the cause of truth if he were to educate the Minister in this matter. She is clearly not educated. For the record, the award is 4·25 per cent. and not, as the Minister said, 6 per cent. after taking increments away or, as she tried to say, 14·5 per cent. That is a characteristic example of the Government's lack of attention to detail and an example of their characteristic capacity to manipulate figures to make people believe what the Government want them to believe.

We need a clear answer from the Minister on another point. Your predecessor in the Chair, Mr. Deputy Speaker, rightly asked us not to intervene too much. I wanted to intervene in the Minister's speech because we require her to be clear on a specific point. If she provides me with the right answer, I will finish my speech now. The Minister told us that the Government's target date for operating the permanent mechanism is 1990. I will happily give way to the Minister if she will answer me. Does she mean in place by 1989 to deal with 1990 pay or does she mean in place by 1990 to deal with 1991 pay? The Minister was not clear on that. It would benefit the House if she could tell us which of two options is right. The Minister is spending a lot of time thinking about the matter—enough time for her to send a Parliamentary Private Secretary to ask an adviser. Is the target 1989 for 1990 or in place for 1990 to negotiate pay for 1991? We have a right to know.

Hon. Members: Answer.

Mr. Pawsey: The answer will come in the Minister's reply.

Mr. Ashdown: In the interests of time, I would be prepared to finish if the Minister would clarify that point.

[Mr. Ashdown]

It should stand on the record that the Minister does not seem to know the nature of the commitment that she made.

Mr. Pawsey: Wait and see.

Mr. Ashdown: The hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth says, "Wait and see." I should not have to wait and see.

The Secretary of State for Education and Science gave a commitment on the record on 5 May last year that the Government were heading for the mechanism to be in place by 1989 to deal with the 1990 pay rise. Is the Minister sticking to that? If so, the House should know. If, on the other hand, the target date that the Minister has put forward is a full year later, the Secretary of State's commitment has not been honoured. The House must take that matter very seriously.

For fear that anyone should doubt what the Secretary of State said, I point out that he said in response to a question from me:

"I do not think that it will be possible to get an agreed new permanent machinery by April 1988. However, that does not mean that we will not be able to get it in place by April 1989 —that is, before 1990"—[*Official Report*, 5 May 1987; Vol. 115, c. 675.]

The Secretary of State declared that as the target. Is the Minister saying that there is a slippage of a year? If so, we have a right to know why.

I do not speak against the motion on the basis that I oppose the Chilver report. I agree with some of the comments. Lord Chilver's report was good and well rehearsed and I am delighted that he had the courage to resist the Government's £300 million limit. Of course we could expect the Government to accept the recommendation, but then cynically to fail to give local education authorities the money to fulfil it.

We also expect the Government to manipulate the level of the pay rises in the way that the Minister has been exposed as doing. Nor will I vote against the principle of incentive allowances, even though the scales that the Government have suggested are very confining. They lack flexibility to such an extent that the headmaster of the comprehensive school which my children attended told me that the allowances are so confining that he has no real chance of allocating them except on the basis of new responsibility.

Lord Chilver commented on precisely the same point, but that is not why I am speaking against the motion. I am doing so because a commitment was made a year ago in the House by the Secretary of State for Education and Science that steps would be taken to put the permanent machinery in place as soon as possible. To honour that commitment, in October 1987 the Government published their proposals and sought responses by January 1988. From that date to this, no discernible movement has taken place. The Minister said that there have been brief discussions; they were very few and very brief. I suspect, as I imagine do teachers and others outside the House, that the failure to meet that commitment was not an accident. The truth of the matter is that the Government want the Gerbil in place so that school governors have the right to remove allowances, to abolish automatic salary increments and to introduce performance pay by stealth before the permanent body is established to reintroduce teachers capacities and to give them some say in their terms and conditions.

I am not, in principle, against a sensible system of performance pay. It must be introduced by consultation and negotiation with teachers, not by stealth. I hope that the Minister will make it clear whether the Government have shifted their target. If they have, they have done so cynically so that conditions will be in force when the permanent body is established, thus undermining the democratic consensus-based system.

Mrs. Rumbold *rose*——

Mr. Ashdown: The hon. Lady has her answer. It has taken her five or six minutes to get the answer from her minders in the Box and, perhaps, as long to digest it. The House awaits, with some anticipation, for her answer.

Mrs. Rumbold: May I read to the hon. Gentleman—who appears to be deaf and dense, among other things —what I clearly said. The Teachers Pay and Conditions Act 1987 made provision for interim arrangements to last until 1990. The Government have always made it clear that that was the target date for establishing and having in place the permanent machinery, and that remains so.

Mr. Ashdown: It has taken the hon. Lady six minutes to get it wrong. I asked her to tell me whether the Government's target is to put the permanent machinery in place, as the Secretary of State said, by April 1989 to deal with pay for 1990 or by 1990 to deal with pay for 1991. It is no good the hon. Lady looking to her minders; they will not give her an answer. She must have sufficient mastery of her brief to allow her to answer one way or the other. I give the hon. Lady the opportunity so to do. Perhaps when she replies to the debate she will have received the answer. Will the machinery be in place by 1989 to deal with pay for 1990 or by 1990 to deal with pay for 1991? In the interests of receiving an answer, and having said what I want to say, I shall finish my remarks.

8.33 pm

Mr. George Walden (Buckingham): I apologise to the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) for not being present to hear his speech.

We are talking not only about pay but pay and conditions, which are both mentioned in the motion. There are conditions on either side. Teachers' conditions are to supply quality teaching. My hon. Friend the Minister paid tribute to the professionalism of teachers. I understand why she has to say that—it is part of the functions of her job. I draw attention to the report of Her Majesty's inspectorate that was published yesterday. It said that 75 per cent. of the classes that the inspectors attended were guilty of the most heinous education sin —low expectation. It is difficult to square what my hon. Friend the Minister naturally felt obliged to say about the professionalism of teachers with the HMI report, which mentioned low expectation in 75 per cent. of the 8,000 classes that the inspectors attended. That signifies that a basic and fundamental problem of quality remains within the British education system.

I know perfectly well that my hon. Friend and the Government are doing what they can to improve the position, and I know that many teachers are concerned about the quality of their profession, but it is not fair on

the ordinary children who receive state education—who can never aspire to attend a private school and receive a higher quality of education—to delude ourselves that there is an untapped mass of professionalism, when we know perfectly well—it was confirmed by the HMI report—that there is a major problem of low expectation.

The other side of the conditions coin is what teachers are expected to do. If one asks teachers to have higher expectations of their pupils and to compete with the private sector—which is growing, flourishing and producing better standards—one must reduce class sizes. I know that nationally the figures have been decreasing, but they need to decrease further. The size of classes in private schools is normally 14 to 20 pupils. Clearly that is a major advantage for the teacher and brings out the best in him or her. It encourages him or her to demand and receive higher expectations, which are of crucial national importance. I know that the overall record and the pupil-teacher ratios are good, but I should like the size of classes to be reduced further. As the hon. Member for Alyn and Deeside (Mr. Jones) said earlier, it will not be possible for teachers to deliver all the additional effort and professionalism that is rightly being asked of them by the Government, even with smaller classes. Class sizes must reduce further, and if that costs money it will be money well spent. It would have a good effect on the private sector, which at present is having life far too easy. It is impossible to talk about pay without mentioning the quality of teachers and the obligations that class sizes and other problems place on them.

I am convinced by my hon. Friend's remarks about the pay increases teachers received that 4·25 per cent. is reasonable, but I should like to enter one important caveat. It is impossible to discuss this subject without having regard to the whole economy. My hon. Friend said that high inflation damages teachers as much as anyone else, but given the crucial importance that I attach—perhaps privately my hon. Friend does also—to education and the quality of teachers, it would be serious and damaging if we returned to the position of the past when teachers were the only people marching in step and keeping high wage claims down.

I understand the background to this matter and the Treasury's viewpoint—it is responsible to take account of its viewpoint. If we want the élite teaching force that ordinary children—whose parents do not have the money to give them a private education—have a right to expect, we shall have to watch the quality of education, watch class sizes and watch teachers' pay. Teachers should at least be adequately rewarded for their extremely difficult task.

8.39 pm

Mr. Martin Flannery (Sheffield, Hillsborough): It was interesting to see how the hon. Member for Buckingham (Mr. Walden) under-estimated, just as the Minister did, the report from the inspectorate, which said that 25 per cent., not 75 per cent., of teachers were dissatisfied. Like the Minister, the hon. Gentleman has got it the wrong way round in his eagerness to condemn teachers.

It is necessary to give some of the history of what has happened to teachers. Last night, there was a debate about democracy and the failure to consult the teachers' unions and local education authorities. This is a continuation of that debate in different circumstances. The Minister let the cat out of the bag. There is not a semblance of democratic thought in anything that she said. The interim report says:

> "The interim advisory committee was established as a result of a major change in the framework in which the pay and conditions of school teachers in England and Wales are determined."

It speaks of that happening in 1987, but now we have to wait until 1990. Therefore, teachers will have had four years without negotiating rights. It is no wonder that the International Labour Organisation, which is part of the United Nations, condemned the Government for not having a proper negotiating machinery.

The Minister compounded her felony by going on to praise the interim advisory committee. The issue is not whether that advisory committee under Lord Chilver made a good report. It comprised a hand-picked group of people, unelected by anybody and chosen by the Secretary of State. Naturally he chose the members so that they would produce the report that he wanted. People condemned the Burnham committee, but it was an elected body. I was elected to serve on it by the National Union of Teachers. That committee was smashed by the Government. It had weaknesses, but all democracy has weaknesses. The House has weaknesses. Many hon. Members are not here for the debates—often fewer than 25 per cent. of all Members are present.

The teachers' unions asked that, instead of the interim advisory committee, there should be an elected body, which they called the joint national council. The International Labour Organisation watched what was happening and took action. However, it cannot compel the Government to do anything, so the Minister was wrong to say that it connived at this process because it did not interfere. The ILO cannot bludgeon the Government into doing as they are told. It has to watch them and see what they do. I am sure that any honest democrat will agree that it will be a disgrace if the teachers have no negotiating machinery for four years. Well over 100 years of free negotiations have been cast aside, and this order continues that felony, despite the fact that it is possible to have proper negotiations.

This lack of negotiating rights is wrong and will have profound effects. The teachers were defeated after they were provoked into action by the pitiful wages they were being paid, so they are now in a difficult position. However, they have a democratic approach to the problem that the Government do not have, and a lack of democracy will always catch up with a Government. The Government are arrogant and over-proud because of their huge majority, but in time this will catch up on them.

The hard facts about wages have not been given. My hon. Friend the Member for Alyn and Deeside (Mr. Jones) gave some of the figures when he talked about an increase of 4·25 per cent. and the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) noticed the 6 per cent. mistake that the Minister had made. The Scottish teachers have got 6 per cent., and good luck to them. However, it has not yet been mentioned that the national average wage increase is 8·5 per cent., so a 4·25 per cent. increase for the teachers takes them back a year. The teachers are rightly angry about that.

The teachers have repeatedly asked to see the Secretary of State, but he has repeatedly put them off. He was asked at the beginning of the year and spoke about 29 January. He was asked later and told the deputy general secretary of the NUT that the meeting would happen in a month or

[Mr. Martin Flannery]

two. Then, he said that it would happen a bit later, and then he said it would happen in June. It has not happened, so there has been no negotiation and only a report from an unelected body. No matter how good that report might be, it has come from an undemocratic body.

We would like from the Minister an answer to the question that the hon. Member for Yeovil asked many times. Will the teachers spend three years with no negotiating rights, or four years? If it is to be four years after assurances that it would be three, who knows whether it will not be five years? Who knows whether the Government will not go on in the same old way because of their huge majority?

Although we shall not vote against the order, it must be pointed out that it is a continuation of a lack of democracy in dealing with a long-established profession. No amount of slanging about that profession or against teachers will do anything to alter that.

Mr. Walden: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Flannery: I am about to finish so that another hon. Member can speak.

Will the Government extend democracy or will they carry on with no democracy for the teaching profession? If they do the latter, it will catch up with them in the long run because a lack of democracy always catches up with those who engage in it.

8.46 pm

Mrs. Rumbold: With the leave of the House, may I say that the Government are as keen as anyone else to have some organisation to negotiate pay and conditions for teachers in a way that is satisfactory to the profession, to the local authorities and to the Government. With that in mind, we wish to embark as soon as possible on serious discussions with the various parties whom we hope will come together eventually with a proper negotiating group.

In case the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) does not understand this, it is not possible to have negotiations in 1990 with a negotiating body unless such a body has been thought through and some conclusions have been reached by the end of 1989. The Government have given that commitment already, and that is the answer to his question. In other words, if there are to be negotiations on pay and conditions, there must be negotiating machinery.

Mr. Fisher: Will the hon. Lady give way?

Mrs. Rumbold: I have only a few minutes to reply, so I shall not give way.

It has been alleged on a number of occasions that teachers' pay has not been increased by more than 4 per cent. The average main scale teachers' pay will rise by just under 4 per cent. as a result of increments, but it is important to remember that teachers' pay has also increased by 4·25 per cent. across the board. By anybody's reckoning, this leads to an increase of more than 4 per cent. for everybody, because teachers are not all paid at the same rate all the way through.

Mr. Christopher Gill (Ludlow): It may be convenient for the House to know that a head teacher on the maximum scale earns nearly £32,000 a year. Will my hon. Friend confirm that the teacher on the top of the scale —not a head or a deputy head—will be earning nearly £14,000 with possibly £4,500 extra as a result of the incentive allowance?

Mrs. Rumbold: In fairness, the heads and deputy head teachers have not managed to receive as high increments as the rest of the profession as a result of the pay round. Therefore, although my hon. Friend the Member for Ludlow (Mr. Gill) is correct, it was the principal task of the interim advisory committee to consider the main group in the profession.

I do not accept the allegation that the Government are not considering seriously the establishment of proper negotiating machinery for the teaching profession. I also do not accept that the Government have not thought carefully about the rewards for the teaching profession's hard work, given that, in the past three years, they have received a 25 per cent. pay increase as a result of restructuring. On top of that, this year, teachers have received an increase of more than 4 per cent. plus increments representing a further 4 per cent. increase. I believe that that is a good and adequate payment for the hard work that teachers do.

8.50 pm

Mr. Fatchett: With the leave of the House, I shall reply. The hon. Member for Buckingham (Mr. Walden) made an appropriate and necessary contribution to this debate. It is sad that that speech did not come from the Minister. The hon. Gentleman spoke about the need for professionalism and the need to reward it, which affects morale and recruitment. Such issues are crucial and have been spotlighted by the interim advisory committee. It is a shame that the Minister did not respond in accordance with the importance of those issues.

It is also a shame that, yet again, the Minister was dismally inept in discussing when the negotiating machinery will be in place and the Government's intentions. The Secretary of State made it clear, in response to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown), that it was the Government's intention to establish that negotiating machinery by April 1989. Every word that the Minister has uttered has suggested that that is no longer the Government's intention. We must either reach that conclusion or conclude, as was self-evident during the passage of the Education Reform Bill, that the Minister does not understand her brief and does not understand the issues involved.

The Minister also failed to understand the importance of democratic collective bargaining rights for teachers. The loss of those rights goes to the heart of the collapse of teacher morale and the Minister——

It being one and a half hours after the commencement of proceedings on the motion, MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER, *pursuant to the Order [22 July], put the Question.*

Question negatived.

Building Societies

8.52 pm

Mr. Chris Smith (Islington, South and Finsbury): I beg to move,

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that the Building Societies (Transfer of Business) Regulations 1988 (S.I., 1988, No. 1153), dated 4th July 1988, a copy of which was laid before this House on 5th July, be annulled.

The Building Societies (Transfer of Business) Regulations set out some of the detailed procedure that must be followed and the information provided when a building society wishes to convert to plc status. We remain fundamentally opposed to conversion and we have made our views especially clear in view of the current rush by Abbey National to convert.

A mutual society is owned by its members and is answerable to them. It has no shareholders and it folds all its surpluses back into the running and prosperity of the society. As a result of the regulations, a society has ample powers to compete flexibly and fairly with banks and other financial institutions.

It is worth mentioning that our scepticism about the necessity for conversion of the building societies is shared by a number of Conservative Members. I studied the debates that took place on 4 June 1986 when the Building Societies Bill was considered on Report and Third Reading. The hon. Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) referred to the ability of foreign banks to buy up converted building societies as, "a real threat." The hon. Member for Mid-Staffordshire (Mr. Heddle) spoke about conversion and the loss of mutuality and said:

"If that sense of mutuality is broken . . . that link of loyalty, which is inestimable, will be broken."

The hon. Member for High Peak (Mr. Hawkins) asked:

"why do we want to allow companies which are not building societies to buy building societies?"—[*Official Report*, 4 June 1986; Vol. 98, c. 939-41.]

The hon. Member for Uxbridge (Mr. Shersby) also spoke against the idea of conversion. Therefore, it is clear that there is widespread unease about the prospect of building societies, with all the benefits that mutuality brings, converting into plcs and becoming just like any other financial institution.

If, however, conversion is proposed by the board of a society we must be certain that the case for and against is put impartially to the members of that society before they vote. That is what the regulations are all about. We feel that they go some way towards ensuring fairness and partiality, but nowhere near far enough. It sets out the information that is required to be given in detail to the members of the society—borrowers and investors—before they vote.

I received a letter dated 8 July from the deputy chairman of the Building Societies Commission. That letter sets out the commission's view with admirable clarity and it is worth quoting. The deputy chairman said:

"This statement"—

the statement presented to members by the board of a society—

"will have to present all material facts relating to the proposals in clear and unambiguous terms so that the members can base their decisions on how to vote on an objective view of the consequences of conversion for members and employees."

That is the intention of the Building Societies Commission and also the intention of the regulations. The letter continues:

"When the Commission approves these statements, it will be concerned to ensure that a fair balance is drawn between a clear presentation of all the material facts and masses of detail which might obscure the central issues."

There can be little quarrel with that. That statement is fine as far as it goes, but what would happen if the Building Societies Commission approves the statement that the board proposes to send out to members but, as the result of its issue, there are serious objections from many quarters among the society's membership that it has not presented an entirely fair and balanced case?

What are the real chances of the Building Societies Commission using the powers that are available to it to refuse confirmation of the conversion? They are negligible, because it is impossible for the Building Societies Commission to be both judge and jury in its own scrutiny, which is precisely what the legislation seeks to make it. It is worth pointing out in passing that too little time was allowed between the draft statutory instrument being circulated for comment and the final version being decided upon. The group of Abbey National members—the Abbey Members Against Flotation—who have been waging a valiant campaign as David pitted against the Goliath of the board of Abbey National, made their detailed representations at a meeting with the Building Societies Commission late one week, and the final version of the statutory instrument was published the following week. So there was not enough time to take account of the detailed objections that they had to this instrument——

Mr. John Butterfill (Bournemouth, West): Of the 6,500,000 members of Abbey National, how many are represented by the body to which the hon. Gentleman has referred? How many turned up at their recent meeting?

Mr. Smith: Quite a large number turned up at the meeting, which I think took place last weekend. There are several hundred members in the organisation and that number is growing weekly. They began their campaign against flotation only a few months ago; their resources are severely limited: they have been afforded no facilities by Abbey National to contact members; and they have been refused permission to place their leaflets in building society branches to enable them to contact more members. In view of all that, their record is fairly creditable, and their arguments have been put with skill and vigour, in spite of their seemingly small numbers, to which the hon. Gentleman is doubtless attempting to draw attention.

Mr. Butterfill: Would it be correct to say that there were 60 members at the last meeting?

Mr. Smith: I was not present at the meeting, so I cannot confirm or deny that number. If it is correct, it was still a creditable turnout, which may well have been much larger than the turnout at meetings of Conservative associations around the country.

I come now to the crucial issue of how tough these provisions are. I am forced to the conclusion that they are not tough or strict enough. We must remember that the board of the society will put the case to its members. It will send out the information and, having decided to recommend conversion, it will tend to put the case in a partisan way. Let us consider the mailing that Abbey National recently sent out to all its members—at their

[Mr. Smith]

expense, because the funds for it came from the funds of the society. The cost was considerable. The brochure that Abbey National sent out asked one or two questions that had been raised by members who were anxious about the process of flotation. The answers are thin to say the least. For example, to the question

"What would be the basis for allocating the shares in the PLC?"

the response is:

"An acceptable scheme will have to be worked out".

A few lines further on the brochure states:

"we would recognise Members' rights in an appropriate way."

What on earth is that supposed to mean? What sort of guidance can that statement give members about the board's intentions?

Further on in the document, the arguments for converting to plc status seem to be that

"None of the business we do today is safe from competition. Our ability to compete on equal terms with our large financial institutions is still restricted."

No mention there of the decisions that have already been taken by the Halifax and the Nationwide Anglia building societies—that their powers are ample to enable them to compete effectively. They have a flexible enough regime to be able to prosper without conversion.

However, the Abbey National says:

"we must recognise the highly competitive reality of today and build for a prosperous future."

It is like listening to speeches from Ministers at Conservative party conferences. There is no solid content to the document. Apart from having a patronising tone, it is verbose, repetitive and gives almost no concrete reasons about why conversion to plc status is a suitable and sensible option for Abbey National members.

The document is also very one-sided. The chief executive of the Abbey National seems to be rather proud of that. In an article that he wrote in *The Independent* of 18 July he said:

"They have been receiving"—

that is, Abbey National members—

"the first of several mailings that will set out the arguments that have convinced the Abbey National board that conversion into a plc offers the best opportunities for the future."

That was the chief executive's statement about the intention and content of the first of a number of mailings that Abbey National members will receive. Where is the two-sided balance? The chief executive says that the board will set out the argument that conversion offers the best opportunities for the future. In other words, the mailings will be entirely in favour of the recommendations that the board wants to put to members.

That leads me to the first of my four principal demands of the Government, which seek to improve and toughen the regulations over the next few months. My first demand is that the necessity for impartiality and balance should apply not just to the final transfer statement that is made to members when they are on the point of voting but to all documents sent out to members during the flotation campaign. If an argument were needed for that, the Abbey National has just supplied us with it. If there is no requirement for balance from day one of the campaign, members will be deluged with mountains of propaganda from the board telling them—at their own expense—how wonderful the idea of conversion is, long before they receive the supposedly balanced statement. It is important that there should be balance throughout the process rather than just at the end of it.

My second demand is that there should be an independent auditors' validation of all the financial information provided to members, not only those aspects of information that are covered by the provisions of paragraph 14(a) of part I of the schedule to the regulations. The provisions of that paragraph mean that paragraph 8 of part I, which refers to

"The future financial prospects of the successor company",

is omitted from the auditors' required assessment. We see no reason for that omission.

Mr. Butterfill: Is it not true that, in addition to the requirements of the transfer statement, there will be a requirement to obtain the approval of the Bank of England to achieve the objectives of the flotation? Will not the information required by the Bank of England be considerably more onerous than is likely to be required by almost any other document?

Mr. Smith: That is correct. However, we are discussing the information that is available to members of the society. I should have thought that it was unarguable that the members of the society should be assured that the information that they receive has been properly validated. That is what we request.

Thirdly, we would want to see a truly independent assessment of all the aspects and consequences of conversion, financial and non-financial, to be sent out to all members. If possible, it should be drawn up by the Building Societies Commission after consultation with groups of members opposed to flotation. It should be sent out alongside the statement made by the board. It should not be left just to the board to mount its case. If we need an argument for that, the Abbey National literature stands testament to it, as does the Abbey National's board's refusal to allow the use of facilities in its branches, at public meetings it intends to hold around the country and within its own mailing. It has denied any such facilities to any group of members of Abbey National opposed to flotation.

Fourthly, the information to be provided to members should be in plain layman's language. Many of the provisions of transfer will inevitably be complex. It is important that members have an understandable set of provisions upon which they can make a judgment.

Those are all improvements that should be made to the regulations. We shall not divide the House, because the regulations go a substantial way towards ensuring the balance we seek. However, supplementary provisions could be brought forward in due course to ensure that the improvements that we believe are necessary are made.

The Lex column at the back of the *Financial Times* is always worth reading. It is a column of considerable percipience. I shall watch with interest to see what it has to say tomorrow about today's news that the balance of payments deficit for June has gone over the £1 billion mark. It is yet further confirmation of the trend in the economy about which we have been warning Conservative Members and the Chancellor of the Exchequer for some considerable time.

On 21 July the Lex column said:

"The clearing banks have demonstrably failed to prove that their access to the capital markets has improved their

performance, and the mutual Scottish life companies often provide a much better service than their joint stock competitors."

That is absolutely right. In terms of money management and service to their customers, the mutual societies within the insurance world perform much better on the whole than those that have attained plc status. The Lex column continues:

"mutual status provides a kind of financial discipline on management which is sorely missing elsewhere."

Lex was absolutely right. There is virtually nothing to be gained and much to be lost when mutual status disappears. At the very least we must ensure that the case for or against flotation is not presented in a loaded manner but is properly, fully and fairly put. We need tougher regulations to ensure that that happens. Building society members must not be dragooned into voting the way the board wants.

9.15 pm

Mr. John Butterfill (Bournemouth, West): I am puzzled that the hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith) should assert that mutual status is so entirely desirable. One of the great criticisms that have been levelled at the building society movement, although it has done great work, is that it is effectively accountable to no one and that the boards of building societies have, in many cases, become self-perpetuating oligarchies simply because the representation of their members is so difficult to achieve in any effective way. The boards have effectively been able to do what they wish. Any proposal to make building society boards more accountable must, therefore, have some advantage. I am by no means totally persuaded that it would be in the best interests of this country as a whole if all our building societies went down the route of flotation.

On the other hand, it is right that different companies and their respective boards should take different views on that. What the Halifax board may decide may be quite different from what the Abbey National board decides, and that is an entirely healthy situation. There should be room for difference of opinion as to which is the best way to proceed to maintain one's competitiveness in a market in which all sorts of players who were not even envisaged a few years ago are now playing. Large American banks and Japanese organisations, such as Sumitomo and Continental, mortgage and bond-issuing houses, are now in a market that was traditionally filled by the building societies. It is right that we should be giving the building societies at least the power to respond in the way that their boards think fit.

I am also convinced that we should do that only if adequate controls exist. The controls contained in the regulations before us tonight are more than adequate. The hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury mentioned the requirements of the schedule in terms of the information to be given to members. Paragraph 1, which relates to the consequences of the transfer, states that the consequences are required to be given

"for members holding shares in the society;"

for borrowing members of the society; and, because the consequences will be different for them, for the employees.

I understand that the Building Societies Commission has made it clear that any statement produced will need to be a fair and balanced statement, giving the case from all sides. I believe that I am correct in saying that Michael Bridgeman has written a letter to the Abbey National requiring that. I am led to suspect, therefore, that the concerns expressed by the Opposition this evening stem more from their reluctance to see new private sector companies being created than from anything else. There is more than a suspicion in the case of the Abbey National that AMAF—Abbey Members Against Flotation—may be substantially organised by the Labour party.

Mr. Chris Smith: The hon. Gentleman must not be allowed to get away with that. I have had considerable contact over a number of weeks with key members of AMAF. Many of them would be outraged by such a suggestion as the hon. Gentleman has just made. I live in hope that they may in due course see the light and come to support the Labour party, but the hon. Gentleman's statement is completely incorrect.

Mr. Butterfill: I am sorry that the hon. Gentleman takes exception to what I said. Perhaps I can try to justify my suspicions. The hon. Gentleman must correct me if anything that I say is incorrect. I believe that the chairman of AMAF is a Mr. Alec Leaver, who is a prominent member of the Labour party and a former trade union official. I believe that one of the most active members of AMAF is Mr. Peter Lowndes, who I believe is a research assistant to the hon. Members for Redcar (Ms. Mowlam) and for Fife, Central (Mr. McLeish). Another leading light in AMAF is a Mr. Hugh Raven who I believe is a research assistant to the hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury.

Mr. Smith: The hon. Gentleman is totally factually incorrect. Mr. Hugh Raven is indeed my research assistant, but he is not a member of AMAF. He has had a number of discussions with AMAF in preparation for this debate, and others, as I have had with Abbey National board members. He is certainly not a member of it, and to describe him as a leading activist is incorrect. I must ask the hon. Gentleman to withdraw that remark.

Mr. Butterfill: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for that assurance. I accept what he says. I understand, however, that Mr. Hugh Raven has been taking part in the meetings of AMAF. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will tell me if he has not been present at those meetings. As I understand it, Mr. Peter Lowndes is a member of the AMAF committee. Mr. Lowndes is the research assistant to the hon. Members for Redcar and for Fife, Central. I shall give way to the hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury if he wishes to deny that.

Mr. Smith: The hon. Gentleman is developing an extremely thin argument. He has established so far that two members of the AMAF committee happen to be members of the Labour party. I suggest that that is no argument to support his outrageous statement.

Mr. Butterfill: I thought that I had established that three of them were, including the chairman and at least one member of the committee, and that two of them were closely associated with leading Labour Members. It is that, combined with the fact that AMAF was able to muster only 60 people at its meeting—that must be set against 5·5 million investing members and 1 million borrowing members—that leads me to have some scepticism about AMAF's right to speak for Abbey National members. It leads me to support the view of the Abbey National board that AMAF's suggestion that the AMAF statement

[Mr. Butterfill]

should be sent out along with the transfer statement to all Abbey National members would be to give AMAF a prominence which would not be entirely deserved or reflected by its membership or supporters.

Be that as it may, that which is proposed in the regulations is entirely reasonable. It will give more than adequate safeguards to any potential investor. It will certainly give more than adequate information to the existing members of any building society. Therefore, I commend the regulations to the House.

9.23 pm

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Peter Lilley): The questions whether a building society should convert into a public limited company and, if so, how the process should be regulated are important ones. It is right that the House should discuss them before departing for the summer. I welcome the opportunity to contribute to the debate.

The Building Societies Act 1986 gives building societies the option to convert from mutually owned institutions into plcs if they and their members believe that it is in their interests to do so. I am sure that it is right that the option to convert should be available. It is right also that the decision on conversion should be made by society members and no one else.

The Government's position on any particular proposal to convert is a simple one—we are neutral. The Government wish neither to encourage nor to discourage conversion. The Government want the choice to convert to be made on a level playing field according to fair rules. The Act empowers the Building Societies Commission, with the consent of the Treasury, to set out such rules in the form of transfer regulations, and that is what we are considering.

The regulations have been made after wide and extensive discussions with all concerned, including, as the hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith) mentioned, the members of the organisation entitled Abbey Members Against Flotation. I understand that that group was given the opportunity to comment on the draft regulations soon after it was formed, and it has acknowledged that its comments were taken into account. The consultation process has been continuing since the first paper was issued in 1987, with draft regulations being issued in December 1987. Therefore, the views of all concerned expressed during that long consultation process have been taken into account in the final regulations laid before the House.

The regulations cover three major areas and a number of minor areas. First, they provide for the continuity of agreements, documents, rights and liabilities from the society to its successor company. They thereby ensure that, for example, mortgage contracts are unaffected by conversion. The successor company simply steps into the society's shoes. Secondly, the regulations deal with the priority liquidation rights of former members of a society that converts. Thirdly, and most important, the regulations set out the matters to be included in the transfer statement that must be sent to members of the society considering conversion. The purpose of that statement is to give members a clear and balanced presentation of all the material facts that they will need to know before making up their minds on which way to vote. It cannot be circulated until it has been approved by the Building Societies Commission.

The main requirement is that the statement shall give an explanation of the consequences, both positive and negative, of conversion for the members, borrowers and employees of the society. It will have to cover, for example, the treatment of investment and mortgage accounts and employment prospects. The society's financial record and present position will have to be set out, together with particulars of the proposed business plans of the successor company and forecasts of its future financial prospects. Those will be certified by a qualified auditor.

The hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith) mentioned item 8 of part I of the schedule, concerning future financial prospects, and asked that it, too, be audited. It is not really appropriate to audit a forecast, but the commission will ensure that the requirements of regulation 3(2)—specifying all necessary assumptions, who made them, and who will stand by them —are incorporated in the transfer document. That meets the spirit of the hon. Gentleman's point.

I shall not enumerate all the items listed in the schedule which it is required that the transfer document contains, as they are clearly specified therein. The schedule to the regulations is intended to be comprehensive, but, in addition, the commission has the power to require other matters not specified in the schedule to be included in a transfer statement if the commission thinks that that would be appropriate in a particular case.

The hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury has taken up the idea that, in addition to being required to circulate all that information, societies should be obliged to circulate the views of members opposed to flotation. I do not believe that that proposal is either necessary or practical. The regulations and the commission together provide powerful safeguards against a society tempted to put only partial and one-sided information to its members. It is not reasonable to require a society to circulate all its members with the views of every opponent, at any length and regardless of cost.

However, it is worth noting that the Building Societies Act 1986 requires that if a group of 50 members propose a resolution at the AGM, the society must circulate not only that resolution but a copy of a short statement of up to 100 words to all members qualified to vote, provided that the resolution and statement are not frivolous and would not damage confidence in the society. Therefore, a small group of members can have their views circulated to thousands or even millions of their fellow members. A group of 100 members can also requisition a special meeting of the society if they think fit.

The hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury called for transfer documents to be certified as fair and accurate by an independent person, or for a parallel document to be produced and certified as fair and accurate by an independent person. As I have already said, the transfer document must itself be approved by the Building Societies Commission before it can be sent to members. Therefore, it will be subject to scrutiny by an independent body to ensure that it is fair and accurate. The commission is the only body empowered to undertake that function, and it is a very suitable one for the commission. Moreover, the financial information contained in the statement must be certified by a qualified auditor.

The hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury also wanted similar vetting and objectivity requirements applied to all statements made by the society prior to the issue of the transfer document. I do not think that that would be reasonable or sensible. The management of a building society has been selected by members of the society and entrusted to manage and lead it. It is only reasonable that the management should be given a free hand to give a lead without every statement being censored while its critics and opponents are free from such restriction in general discussion that may last for months before the transfer documents are ready.

Under the Building Societies Act 1986, the management, rightly, has a considerable hurdle to jump before conversion can be carried through. Not a simple majority but a 75 per cent. majority of investing members of the society is required to support conversion. A minimum of 20 per cent., a substantial number in many instances, must take part in the vote, and 50 per cent. of voting borrowers must also support the conversion. I do not feel that it would be reasonable to require the management, prior to that, to maintain an almost monk-like silence unless every word has been vetted.

In any event, once resolutions have been passed the transfer still cannot go ahead until the commission has confirmed it, and it cannot do that if it considers that the vote does not represent the views of the members. In that case, it will hold a hearing at which objectors will have an opportunity to say if they do not believe that the vote was carried out fairly, or if any material information was withheld or misrepresented in the transfer statement. If the commission is persuaded that material information was withheld, it will not grant the conversion before taking remedial action.

Another matter that has caused concern is the possibility of takeovers once a society has converted. The Act does not set out all the details of the new company's articles of association; however, they must incorporate protective provisions that prevent any one person from holding more than 15 per cent. of the shares for the first five years of the successor company. Those provisions are intended to give societies a reasonable breathing space after conversion without the threat of a change in control, so that they can adapt to their new environment of company and banking legislation. Those are important conditions. We consider it right that the institutions involved should have a limited period of stability after conversion, free from the threat of takeovers, and that they should adopt such measures as are necessary to maintain their independence during that period.

Mr. Jim Cousins (Newcastle upon Tyne, Central): Can the Minister tell us whether the important, if now somewhat neglected, aspect of mutual status—the right of members to put resolutions to the meetings—will be preserved in the company status that will result if building societies take advantage of the opportunities that the regulations provide? Will members find themselves in the position in which I found myself as a shareholder in Beecham? I was unable to participate in the annual general meeting to protest at Beecham's contributions to the Conservative party because under the company's rules the backing of 2 per cent. of shareholders was required in order to put a resolution. That would probably require the presence of more than 100,000 people.

Mr. Lilley: The successor society will be a company under the Companies Act. Members of that company will therefore have the rights of any members of such a company, plus any rights granted by the articles of association that will be presented to them in the transfer period.

Mr. Chris Smith: Will the Minister confirm that after conversion a building society would be answerable to its shareholders and only to its shareholders? That would not necessarily include, as membership does at the moment, all borrowers and investors.

Mr. Lilley: That is the very essence of conversion. Any borrower or investor would be able to buy shares and become a voting member, or in the process of conversion he might acquire or be given such shares. That is a factor that members will have to take into account when they decide whether it is right for them to convert. If they like the total package, they will support it. If they do not like it, they will not support it. That is up to them, and we believe that it should be left up to them.

This is not a party political matter. It is for the members of each society to reach a decision in the context of a fair set of rules and regulations that ensure that all material considerations are made clear to them during the discussions. It would be regrettable if it were to become a party political matter. I am glad that the hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury has not sought to politicise it to any great degree. By promising not to oppose the regulations the hon. Gentleman has recognised that they pave the way for fair consideration of decisions that should be made by members of each society, not by hon. Members.

Mr. Butterfill: Does my hon. Friend agree that in order to protect the interests of society members they will be given priority rights in the event of a liquidation after conversion?

Mr. Lilley: That is correct. That is laid down in the Act, and the regulations specify how liquidation rights are to be calculated and secured. Society members will retain those rights after conversion. I hope that the House will not annul the regulations.

9.37 pm

Mr. Malcolm Bruce (Gordon): I listened with care and interest to the Minister's speech. His latter remarks will be welcomed by all hon. Members, but a few points need to be elaborated.

The Economic Secretary said that mortgage contracts will be unaffected by transfer. I accept that that is correct, but I am sure that he agrees that the future conduct and performance of a building society, once it has become a corporate entity, could affect the rate of interest that the building society, or the incorporated bank as it would then be, might subsequently charge. When voting, society members should take that fact into account.

The Economic Secretary also said that managements have been entrusted with the duty of leading building societies and that it should be accepted that managements have leadership qualities. Again that is not in dispute, but to run a building society as a mutual body is quite different from running it as a bank. A few commentators have said that that could make the switch very difficult. The management of a building society, which is very competent

[Mr. Malcolm Bruce]

at running a mutual society, could unwittingly lead its members into taking commercial risks for the commercial consequences of which they are not prepared because they lack the necessary expertise. Managers of building societies are not bankers, yet the transfer will convert them into bankers without necessarily providing them with the necessary wisdom and experience to be bankers. That fact must also be borne in mind by all society members when voting for or against conversion.

I do not wish to enter into the debate about whether a particular society—for example, the Abbey National—will serve its existing members and its own future interests better by conversion. I would be very disappointed if that was the course of action that all building societies might wish to follow like gadarene swine. I hope that the Economic Secretary will accept the need for diversity of choice. Putting it bluntly, if we simply converted all building societies into joint stock banks, we would reduce rather than increase the diversity of choice. I hope that as the regulations progress that will be borne in mind.

I anticipate that the Government may take the view that the market and the customers' wishes will automatically determine that. But experience shows that that is not necessarily so. There are fashions in market trends and economic developments change. It would be unfortunate, particularly as building societies vary enormously in size, capability, experience and geographical base—I hope it would not happen—if building societies sought to abandon their commitment to a particular locality. There is merit in a building society having a regional base which it knows and understands, and that is not necessarily a disadvantage.

To some extent, if building societies are likely to convert to a banking mechanism—and I understand the pressures on them to do that—it would be nice to think that some of them might convert to local banks with a particular local knowledge and regional expertise. That would ensure that the changes and the dynamism that is operating within the market led to increased choice, diversity and variety. I hope that the Government and their supporters genuinely wish that to happen but accept that simply saying that the members should be allowed to make their own decisions will not necessarily produce the desired result.

There is no doubt that the current or previous operation of the Building Societies Act has been unduly restrictive and has prevented building societies from moving into related areas. In previous years, it has led to nonsense whereby people who thought that they were mutual members of a building society because they were savers found that they were precluded from acquiring a mortgage or changing their mortgage because of the restrictions that were imposed on building societies. I have been in that situation, and I quite understand that members of building societies do not regard that as an impressive example of the flexibility and function of a building society.

I do not wish to oppose the regulations, and I accept the qualifications that the Economic Secretary has made. I simply wish to make the marker that, as we move into increasing diversity and flexibility, with which building societies are allowed to respond to the developments within banking, I hope that we do not lose sight of the fact that there is benefit in mutuality and in having local and regional knowledge. The best result of the regulations will be if some opt to take advantage of the regulations and move in different directions so that we continue to have a diversified system of mortgages and banking which is national and regional and offers a genuine choice rather than a bland, across-the-board picture which makes choosing between one society or bank and another a lottery that makes no difference.

Real choice matters. The regulations do not preclude choice; they extend choice. But we should be aware of the dangers of opening up too quickly and leading too many building societies down a similar path and so restricting diversity.

9.43 pm

Mr. Chris Smith: I should like to comment briefly on two points which have arisen during the debate, and first to take up the argument made by the hon. Member for Bournemouth, West (Mr. Butterfill). In an uncharacteristic display of incompetence, he departed from the Minister's injunction that this was not a party political matter and sought to characterise it as a party political matter.

The hon. Gentleman based his entire argument—that the regulations provide more than adequate safeguards—on a rather cack-handed attempt to besmirch one organisation, for which I hold no brief, that has engaged in a campaign against the flotation of Abbey National. His was an inaccurate and rather unfair attempt to rest an argument on flimsy foundations.

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): The hon. Gentleman may not be aware that my family founded the Abbey National building society. I believe that the object of the regulations would be much approved by its founders, as they were criticised in the 1870s because they were supposed to be taking away from smaller societies the opportunity to look after their investors. Does the hon. Gentleman agree that, as we approach 1992, it is important that building societies should compete and that they should be able to provide the kind of service which is relevant to the late 19th and 20th centuries?

Mr. Smith: I should have known that an hon. Member with the hon. Gentleman's name was part of a family which founded a major financial institution. The hon. Gentleman is correct. We trawled over this subject at considerable length a few weeks ago when we considered a statutory instrument. I said clearly that there is a need for building societies to compete in the modern financial world and that that instrument gave building societies the opportunity and flexibility that they require to do that. There is no need to convert to achieve what the hon. Gentleman wants.

The Economic Secretary said that it would not be reasonable or sensible to place a duty of impartiality on the board of a building society when sending out literature before the final transfer document. It is Abbey National's stated intention to put out several pieces of literature before the final transfer document. We believe that it is sensible and reasonable to put a duty of impartiality on it. The Economic Secretary said that, if we did that, the board would be censored but its critics would not. We should remember, however, that the board sends out literature at the members' expense. It is members, through the society,

who fund such literature, whereas any opposing literature is paid for entirely out of the pockets of the members involved. That is a crucial difference.

Mr. Butterfill: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Smith: No. I am drawing to a conclusion.

I hope that the Economic Secretary's mind is not closed on this matter and that he will consider it during the summer recess. It is an important matter, and I hope that, although we shall allow the regulations to go through without a Division, we shall be able to consider closely any possible and necessary improvements to the procedures for conversion.

Question put and negatived.

Road Transport

9.49 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Peter Bottomley): I beg to move,

That this House takes note of European Community Document No. 6048/88 on social legislation relating to road transport.

In December 1985 the EC approved two regulations —3820/85 and 3821/85—prescribing the maximum permitted driving hours and minimum rest periods for drivers of goods and passenger vehicles, and providing for the use of tachographs for checking drivers' activities. The House debated the regulations in draft form in March 1984 and the related Transport Act 1968 regulations on 15 July 1986. Those concerted regulations, which apply to both domestic and international driving, came into effect on 29 September 1986.

The EC regulations were in many ways a "British kilometre post" or a "European milestone". Against the decision by the Council of Ministers in May 1985 to implement the single market by 1992, they were an attempt to provide harmonised rules on driving in the interests of fair competition, improved working conditions and road safety, while at the same time providing sufficient flexibility to meet the diverse needs of a modern transport industry. Those regulations were not everything that the United Kingdom Government would have wished. They represented the results of over two years' difficult negotiation with other member states in Europe. But as a package, they were acceptable to us.

The draft proposals that we are considering tonight, those contained in EC document 6048/88, have two strands. Both relate to the 1985 regulations. First, there is a proposed directive aimed at better enforcement of the regulations. Making sure that the agreed rules are complied with by means of more and standard checking procedures must be in everyone's interest. The Government fully support the aims underlying the directive on checking procedures. The second strand is the proposal for a new regulation amending the regulations. The Government are opposed to the proposed changes to the existing regulations.

The drivers' hours and tachograph regulations have three main objectives—to promote road safety by requiring drivers to have adequate rest and breaks and preventing excessive driving, to ensure that competition between hauliers and coach operators in this area is fair and on a common basis, and to give drivers reasonable conditions of work and leisure and prevent their exploitation.

To achieve those objectives within what the regulations provide for, efficient, effective checking on a standardised basis by all member states is necessary. The directive sets out to achieve that. It has been discussed in detail by officials in Brussels and was considered by the Council of Ministers in Luxembourg on 20 June. There is widespread support. Agreement on the details is close, but it cannot be approved until Parliament has pronounced on the requirements. The opinion of the European Parliament is also required. In explaining the draft directive to the House, I will endeavour to indicate where modifications to the Commission's proposals contained in document 6048/88 are contemplated by the Council.

Mr. Teddy Taylor (Southend, East): I was delighted to hear my hon. Friend the Minister say that nothing could happen until the House of Commons did something. Is this not one of the matters covered by article 100A whereby it can be considered by a majority vote? Or am I quite wrong in that?

Mr. Bottomley: I am not sure. If I can give my hon. Friend an answer in a moment, I will. I would prefer to explain why the——

Mr. Taylor: My hon. Friend does not know. That is outrageous.

Mr. Bottomley: My hon. Friend has asked me a question. Perhaps I might be allowed to respond in my own way to the question he has chosen to ask.

The first part of what is proposed is acceptable, subject to minor modifications. The second part is not only not acceptable to us, but we think will be unacceptable to all member states. Therefore, the point raised by my hon. Friend does not appear to be terribly relevant.

The main substance of the directive is contained in draft article 3. This specifies—article 3(1)—the annual level of checking to be carried out by member states—30 per cent. of vehicles in circulation and 30 per cent. of operators. Modifications to this have been suggested and the Council looked favourably on an alternative of checking 1 per cent. of working days carried out under regulations 3820 and 3821 in each country as represented by the daily tachograph charts. At least 15 per cent. of the checking of charts under the alternative regime would have to be carried out at the roadside. Neither the Commission's original requirement nor the alternative proposal would cause difficulties for the United Kindom. Our checking is done by the Department of Transport and Northern Ireland traffic examiners as well as by police officers. The Department of Transport's national enforcement plan sets out, among other things, the checking requirements for traffic examiners. They will meet the levels proposed in the directive. We are planning to check over 1 million daily tachograph charts a year.

Articles 3(2) to 3(6) specify that the checks should be carried out at the roadside and at the operators' premises, and give the items to be considered by investigating officers. Modifications considered by the Council would further amplify these requirements by giving better and more detailed guidance on what these checks should entail, which would be useful.

Article 3(7) requires the numbers and results of checks to be conveyed to the Commission annually. We consider that this requirement is already present in article 16 of EC regulation 3820/85.

Article 3(8) requires authorities to carry out checks at operators' premises at the request of another member state concerned. This would cause no difficulty for the United Kingdom. We consider such co-operation necessary to prevent those who abuse the rules escaping detection by crossing national borders.

More general requirements for simultaneous checking operations and the exchange of data between member states are set out in articles 4 and 5. Article 4 requires member states to carry out simultaneous checks on four specified days each year. While we support the underlying idea of highlighting the importance of checking and demonstrating member states' commitment to it, we feel that to pre-advertise the dates of the combined operations would be somewhat naive. I suspect that this is one of the points that my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) had in mind. The Council has considered an alternative whereby member states would carry out at least twice-yearly concerted operations with at least one other member state. This would be a better arrangement. I suspect that those who break the rules would think that it is a worse arrangement, which is one of the reasons why we support it.

Article 5 specifies the data that are to be exchanged between member states on breaches of the regulations. Article 17(3) of regulation 3820/85 and article 19(3) of regulation 3821/85 already require data exchange, and we consider the further proposed provisions to be unnecessary. The Council has considered an alternative which would simply specify that the bilateral data exchanges under the present regulations should take place every 12 months, while allowing other specific requests on demand. This is a better and more flexible solution.

Articles 1, 6 and 7 are purely definitional and procedural. Article 2 lays down 1 January 1989 as the date for implementing the directive. Again, this would cause no problems for the United Kingdom.

The Government's position on the proposed directive is one of support, subject only to the minor modifications I have outlined. Enforcement of the rules is crucial. I feel confident that the House will want to give its support to the objective of achieving better standardised checking procedures among all EC member states. The draft regulation in EC document 6048/88 would have the effect of amending the present regulations 3820 and 3821/85. The House will note that the intention of the proposal is to

"clarify certain definitions in order to avoid misinterpretation and abuse."

This is a laudable aim, but examination of the draft articles shows that either the real aim or the effect is to change radically the present regulations.

Agreement on regulations 3820 and 3821 came only after more than two years of hard and detailed discussions in Brussels. Both sides of industry were consulted during those discussions. In those negotiations we could not expect to have it all our own way, but there were positive results. Benefits for drivers were increased weekly rest, up from 40 to 45 hours, and decreased driving, down from 92 to 90 hours in a fortnight. Benefits for operators were increased operational flexibility, with the ability to increase daily driving from 9 to 10 hours twice a week, and to postpone part of daily and weekly rest subject to later compensation for the drivers. Both sides would have wanted more, but the new rules represented a reasonable, hard-won compromise arrived at between member states and, overall, the best deal we could negotiate for both sides of the road and passenger transport industries.

The regulations were implemented less than two years ago. Quite significant costs were involved in implementation. It meant retraining the whole of the work force in the freight and passenger industries as well as officers in the enforcement agencies. Those costs were borne by Government, operators, unions and police forces. They applied not just here but across the whole of the Community. It is too soon to contemplate radical changes, and that is what the small print of the draft regulations implies.

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg (Hampstead and Highgate): My hon. Friend listed all the organs that had to pay the cost of this. Has he not missed out the most important one —the consumer, to whom all the costs are, in the end, passed on?

Mr. Bottomley: I apologise to the House for dealing with the technical issues in the main. When I was taking the draft regulations through the House, as the hon. Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd) will acknowledge, I made it clear that the aim was not to increase costs to consumers or the end users of the transport industry but to provide flexibility, as we called it. The Transport and General Workers Union, and some who spoke in support of its views from the Opposition Benches, argued for a relaxation of drivers' hours regulations and the abolition of some of the duty hours requirements. During those debates, there was no suggestion of increased costs to those paying for road haulage. My argument was to allow flexibility so that drivers would not be faced with ludicrous situations. For example, a driver might run out of hours half an hour's drive away from the depot. He would have to ring up the depot manager, who would come out in a car. The driver would drive the car back and the manager would drive the truck back. Such situations are ludicrous, even before we move on to the provisions in the new regulations.

My hon. Friend has rightly made a point that the Government take seriously and, if there were a choice, we would want to ensure that we were taking cost compliance analysis fully into account. The House can be assured that this issue comes up neither under these regulations nor in the changes that came two years ago. No doubt the hon. Member for Stretford will correct me if I am wrong on that.

I was explaining why the second part of the draft directive is wrong. It comes too soon because the industry is just beginning to settle down under the new rules, because industry and Governments—not just this one—should not be asked to bear the additional cost that would be involved and because the changes proposed would bring no new benefits and would in fact bring disbenefits. To put it less diplomatically, it is just wrong and should not happen.

In opening up the regulations for revision, as is proposed in the draft regulation, it is not certain that the United Kingdom could retain some of those important points, hard won in negotiations last time round. The draft regulation has not been considered in detail by officials in Brussels or by the Council. It would seem that it commands no significant measure of support among member states. I hope that my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East will accept this point. The answer to his question, which I should have been able to answer immediately, is that the directive and regulations would be subject to majority voting by the Council, if necessary. I hope that my speech has made it plain that this is not necessary and that the unacceptable second half does not have support, while the acceptable first part does.

Many of the difficulties arise in the context of definitional points contained in article 1. This would change the present definition of the "week" from the fixed period between midnight Sunday to midnight of the following Sunday to any period of seven days, this period starting when the driver starts driving following a weekly rest period. It is difficult to see any benefit whatsoever in this change. It would be to revert to the position that existed before regulation 3820. The "fixed week" was introduced in the present regulations to counteract the abuses under the "rolling week" system. The proposal would simply reintroduce those abuses. If every driver has a different starting point for calculating weekly rest and compensation requirements, the difficulties of both comprehension for drivers and enforcement are enormous. That was the position which existed before September 1986. At a more practical level, the change would involve altering the software systems used for computer scanning of charts by enforcement agencies and commercial bureaux. I do not regard that as the most important reason for imposing this definitional change in the regulation to change the regulations.

Article 2 refers to the mandatory exemption from the social regulations of vehicles used for sewage, flood protection, water, gas and so on. It seeks to limit this exemption to vehicles used by public authorities or under contract to public authorities. The present regulations exempt all vehicles carrying out the specified transport operations. We fought hard to achieve that during the earlier negotiations. If private operators are competing with public authorities for the same work, they must compete on equal terms. That is fundamental to this Government's policy and the requirements of the single market. We would not find the proposed amendment acceptable.

Article 3—amending article 6 of the existing regulations —would limit driving to nine hours—10 hours twice a week—in any 24-hour period. The present regulations define these driving period limits as coming between daily rest periods. This amendment would prevent a driver who had driven for nine hours and then taken an 11-hour daily rest from driving again for another four hours. That seems to be an attempt not only to limit driving, but to limit total working duty time. The House will recall that that was raised during the discussions of regulation 3820 but found no support among member states. We would not wish to see duty limits reintroduced through the back door by this proposed regulation.

There is a great deal more at this level of detail inherent in the draft amending regulation. I would be willing to explain further if the House wishes. I have probably sufficiently demonstrated the point that if the laudable aim of the draft regulation were to clarify definitional points, the draft before the House is flawed. I would not claim that the regulations as we have them are perfect, but they represent a reasonable compromise set of rules capable of practical enforcement. If and when the draft regulations come forward for detailed discussion in Brussels, the United Kingdom Government would wish to make the points I have explained to the House.

10.6 pm

Mr. Tony Lloyd (Stretford): The hon. Member for Hampstead and Highgate (Sir G. Finsberg) asked about consumer interests, but the other interest that should be taken into account in our discussions is road safety.

We must establish a balance between the number of hours that drivers work and the costs to industry and the consumer, while ensuring that drivers are not forced to work overlong hours. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman would agree that that is in everyone's interests. In 1984, in

[Mr. Tony Lloyd]

a transport debate, the Minister of State, Department of Transport, now Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, said:

"There is no disagreement about the broad objectives of the regulations. Since the 1930s, Governments of all complexions have recognised that commercial pressures can lead transport operators and drivers to indulge in excessive driving that can endanger both themselves and other road users . . . one's own common sense is enough to show that tired drivers are dangerous."—[*Official Report*, 3 December 1984; Vol. 69, c. 132.]

I agree with the Minister that the regulations, in common with a lot of European legislation that comes before the House, are not helpful. It is a mystery to me why there is such mad pressure to introduce some sort of European standardisation when it would not be in the interests of the consumer or road safety.

The way in which this matter will be dealt with by the Council of Ministers is important. I hope that when the crunch comes the British Government—should they find themselves isolated—will be able to prevent the introduction of the regulations.

The directive is a different matter and it contains some things of merit. However, the Minister is right to draw attention to the nonsensical idea of having four days a year.——

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Eurodays.

Mr. Lloyd: Yes, Eurodays on which the forces of law, order and enlightenment will move to prevent abuse by the already extremely suspicious travelling commercial traffic. It is obvious that they will be just as prepared for those Eurodays as the Department of Transport. It is a ludicrous idea and why the Commission put it in the directive is a mystery.

It would be wrong not to acknowledge the sense of the Commission's suggestion that about 30 per cent. of vehicles should be checked every year. The Minister claimed that the Department would have no problems with that, but I am a little more sceptical. I know that the Department of Transport insists that it is on the way to being able to check such numbers, but I am not sure whether that is based on accurate statistics of how many vehicles are already checked. There are considerable difficulties with enforcement. The number of traffic inspectors is relatively small—perhaps fewer than 200 are in charge not only of enforcing tachograph compliance, but of the overloading of lorries and so on, all of which takes considerable time.

In June this year Department of Transport inspectors, in co-operation with the police, cracked down on foreign vehicles on the M1. It was found that about nine out of 10 of them were in breach of regulations of one sort or another—not all to do with tachographs. If we are serious about enforcement we shall need more traffic inspectors, and unless the Minister can tell the House that the money and political will are available for such enforcement, by providing more inspectors, it will not take place.

The aim of checking 30 per cent. of vehicles a year is laudable, but enforcement is bedevilled by various factors, including the growth of international traffic. With the approach of 1992 and of much traffic from the non-English speaking world, Britain's police will face considerable problems. I note in the directive the suggestion that police should be issued with a language chart which will allow them to converse at least at a basic level with non-English speaking drivers—or with those who choose to be non-English speaking when their vehicles are pulled up at the roadside. I am assured that the scheme operates successfully in Germany, where the police have comprehensive language charts that allow them to monitor and enforce their traffic regulations. That is not done here, so I urge the Minister to give serious consideration to the quality of the charts for his inspectors and the police who will be involved.

I also draw the House's attention to another point raised by the Minister—the connection between roadside checks and checks at premises. It is critical that both are done. Roadside checks are important, but if there is no follow-through at the place of work where the tachograph records are kept for a longer period there can and will be widespread abuse of the system.

It might be useful if I mentioned to the Minister an amendment to the directive that was proposed in the European Parliament by a Labour Member, who said that it would make sense to have a regulation that made it compulsory for all drivers to be issued with consecutively numbered record tachograph discs, so that when stopped drivers would have to show—this could easily be checked—their tachograph records. Otherwise, they could say that they had slipped in new ones five minutes before and did not have the other ones because they had just taken over their cabs. It is important that such physical checks take place.

The relevant trade unions, which have always taken a line that is undeniably related to the safety of their members and that would avoid their being pressurised by their employers, have told me that it would be valuable if the discs were signed by an authorised employee of the company concerned. The argument runs that an authorised signature would wonderfully concentrate the minds of those involved, and there would be no systematic attempt to abuse the tachograph system. Such abuse is unfortunately all too prevalent now.

I want to make a number of points on the existing situation. The Minister has drawn attention to the importance of recognising how impractical the proposed new regulations are, but it is equally important to recognise the problems of the present system. There is no particular merit in the European Commission's proposal. The Commission has not helped us, but we must recognise that there is the potential—some would suggest that it exists already—for large-scale abuse.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Is the hon. Gentleman suggesting that tachograph charts should be signed by the operator when they are issued to the driver or when they have been checked by the operator after being used by the driver?

Mr. Lloyd: Both. It would be helpful if the company took steps to guarantee that the discs issued to drivers were recorded and that they were signed back in at the end. That would establish a proper mechanism by which to check which discs went out.

There are abuses of the present regulations. Under the present system there is a global limit of 90 hours over two weeks and an allocation of up to 56 hours in any one week. It is difficult to avoid the possibility of a driver working 56 hours in two consecutive weeks. In the first week of a four-week cycle he could operate for only 34 hours a week, allowing him to operate for 56 hours in the second and

third weeks, to be followed by 34 hours in the fourth week. That is against the spirit and perhaps even the letter of the regulations. However, without enforcement, that is difficult to stop.

Article 3 provides for limited driving periods of 56 hours for one week or 90 hours for two weeks. Does that mean any period of two weeks, however defined, or two consecutive weeks? That may be a question of semantics, but it is not unimportant if a driver operates 56 hours on two consecutive weeks.

In the same vein, there is a real question about rest periods. The Minister said that he did not want to reintroduce the old system of duty hours through the back door. Nevertheless, there is a widespread practice of getting round the regulations whereby a driver uses his rest period for loading and unloading so that rather than being a rest period it is merely a period during which the tachograph is not operating.

It is important that the rest period should be a physical break, not simply an alternative form of work. Drivers can operate many hours a day while still complying strictly with the letter of the regulations. Fatigue is dangerous, as the then Minister for Public Transport said in 1984. That fatigue is dangerous whether it is caused by loading and unloading or by driving. I hope that the Minister will address that point.

It has also been suggested that there is fairly wide abuse of the tachograph system in terms of the weekly break entitlement. It is possible to ask a driver to pull over to the side of the road, but the driver's tachograph record over a long period is not always examined. The weekly break entitlement of 45 hours is spelt out in the regulations, but, because it is possible to take advantage of the exemptions and move to a 36-hour break, or even, in some circumstances, a 24-hour break, drivers can regularly operate with 36-hour or 24-hour breaks without compensating in the following weeks, and that is a widespread abuse.

There is some advantage in article 5 of the Commission's regulations because that makes it clear that any compensation has to take place in the following week, not simply over a prolonged period. That depends on the mechanisms for enforcement. I hope that the Minister will turn his attention to how that breach of the regulations could be avoided.

I should like to put a technical point. Under article 4 the break of 45 minutes in every four and a half hours driving period would have to be taken within that period. The present position is that the 45-minute break can be taken after the four and a half hour driving period. There is a difference of interpretation between the police and the Department of Transport. The police argue—they are supported by some of the trade unions—that for every four and a half hour driving period there should be a 45-minute break. The Department of Transport seems to argue that as long as the 45-minute break is taken after the initial four and a half hours, it is possible to continue the rest of the nine or 10 hour driving period without any extra break. To that extent there would be an advantage in the idea promoted by the Commission that the 45-minute break should be integrated into the four and a half hour period. It would avoid dispute between the Department of Transport and the police. On this issue I think that the Department of Transport is wrong.

This is a fairly technical debate, but it is important because we are talking about road safety. I have already made it clear that I do not see the relevance of the European Commission's proposals for new regulations. However, some aspects would be useful. The Minister should continue with his declared intention to ignore the Commission on the regulations. I note that tonight the Prime Minister was distancing herself significantly from the European Commission. I am sure that that will give heart to some Conservative Members. On that issue, if not on much else, I have some sympathy with the Prime Minister's position. The Minister should note the position of his leader and make it clear to the Commission that the regulations would be dangerous in terms of what we are trying to promote. However, I hope that he will accept that it would be sensible to introduce some aspects into the British legal system because they would enhance road safety in Britain.

10.23 pm

Mr. Teddy Taylor (Southend, East): I want to ask three specific questions. The Commission's proposals on driving hours are outrageous. The starting and finishing times for weekly and daily driving would become less suited to the irregular patterns of work within the road haulage and passenger transport industries as would the compensating rest period arrangement. I agree with what my hon. Friend the Minister said about the outrageous proposals.

How will the regulations be determined? I have become concerned—from what she said today it seems that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister is also concerned—about the attitude of Ministers in the Council to the issue of majority voting or unanimity. The Prime Minister said that she is concerned that some of the directives coming before the Council are unsuited to common sense and to the interests of the United Kingdom. When we discuss the directives I ask Ministers repeatedly whether we are dealing with an issue of majority voting or unanimity. The Minister, as always, has been extremely courteous and said that this was an issue for majority voting.

The biggest worry is that the Commission in its quest for an extension of its powers is forcing, under article 100A, issues that should never be matters for majority voting. I suspect that the proposals should probably be dealt with under article 75, which would, according to the paper, have been an issue for majority voting and that the proposals are simply an extension or clarification of the 1985 regulations on driving hours.

Whenever proposals come up before the Council, the Government must first ask whether there will be an unanimous or a majority vote. If the Government take the view that the decision should not be taken by a majority vote, they must challenge the decision at the first instance because, unless the challenge is issued immediately, it is impossible to alter the basis of the consideration, unless there is unanimity in the Council.

Even if the provisions will not be effective—I suspect that they may come under the treaty of Rome's regional article 75—I ask my hon. Friend the Minister and his colleagues to inquire about the basis of voting before discussions start. If they do not, they may find themselves with their trousers down, having something pushed through by majority vote. I appeal to the Minister to have a word with the Home Secretary on the issue of summer

[Mr. Teddy Taylor]

time which was found out, belatedly, to have been decided on the basis of majority voting. It is too late to change that, unless everyone else agrees.

Perhaps my hon. Friend the Minister will tell us what was the view about article 2 of those who were at the Council meeting. The most worrying things about the proceedings in the Commission are the extension of Socialism and the favours for public enterprises. The Minister will know that, in almost every aspect of the Commission's current policies, we see all the things that we thought a Thatcherite Government were against—extension of subsidy, control, centralisation and protectionism. The Minister must surely be aware that the Commission, under the present leadership, and the Council are forcing through measures that we in this country have fought against.

My hon. Friend the Minister will be aware that, for example, local authorities are now instructed that they must put services out to competitive tender to ensure a fair balance of decision-making, but, if he looks at article 2, he will see that there is a specific proposal that private contractors should not be treated in the same way as public authorities. I appeal to him to look at page 7 of the document where it states specifically that article 2 would amend article 4

"by excluding from its scope only those vehicles used by Public Authorities or under contract to Public Authorities in connection with the provision of the public services listed in paragraph 6."

It goes on to state that

"With the increasing 'privatisation' of public services, this ensures that private operators who provide such services are not exempt . . . unless they are under contract to Public Authorities."

I appeal to my hon. Friend the Minister to say what were the views of the various members of the Council on article 2, which is simply an extension of Socialism and undermines a Bill that the Government fought hard to get through this Parliament. The Minister must be well aware that under majority voting, although drivers' hours themselves may be rejected, it is possible for some compromise to be brought forward which might include something of that sort. I hope that the Minister is watching that, and that he can give us some kind of assurance.

I also appeal to my hon. Friend the Minister to tell us what he means by saying that we must ensure that enforcement is improved. He must know what the rules are and what is happening. He must know some of the standard stories that I have been passing on to him, for example, about Southend. He will know from his colleagues and from Ministers in the Foreign Office, who have been helping me, that although Community regulations made it an essential part of Community law that a bus could go from Ostend to Frankfurt, there were discussions four years ago between the Foreign Secretary and Herr Genscher, who was then the appropriate German Minister. The Minister will know that the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office took infraction proceedings at the Commission and that there were flights across the sea to German Departments, but that there was constant blockage against Community rules. The final blockage was when the authorities in Frankfurt claimed that they could not find a parking space for the bus.

My hon. Friend the Minister may also be aware from a question that I asked this week that a firm called Upsons in Southend runs splendid buses to Germany. The company has been astonished to find out that it is now being charged a levy of so much per metre, per passenger for taking a bus into Germany. If we are to have equal treatment and fairness, it is unlikely to be lawful for that to be done.

My hon. Friend the Minister will be aware that a rather different attitude is adopted to transport regulations from that adopted to other regulations. I hope that he will come to Kent to see some of the ports where we have the appropriate arrangements for testing vehicles that come from abroad. He should ask some of the operators and inspectors about the percentage of vehicles found not to conform with the current regulations.

I hope that the Minister will think about my three questions and give me some assurances. I ask him to clarify the status of the proposal to amend European Community document No. 3820/85. Is it dead? Will the Council not discuss it again? Is the Council planning a mini-directive to cover only certain parts of the document? It is rather a sad moment for parliamentary sovereignty, this being a day when my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has made some splendid remarks about Parliament's control of this sort of matter. We are discussing an issue which was discussed in the Community on 20 June. We want merely to know what the next step will be. Is the issue dead or is it still alive? Will we see a mini-directive, with article 2 being passed by a majority vote?

10.31 pm

Mr. David Marshall (Glasgow, Shettleston): As my hon. Friend the Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd) has made most of the main points, I wish to ask the Minister only four simple questions, which I hope he will answer.

First, will it be possible for a driver to work two weeks of 56 hours each back to back, and to continue to do so?

Mr. Peter Bottomley: No.

Mr. Marshall: Thank you. Secondly, can the Minister guarantee enforcement of the regulations? There are only about 200 Department of Transport inspectors. How will he manage to achieve his target of 1 million checks per annum? Is that figure sufficient? It will amount only to about a 30 per cent. check. Should not the Minister be setting his sights higher?

Mr. Tony Lloyd: My hon. Friend has asked an important question about 56-hour back-to-back weeks. Would he care to——

Mr. Bottomley: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Lloyd: With respect, I do not think that I am in a position to do so.

Would my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Shettleston (Mr. Marshall) care to press the Minister on the issue? The Minister maintains that the regulations will prevent the working of 56-hour back-to-back weeks, but are the enforcement provisions sufficient to guarantee that a driver who is confronted with two 56-hour weeks will not say, "Of course, I am going to work the two weeks." Enforcement is important.

Mr. Marshall: Some of us have doubts about the sufficiency of the enforcement provisions. The Minister may be able——

Mr. Bottomley: I am sorry that the hon. Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd) would not allow me to intervene. I am grateful to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Shettleston (Mr. Marshall) for allowing me to do so. The hon. Member for Shettleston has more courtesy than the hon. Member for Stretford.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Order. The hon. Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd) was intervening in the speech of the hon. Member for Glasgow, Shettleston (Mr. Marshall) when the Minister asked him to give way. That is why the hon. Member for Stretford did not give way.

Mr. Bottomley: I did not think that I would get away with that observation, Madam Deputy Speaker.

There cannot be more than 90 hours worked in any fortnight. That means that anyone who works two 56-hour weeks back to back is breaking the law. Sadly, we have begun to learn—if we did not know before—that passing laws does not make people obey the law. We know, however, that there cannot be total enforcement, for that would mean that nothing else would happen. We must create the right conditions and penalties so that individuals find that the chances of being caught, multiplied by the penalty, bring them into the paths of righteousness.

Mr. Marshall: I have my doubts. I think that there will still be a temptation to break the law.

Thirdly, I ask the Minister to estimate the increased costs that will be incurred by the road haulage and coach industries, and by Government, who will be responsible for implementing the regulations.

Fourthly, thousands of overloaded lorries are entering Britain. If the inspectors are spending all their time checking drivers' hours, how will they be able to check vehicles to ensure that they are not overloaded, especially those that are carrying hazardous and toxic substances or dangerous chemicals? What measures does the Minister propose to take to prevent overloaded lorries entering and leaving Britain in even greater numbers when inspectors are spending all their time checking drivers' hours?

[Mr. Marshall]

10.35 pm

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): My hon. Friend the Minister has told us that steps are being taken under article 100A. I have said on many occasions as a member of the Select Committee on European Legislation that the expenditure memorandum, copies of which we have been supplied with, states clearly that matters are proceeding under article 75. I have great difficulty in understanding how that switch is taking place. One can only conclude that it is more convenient to deal with it under article 100A, for the reason that it will be dealt with by majority voting. On 23 June, an article of mine appeared in *The Times* in which I clearly stated that I was very concerned about the way in which this matter was proceeding. There is increasing evidence of creeping federalism in Europe.

It may be that at this late hour this is a glazed-eye subject, and that it is just too boring for the British Parliament, whereas this issue is being suborned—and this is just one instance of it—by a system within which there is an increasing tendency for the Commission to take more and more power over this Parliament. We must face the fact that that is happening.

The Prime Minister has made her own position entirely clear. She is deeply concerned about that drift. M. Delors of the European Commission has made it clear that he wants European government. I am not—emphatically not—against the European Community. Nor am I against sensible conclusions, some of which may have to be discussed and negotiated within the Council of Ministers. What I am against is the apparent bypassing of the House in respect of important legislation. A matter of this kind would be dealt with in a Bill on a line-by-line basis. Instead, we are presented with a series of continuing documents, which come before the Select Committee on European Legislation, and which are then referred back to the House at a late hour, when they are not capable of being intelligently discussed. I note that my hon. Friends seated behind me are nodding in approval at what I say, for the simple reason that what I say is absolutely true. There is no question about it.

Even in our own governmental paragraph, under the heading "Policy Implications" there is almost total condemnation of the provisions we are now considering. However, my hon. Friend the Minister, understandably, has made the best of the dog's dinner with which he has been provided. He has said that there are two halves——

Mr. Peter Bottomley: My hon. Friend is absolutely right in saying that some of this is absolute nonsense. However, it is clear which bits are nonsense and which are not. The reason why I am delighted to move the motion is that we want support in achieving the sensible bits, and support in getting rid of the nonsense.

Mr. Cash: I am delighted to hear my hon. Friend say that. He is receiving great support from me in making the argument for continuing opposition to those parts which, from the point of view of the consumer, and from that of my hon. Friends the Members for Hampstead and Highgate (Sir G. Finsberg) and for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor), contain a considerable amount of nonsense. It is nonsense of a kind that would do credit to Edward Lear.

As I recently stated in a memorandum I wrote on this very subject, I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will be able to return to Brussels in the knowledge that the United Kingdom Parliament profoundly disagrees with the nonsensical parts of the provisions.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: I hope that I am not beating the hon. Gentleman to his punch, but he makes an important point. It is not good enough to acknowledge that some parts of the provisions are nonsensical and to seek agreement at Council of Ministers level or wherever. It is important that Parliament should recognise that, almost by definition, much of this legislation—whether it concerns traffic regulations or any other matter—is totally irrelevant. The hon. Gentleman addressed a point of principle about which areas are sovereign.

Perhaps the Minister will address another question. Given that the Prime Minister has placed on record the fact that she is extremely suspicious of this creeping federalism, to use the hon. Gentleman's own phrase, why does she not do something serious about it, because she is head of the Government?

Mr. Cash: The plain fact is that we have passed the Single European Act, and within the context of that Act are provisions that are subject to majority voting.

According to the explanatory memorandum, these measures are being taken under article 75. In his introduction, however, the Minister said that they were being taken under article 100A. The Select Committee on European Legislation—I was present at both sessions—recently cross-examined the Treasury solicitor on the use and misuse of article 100A. The Minister may or may not know—I am telling him because it is something with which the Committee is familiar—of the increasing tendency for the Commission to say, "We want the Common Market to operate." We in the United Kingdom Parliament also want the Single European Act to work effectively, but if there is a tendency for article 100A to be misused, we are forced to abide by majority decisions that may be invoked in a manner that is—to use the technical expression—ultra vires.

How can we deal with that? Not by saying, "Oh, well, that is just too bad; it is ultra vires." We must go off to the European Court for the matter to be determined on judicial review, in the context of the powers of the Court of Justice and article 177 of the treaty of Rome. We are in a new ball game. It is a question not of whether the House wants something done, but of viewing the matter through the telescope of the treaty of Rome and working out whether we are in a position to defend ourselves after the event.

If the Minister has grave doubts about whether the policy implications of his document dated 13 June suggest that the nonsensical parts should be dealt with effectively, he has no option but to take appropriate action in the Court of Justice. That appears to be the only means by which we can retrieve the situation at this stage. It is not good enough for us to wring our hands in the House and to say that we do not like this, that or the other.

Will the Minister bear in mind that a great deal of time would be saved, over and over again, if the United Kingdom Parliament were brought into consideration of these questions earlier rather than at this late hour? I notice my hon. Friend the Minister looking at his watch, and I do not blame him. We would then be in a position

to influence such consideration. Matters of this kind that would otherwise be dealt with by a billion Parliaments on a line-by-line basis should not be dealt with in such a truncated fashion.

If we are to do what the Prime Minister wants us to do, for heaven's sake let us consider the legislation earlier and in a proper way. By improving the scrutiny process of the European Legislation Committee and other Select Committees, we may at last be able to retrieve some of the power that has moved from this House.

10.43 pm

Mr. Roger King (Birmingham, Northfield): I heartily endorse what my hon. Friend the Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash) has said. I was gratified to hear my hon. Friend the Minister comment on some aspects of the proposed change in the legislation, especially those relating to article 1.

Let me first declare an interest, as I want to mention a specific example of how badly article 1 will affect the operator concerned if it becomes law. I am a non-executive director of National Express Ltd., which is one of the success stories of the Government's deregulation policy in that it is now a privatised business and performs a vital and valuable function for the community.

A few facts and figures will give the House some idea of the extent to which this operator—the biggest national operator—has grown during the last few years. It carries 15 million passengers a year and its vehicles travel 5 million miles a week. There are 1,500 services and 900 coaches. It is an extensive operation. That does not include the Scottish City Link partner, which has about 150 coaches. It is a much smaller operation but it is extremely important. It is a unique European organisation. Its services are interlinked. They convey passengers from Penzance to John o'Groats and right across the country. They go to parts of the country that British Rail cannot reach and they are provided at a price with which the user is well satisfied.

The cost to the company and to other coach operators of having to accept article 1 and a return to the rolling seven-day week would be substantial. As the services are interlinked, to have drivers and those who run the coaches starting their weeks at different times and on different days would make it very difficult for the company to get the drivers on the right services at the right time.

When the European Commission looked at this aspect I do not think that it was aware of the extent of this type of operation, thanks to our policy of deregulation and free enterprise. There is no equivalent operation on mainland Europe. More power to my hon. Friend's elbow in combating the effects of article 1. It will only lead to passengers having to pay considerably more if article 1, the rolling seven-day week, has to be implemented.

Mr. Cash: Can my hon. Friend say how the Council of Ministers would be able to deal with his point?

Mr. King: I regret that I cannot answer my hon. Friend's question. I am presenting a factual case that I hope my hon. Friend the Minister will take on board and use in evidence to the European Commission. I hope he will say that there are exceptions to what is happening elsewhere in Europe and that our Government's deregulation policy will almost certainly be extended to Europe in 1992 when European operators develop similar systems.

The rules are designed to ensure safety. Despite all the miles covered and the number of passengers carried, I am happy to be able to tell the House that according to the statistics with which the company has supplied me nobody has been injured or killed in the last two years. Many people believe that coaches are unsafe and that they are more prone to accidents than other forms of travel, but the facts do not support that belief. Coaches provide a particularly safe form of travel. I hope the company's record of nobody having been injured or killed in the last two years will continue indefinitely. The safety of passengers must come first. The present rules and regulations came into effect two years ago. They have probably played their part in ensuring a high standard of safety.

It seems to me that there is often wide discrepancy between how each country interprets the spirit of the rules that are laid down. An olympic contestant has been banned from competing for life because he took steroids, yet some other European countries might not have inflicted such a high price. Russian children are probably fed steroids for breakfast. The requirements are laid down generally and we are all supposed to obey them, but some member states—and ours in particular—are a little more disciplined than other countries in enforcing them. Can we be sure that Spain will adopt the same determination to check vehicles, to look at tachographs and to implement safety requirements? The existing European laws say that it should, but there is some argument as to how conscientious some of our European partners are in containing drivers' hours, vehicle weights and so on.

Mr. Cash: Does my hon. Friend accept that it is not simply a question whether the member states can look into these matters; that it involves their manpower, whether they can afford to do that, and whether the European Commission can provide the level playing field that is supposed to result from the proposals? Fair competition is not possible without an enormous amount of extra bureaucracy and expense for the member states and the consumers, unless there are sufficient people to make sure that the laws are being exercised in a manner which is fair to all.

Mr. King: I agree with my hon. Friend. I am not suggesting that there should not be European laws. We want to get those laws absolutely right. Of course their implementation will vary from state to state, depending on financial ability and the determination to police those laws, but that does not remove the necessity of having laws that are sensible and are worth implementing. We require uniformity across Europe for the standards whereby we produce, trade and provide services, but that may take some time.

The proposals that we are considering do not go very far to establish a broad consensus as to how we should regulate drivers' hours. As I have illustrated, in the United Kingdom there are circumstances which make the implementation of the rolling seven-day week which the European Commission would like, very difficult and wholly unneccessary.

10.53 pm

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I remind those who read *Hansard* that our debate has shown that the House of Commons, on both sides and in many ways, takes seriously its debates on European draft directives. A variety of points have been made. We have heard the major constitutional points, which may be seen to follow from the Single European Act. Other issues have been brought forward concerning precisely when a three-quarter hour break may come in a four and a half hour driving period. We have heard examples from the Opposition spokesman, the hon. Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd), from the Chairman of the Select Committee and from my hon. Friends who have spoken for the general interests of drivers and for the coach industry. I also understand that our debates are of concern to people in other parts of the country. I had to decide whether to wear my Transport and General Workers Union tie or my United Road Transport Union tie today. I am not a member of the URTU. I was sent a tie because it was rather jealous that I was always wearing the TGWU one.

I look forward to Friday when, at the suggestion of a member of the national executive of the TGWU road haulage section, I shall go and see it at work in west London. I suspect that I shall not hear too many complaints about the regulations that were taken through the House two years ago. There may be some, but in general we have managed to combine safety with flexibility.

The hon. Member for Stretford rightly reminded us that this is, in effect, a continuation of yesterday's debate on transport safety. My hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King) reminded us how safe coach travel is. We intend to make it safer still by, for example, having speed limiters which will ensure that the reduction in speeding by coaches continues. There is less speeding in the road haulage industry. That is not true for light vans, but there is an improvement in major freight distribution.

The professionalism of drivers must be praised again and again. Not everyone reaches the highest standard, but we want to get the average standard up, the bad people out and the good to be able to earn their reward rather than for them to be cheated by the cowboys who break the hours regulations and the weight limitations.

I shall not go into enormous detail about our enforcement plans, but even without allowing for the efforts of the police, the Department of Transport's own plans would meet the acceptable part of the draft directive's targets on checking tachographs. We take all the actions mentioned anyway.

My hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) mentioned buses. I understand that the service from Southend to Frankfurt has now been approved. I shall not even dare read out Germany's explanation for the levy because I am not certain that it is acceptable to me, let alone to my hon. Friend.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: What does the Minister think of it?

Mr. Bottomley: I have not had responsibility for buses for very long and I suspect that my hon. Friend the Minister of State may want to take a view of his own. The change in the ministerial team took place only about 24 hours ago, so my hon. Friend ought to allow us slightly longer to have some effect.

The House should not be too frightened of getting involved in discussion and negotiation in Europe. When I was at another Ministry, an anonymous Minister from another Community country asked me to explain why Britain is not so keen on the Vredeling draft fifth directive. It was after dinner and I was tired, and I said that half the people in Britain who oppose it have not read it and the other half who oppose it have read it. I thought that that was quite an entertaining answer, but he nodded wisely and said, "Nobody has ever explained it to me that clearly before."

If necessary, I shall continue to explain clearly in Europe, and to others who are interested, why some of the definitional changes that are proposed are crazy. I shall also explain why we should not put the private sector at a disadvantage when it provides services which were provided in Britain by a state authority, and still are in some other countries.

I should like to refer to the first joke in the April edition of *Reader's Digest*. Mr. Gorbachev is supposed to be driving to Moscow airport to meet the Prime Minister, and his driver refuses to break the speed limit, so they change places. They are stopped by the police but are let off because the junior police officer who stops them tells the senior officer that there is a very important person in the car. "Who was it?" asks the senior officer. "I do not know," says the junior one. "How do you know they are very important?" asks the senior one. "Well, the person in the car had Comrade Gorbachev as his driver."

I argue that the House provides the very important person for the country. When people make a half-baked proposal which they think will improve safety or flexibility, but which will not, they should see how Russia is learning the British lesson. It is that deregulation, competition and privatisation, while maintaining necessary safety standards, are all-important. If we had not had competition in the coach industry, as a result of which National Express is doing quite well and firms in Southend are running services to Germany, consumers would not be in such a good position. They would not be in that position if we did not have that small extra flexibility combined with protection for the driver in the drivers' hours regulations.

I doubt whether we would have obtained that flexibility without the European Community taking an interest. We would have found it more difficult to make changes domestically. We owe something to Europe, and many of us are willing to move forward with the single European market and we will be willing to argue our case. We will not succeed all the time, as I said two years ago when we discussed other draft regulations.

If the House will forgive me, I will not become involved in too many of the arithmetic questions raised by the hon. Member for Stretford. I pay tribute to the way in which the hon. Gentleman persistently does his homework and brings forward interesting points.

We should understand that the key point made by the hon. Member for Stretford related to the 56 hours back-to-back. That would be illegal. The sensible proposals included in the motion and my speech related to how it will be possible to achieve higher standards of enforcement in other European partner countries. That is what the good bit achieves.

My hon. Friend the Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash) reminded the House that we should be very careful about simply accepting declarations of article 100A and should

be prepared to use the European Court. I do not think that I am fully qualified to answer my hon. Friend's points, but I will ensure that they are passed on to those who wish to know that there is very strong support in the House for ensuring that, where possible, the European harmonisation is achieved to maintain minimum standards and to recognise equivalent standards elsewhere rather than simply to go for the common denominator which may be most convenient for the person who knows very little of what he is talking about.

One example is driver licensing. It is worth reminding the House, the people of this country and the rest of the European Community that this is the only country—with the possible exception of Ireland—which has a thriving minibus industry, not just in their manufacture, but in use by community groups, student organisations and people going to parties who hire them when one person drives and the others drink. No other country has that provision because their licensing requirements do not allow people to drive a minibus or vans weighing between 3·5 and 7 tonnes.

I hope to convince the rest of Europe not that Britain must eliminate that provision and service for the handicapped, poor, unprivileged and the elderly, but that the rest of Europe should consider what is happening in this country. I hope that they will discover that there is no road safety case for this ludicrous harmonisation although we are slightly bound by that in the Vienna convention. I hope that we can extend the provision to the other 200 million or more people in Europe so that they can enjoy what we have enjoyed here, so long as the safety case is made.

Mr. Cash: Which member states are in favour of the nonsensical provisions? Given that there is majority voting and presumably the member states in favour of the nonsensical provisions are against my hon. Friend the Minister, how can we carry the day? What can we do about that when we make protestations under the provisions of the explanatory memorandum policy, the implication of which could not be more emphatically condemnatory of the provisions? What on earth are we going to do about it?

Mr. Bottomley: I was not at the Council of Ministers meeting. However, I understand that no country supported the redefinition point. If one did, I suspect that the point would have made further progress. It is worth noting that the implementation date is supposed to be September this year. If others had supported it, that support would have been declared and I could have given the names off the cuff. I do not think any one else supports it.

A child who experiences darkness for the first time thinks that it will never become light again, but it becomes light in seven hours; the cycle is repeated. There may be discussions, the cycle will be repeated and we will end up with the nonsense being jettisoned. The good things will be brought in and the level of enforcement will rise for the rest of the Community to the levels enjoyed in this country.

I hope that, partly as a result of this debate, there will be an opportunity for the private sector to come in and for competitive tendering—this is one of the points made by my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East—to come about. We want improved enforcement and opportunities for the private sector. However, the basis of the consideration is an issue to which the House will want to return rather than have me go on too long about it now.

This has been one of the better debates which should inform people in the Community and the Commission. I hope that the European Paliament will come to the same view as the House—that we want to do the good things, not the bad ones.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: The Minister has not answered my question about article 2, but perhaps he will say under which article the directive is proposed. Is it article 75 or article 100A? If it is article 75, will he ask his clever advisers —some of us are worried about the extent to which they are keeping up to date with European affairs—why the explanatory memorandum says that the voting procedure and a qualified majority apply, because article 75 of the treaty of Rome says:

"For the purpose of implementing Article 74 . . .the Council shall, acting unanimously until . . . the second stage, . . . lay down, on a proposal from the Commission".

It clearly says that under article 75 there is not a majority vote but unanimity until the end of second stage.

Will the Minister say under which article the directive is proposed and why he mentioned qualified majority voting when article 75 of the treaty is abundantly clear? Is it not time that he arranged for his clever people to go on those splendid courses on Community law? These matters are terribly important, because every one of us will be affected by what the Community does.

Mr. Bottomley: I hope that those who read the debate will realise that the House is united about enforcement, which my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East supported, is unanimous in wishing to get rid of the nonsense in the draft directive and will not be too put off by the dissection of article 75 and the issues on majority voting that my hon. Friend raised. I do not want us to appear reluctant to work with others in the European Community because to achieve enforcement we need to do so. The best thing that I can do about the precise point that my hon. Friend raises is write to him and have a copy put in the Library. If that is unacceptable to my hon. Friend, he can now say why.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: We are having a vital debate about future transport policy. I am merely asking under which article the directive is being proposed. This is one of the few opportunities that we shall have to discuss a Common Market proposal that will affect every person in the land. If we do not know under what article the scheme is being proposed, we do not know on what basis the majority voting will be conducted or on what basis the Minister will address the Council. You, Madam Deputy Speaker, are one of the fairest-minded people that I have known in the Chair, but we must be given an answer before the debate concludes.

Mr. Bottomley: The simple answer is article 75. I do not want to go into detail about the more complicated answer, because I suspect that my hon. Friend knows more about it than I do. I encourage my hon. Friend to listen to me for one moment because it might be helpful to him and the House. We want to lift the parliamentary reserve on the good things, such as enforcement in other countries. We believe that not one other Community country supports the proposal to amend the regulations. We should send a clear message from the House that we are all united about

[Mr. Bottomley]

that, rather than have our lawyers and those of the Community spend time on a point that my hon. Friend makes inside and outside the House effectively and frequently.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: Why does the explanatory memorandum say one thing but the treaty of Rome something different?

Mr. Bottomley: I thought that it was the right answer. If it transpires that I was wrong, I shall have no difficulty in saying that I was wrong. If it transpires that I was right, I shall write to my hon. Friend and say why I was right.

Mr. David Marshall: Earlier, I asked the Minister to give some idea of the costs involved, but it appears that he will not answer that question. I draw his attention to his Department's memorandum to the Select Committee on European Legislation. It says:

"changes envisaged would impose further expense and new burdens on the road haulage and coach industries"

and

"would involve significant cost to central Government."

The Minister must have some idea what the additional costs will be. Will he give them to the House?

Mr. Bottomley: I believe that the additional costs of the first part of the enforcement will not be significant because our existing enforcement plan covers what the draft directive would require. That is why we would be prepared to accept that part, subject to this debate and the parliamentary reserve that would have to be put on in the Council of Ministers. We have made it plain that we regard the regulation to amend the regulations as unacceptable, and we have given our view that we think that other member states regard it as unacceptable as well. We have said that if members states came together and said that they wanted to accept the regulation to amend the regulations, there would be significant costs. My hon. Friend the Member for Hampstead and Highgate (Sir G. Finsburg) made that point first, and it was then made by my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East. As we have the implicit support of the Chairman of the Select Committee on Transport, people in Europe had better watch out, We are not having it.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House takes note of European Community Document No. 6048/88 on social legislation relating to road transport.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101(5) (Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.).

PESTICIDES

That the draft Pesticides (Maximum Residue Levels in Food) Regulations 1988, which were laid before this House on 12th July 1988, be approved.—*[Mr. Alan Howarth.]*

Question agreed to.

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY DOCUMENTS

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 102 (Standing Committees on European Community documents).

CHROMIUM IN WATER

That this House takes note of European Community Documents Nos. 4236/86, and the Supplementary Explanatory Memorandum submitted by the Department of the Environment on 11th July 1986 and 4498/88 on water quality standards for chromium; and supports the Government's intention to seek to ensure that any such standards are based on clear scientific principles consistent with the proper protection of the aquatic environment.

ELECTROMAGNETIC COMPATIBILITY

That this House takes note of European Community Document No. 9715/87 and the Supplementary Explanatory Memorandum submitted by the Department of Trade and Industry on 30th June 1988 on electromagnetic compatibility; and supports the Government in seeking adoption of the measure and in seeking to ensure that any Commission action in this field takes account of United Kingdom interests.

ANTI-DUMPING

That this House takes note of European Community Documents Nos. 5017/87 on protection against dumped or subsidised imports and 6358/87 and 5151/88 on anti-dumping and anti-subsidy activities in 1985 and 1986; and supports the Government's aims that anti-dumping measures should not be circumvented by assembly operations whilst ensuring that genuine inward investment is not discouraged and that United Kingdom interests should continue to be taken fully into account in the Commission's anti-dumping actions.—*[Mr. Alan Howarth.]*

Question agreed to.

PETITION

Opencast Mining (Marley Hill)

11.11 pm

Mr. John McWilliam (Blaydon): Rather than delay the hon. Member for Hampstead and Highgate (Sir G. Finsberg), who has a most important Adjournment debate this evening, my hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) and I have decided that I shall present this petition, although it is signed by 684 of my constituents and by 349 of his. The petition reads as follows:

The Humble Petition of residents of the Metropolitan Borough of Gateshead.

Sheweth,

That the proposal to opencast mine coal in the area to the south of Marley Hill and remove the coal by road would result in the net destruction of jobs, cause blight to the countryside and congest the already inadequate roads.

Wherefore your Petitioners pray that your Honourable House encourage the Secretary of State for the Environment to resist this proposal.

And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray &c.

To lie upon the Table.

Camden (Right-to-buy Legislation)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Alan Howarth.]*

11.12 pm

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg (Hampstead and Highgate): This is only the second Adjournment debate that I have had in 18 years, which is a signal of how very angry I am at the way in which the London borough of Camden has been operating the right-to-buy scheme, and my extreme unhappiness about the way in which the Department of the Environment has been trying to permit my constituents to operate within the law.

I welcome my hon. Friend the Minister to his first debate on this subject. I hope that he will spare the House and me details of how the right to buy operates and concentrate on telling me why the Department has been so unwilling to help my constituents, and to implement our Act of Parliament. With my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Tunbridge Wells (Sir P. Mayhew), I had a hand in drafting the legislation, and we included measures to be used against recalcitrant authorities. I am a little puzzled to know why my successors have been unwilling to follow our example. For example, Norwich council would not operate the right to buy. It took us to court and lost, and we did not need to take over its functions.

The London borough of Camden has, from the beginning, expressed its outright opposition to the right to buy. In May 1987, it made this very clear by removing official right-to-buy leaflets from the shelves in all its libraries. My hon. Friend the then Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction warned that he would send a task force of Government commissioners to sell council houses unless the hard Left toed the line. That was in May 1987 and after that Camden turned to dumb insolence and pretended to let the scheme operate. For example, one member of staff was doing all the work. It refused to sent out right-to-buy forms to tenants who asked for them and told those tenants that they had to call for them. I have already said that those forms were not available in the libraries. I circumvented that by obtaining a stock of them, which were available at my advice bureau. However, it was not my job to do that; that is what the council should have done.

The council also used other ways to put off its tenants from buying. It inflated service charges, but, fortunately, the Government have changed that part of the law. My hon. Friend the Member for Hendon, South (Mr. Marshall)—I do not blame him for his absence at this late hour—has some Camden properties in his constituency. He has been most active on behalf of those Camden tenants and he managed to make Camden offer an even more extraordinary reason for the delay than usual. It told him that it cannot define the correct boundaries of a particular property. I am sad to say that, in correspondence, the Department was apparently willing to accept that that was possible and that it was an acceptable reason.

Whenever tenants inquire about valuations or anything else they are told of massive delays. I have been receiving monthly performance, or lack of performance, figures, and at the end of June there were 1,884 overdue section 125 notices. I do not believe that the Department should ever have permitted that.

When tenants have bought their properties, the council has got back at them. It charges those people a higher rent than council tenants for the use of a garage. In some cases there is a £6 differential in such rents. I appreciate that, under present legislation, the Government can do nothing about that. Such practices, however, put off tenants from buying.

Alas, when I have drawn such cases to the attention of the Department, it has been rather slack about taking action. First, it summoned the leader and chief executive of Camden and wrote to me to say that it had met representatives of that borough on 14 May. Camden promised to put positive proposals before the Department. By August, Camden had not even recruited the staff, but it offered "news" in September. After further pressure from the Department, it was forced to employ 19 extra staff, but it took as long as was decently possible before appointing them—they were not all in post by November. My hon. Friend should note that, because of the Department's attitude, Camden got an extra six months' grace before complying with the legislation.

I asked the Department whether it would make Camden put conveyancing and valuations out to the private sector, but the answer was, alas, no. Even now, when I draw attention to individual cases, the Department's attitude is less than urgent. I informed the Department about a complaint that I had received from a constituent in Lissenden gardens. In March 1988 the London regional housing division wrote to Camden about that and said:

> "Bearing in mind that your authority is under a statutory obligation to issue an offer notice within 8 weeks of the admittance of the right to buy (or 12 weeks in the case of a leasehold sale) I am to say that Ministers are concerned at the delay that is occurring in this case. In the circumstances, I would be pleased if you could let me have your detailed comments on this matter, together with your best estimate of a date by which you now expect to despatch an offer notice. I should be grateful for an early reply to this letter."

When someone is in statutory breach, one should ask for a reply within seven working days and not

"for an early reply to this letter."

It took the Minister six weeks to fix another meeting with the leader of Camden council. Camden is laughing behind my hon. Friend's back and behind the back of the Government. Its message to me is, "Your Government are doing nothing," but I know that the Government will catch up with it. I hope that my hon. Friend will be able to tell me that nemesis has caught up with it. My hon. Friend does not have to face tenants week after week in his advice bureau. Five or six come to each of my surgeries complaining that they have to pay £40, £50 or £60 a week in rent when that money should be set off against their mortgages.

All the letters tell me that the purchase price is fixed at the date of application. That is marvellous, but many of my constituents have paid out hundreds of pounds in rent that they would not have had to pay if the Department had been willing to act more swiftly. As tenants grow one or two years older and their cases become one or two years out of date, mortgages become less easy to deal with. Now, after a certain amount of pressure from me, the Government say that they will introduce an amendment in another place to the effect that if, after a certain period, the council is in default, the rent will be set towards the purchase price. The Government are not even prepared to backdate that to Second Reading. They are producing a

[Sir Geoffrey Finsberg]

lawyer's paradise—almost a page-and-a-half schedule of notice and counter-notice which not even I, who helped draft the original legislation, am sure I understand.

I ask my hon. Friend, who is new to his responsibilities, to put this schedule in workmanlike English and to simplify it to state that, if a property has not been sold by a certain date, or if the council has not complied with the statutory requirement, rent will automatically be set against purchase price unless the council can prove that it should not be. It should not be up to my constituents to serve notices on Camden; they have done that. It is up to Camden to comply with the law.

A greater difficulty has now arisen, and I ask my hon. Friend to recognise it. The Finance (No. 2) Bill provides that tax relief on purchases not completed by 1 August will operate on the property, not the people involved—unless they are husband and wife. Two sisters in my constituency were purchasing a property from Camden. Because Camden would not comply by 1 August, they ran the real risk of losing half the tax benefit that they should have had. Fortunately, they had a good solicitor, who has prepared a document that will satisfy the Inland Revenue, but there must be hundreds of such cases—I note that the Law Society is concerned about them—of people who will lose because Camden and other local authorities are failing to comply with the law.

I ask my hon. Friend to take this up with the Treasury. The Finance (No. 2) Bill cannot be amended now, but the Revenue should be persuaded to produce an extra-statutory concession to cover people whose only fault is that they happen to be buying from the London borough of Camden. I bet there are people in a similar position in Islington, Lambeth and Hackney, all of whose councils are defying the law and getting away with it.

I am sorry for being more vehement than my hon. Friend might have liked, but I have reached the end of my tether. I ask my hon. Friend to tell Camden that it has four weeks—or two months—in which to get its act together. I said earlier that there are 1,800 section 125 notices. They are valuations, and my hon. Friend could force Camden to go outside to have them done. The conveyancing could be done by outside solicitors. If Camden does not dramatically reduce the number of cases pending in the time stipulated, my hon. Friend should use the powers provided in the right-to-buy Act to take over the council's functions. I remind my hon. Friend that it will cost the Department more to carry out those functions. Then perhaps an action for surcharge could be taken out against the council by the district auditor. That would double the threat.

Secondly, I ask my hon. Friend not to allow the new schedule and the notice and counter-notice to set rent against purchase price stay in their present gobbledegook form. I apologise again for keeping my hon. Friend the Minister here late tonight, but this is a matter of real anxiety to many of my constituents.

11.24 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. David Trippier): It is essential that I should at the outset pay tribute to the assiduous way in which my hon. Friend the Member for Hampstead and Highgate (Sir G. Finsberg) has represented his constituents seeking to exercise their right to buy. Many of them, I know, suffered enormous frustration as a result of the shortcomings in Camden's performance, which my hon. Friend has so ably described. They could have no more determined champion. He has corresponded with Ministers regularly on this matter, both on behalf of individual constituents and more generally.

My hon. Friend's complaint is that Camden's performance in carrying out its right-to-buy responsibilities has been woefully inadequate, and that can hardly be disputed. Camden is one of the 11 authorities whose right-to-buy performance is formally monitored by the Department so that we can keep a regular check on its performance. The evidence of the figures suggests that the council has not been dealing with applications at a rate anything like sufficient to ensure that its tenants applying to exercise their right to buy are able to do so reasonably speedily.

There are two stages in the right-to-buy process for which statutory time limits are laid down and, rather than indulge in explaining the right-to-buy legislation, which my hon. Friend urged me not to do, it is important that I should explain precisely what that procedure is, so that I can explain how bad Camden has been.

The first stage is the landlord's notice admitting or denying the tenant's right to buy. That must normally be served within four weeks of the tenant's claim to exercise his right to buy and is not complex for the landlord in the vast majority of cases. Yet in May 1987, when Camden had virtually ceased issuing notices, there were over 800 cases where it had not complied with the statutory time limit.

However, I am glad to say that the latest report shows that there were no cases in which the first notice had not been served by the due date. Therefore, it is clear that the intensive lobby that my hon. Friend has mounted, and the way in which Department of the Environment Ministers have responded, have had that effect already.

The other stage for which there is a statutory time limit is the service of an offer notice under section 125 of the Housing Act 1985, giving the landlord's opinion of the price at which the tenant is entitled to buy. That must also include a statement of known structural defects and, in the case of a leasehold sale, details of service charges payable including binding estimates for repair and improvement costs in the first five years of the lease. The landlord has eight weeks in the case of a freehold sale and 12 weeks in the case of a leasehold sale to prepare that, starting from the date at which the tenant's right to buy is admitted.

The number of cases in which Camden council has not met that deadline has been rising alarmingly in recent months and is currently almost 1,900. The rate at which Camden issues offer notices has increased—I shall say more about that later—but not by nearly enough to match the increased number of applications.

We know from complaints passed on by my hon. Friend, and those that we receive direct from his constituents or others, that there are also delays in completing the legal formalities leading to sale when a tenant has decided to continue with his purchase on the basis of an offer notice. Statistics are less easy to interpret, since delays may be attributable to a variety of causes, some ascribable to the tenant, some to the landlord.

However, at the end of June there were 665 cases where completion was awaited, against an average this year of about 22 sales a month.

Against that background, I can understand my hon. Friend's wish that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State should use his powers to take over Camden's role in processing sales, and I shall return to that specific point later.

It may well be that Camden is not the only authority in London whose performance in handling right-to-buy sales is less than satisfactory, but in numerical terms, the problems in Camden seem to be the most acute. All the evidence reflects that. A number of inner London boroughs have had difficulty in handling right-to-buy applications over the past 18 months. A major factor in that has been a substantial increase in the number of applications received. The number of applications by Camden tenants was, on average, 79 a month in 1986. That rose to 165 a month in January 1987, no doubt due in part to the higher discounts introduced in January 1987 for those buying flats under the right-to-buy. The trend has continued into 1988. The average monthly number of applications so far is 281, with 467 received in June alone. The Government are delighted that so many people are expressing an interest in becoming home owners. However, the number of applications is not easy to predict, and it is hard for local authorities to adjust to such an increase overnight when staff are scarce. I understand that.

I shall turn now to the steps that Camden council has taken in the past year to try to improve its performance. As my hon. Friend is aware, these have had some, albeit limited, success. Following a meeting to discuss the council's right-to-buy performance held last July, the council informed us that 19 additional posts were to be approved with the intention that the output of section 125 offer notices would increase to between 120 and 140 a month once they were filled. Those additional posts were approved, we were told, against a background of reductions in staffing and funding in other areas of the council's responsibility from which the right to buy was protected.

The council's output did begin to improve as the additional posts were filled. The number of offer notices issued in any month did not exceed 20 between February and September 1987, and has never been below 72 since. The council now seems to have reached its target of 140 notices a month promised last year. Greater central co-ordination, helped by additional staff, seems to be at the root of the improvement. I understand that the council's valuer and estates surveyor took on overall responsibility for right-to-buy matters in September 1987.

At a meeting earlier this week, the leader of the council acknowledged that the improvements delivered by the council were not sufficient to keep pace with the larger numbers of applications now being received, but said that the rate is over three times that in 1986. He said that the council is now considering proposals to establish a central unit of administrators devoted to right-to-buy work and that that would involve some extra staffing. It was expected that that should enable the output of offer notices to be increased to some 180 a month well before the end of the year—possibly more if a greater number of those involved in right-to-buy work could be located in the same building.

That is a significant increase. However, it is clearly not sufficient if applications continue to be received at the present level. The leader therefore agreed that, in the light of the trends in applications in the autumn, the council will also consider whether further staff resources for right-to-buy work are necessary in the medium and longer term.

It is clearly important that the council should make the best possible use of existing resources, as well as devoting more to the right to buy. The leader said that there was no obstacle to staff working overtime on a voluntary basis and that the council was making every effort. The leader did not rule out the use of the private sector, for example in conveyancing, where that would help.

The leader has confirmed—he is prepared to be quoted—that it is the council's policy to fulfil its statutory obligations. That needs to go on record. He also pointed to the fact that additional staff resources had been devoted to the right to buy at a time of reductions elsewhere. He also stressed—this is something that I welcome—that the council was dependent on the capital receipts from housing sales to maintain its repair programme. Against that background, he gave assurances that the case for extra staff would be considered urgently if the proposed reorganisation did not prove adequate.

The Department will continue to receive monthly progress reports from the council and will keep in contact with it over the steps it is taking, so that the Secretary of State can review the possible use of his powers of intervention. I shall give my hon. Friend a clear undertaking. It is abundantly clear to me, as it will be to him, that, if the situation does not improve in the short term, we should have no alternative but to use those powers.

My hon. Friend is, of course, primarily concerned about his constituents who have suffered unconscionable delay. I remind him, if I need to, that the amendments to the Housing Bill were designed to meet his concerns and those of many other hon. Friends on that issue.

I hope that my hon. Friend will welcome the specific points that I have made and the assurance that I have given him. Although I took on these additional responsibilities only some 24 hours ago, I am nevertheless aware of his grave concern about this matter. I have enormous sympathy for the points that he has raised and am grateful to him for the additional information that he has supplied in the debate.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at twenty-five minutes to Twelve o'clock.

House of Commons

Thursday 28 July 1988

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

COUNTY OF SOUTH GLAMORGAN (TAFF CROSSING) BILL

Lords amendments agreed to.

BRITISH RAILWAYS (NO. 2) BILL *(By Order)*

As amended, considered; to be read the Third time.

TEIGNMOUTH QUAY COMPANY BILL *(By Order)*

YORK CITY COUNCIL BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

CARDIFF BAY BARRAGE BILL *(By Order)*

FALMOUTH CONTAINER TERMINAL BILL *(By Order)*

PORT OF TYNE BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

AVON LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

Orders for Second Reading read.

To be read a Second time on Thursday 20 October.

Oral Answers to Questions

NORTHERN IRELAND

Gibraltar Shootings

1. **Mr. Flannery:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the repercussions to date in Northern Ireland of the killings of three suspected terrorists in Gibraltar.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Tom King): I am aware of the interest in Northern Ireland in the deaths of three Provisional IRA terrorists in Gibraltar earlier this year. The inquest will be held in September by the Gibraltar coroner. It will address matters of substance and it is therefore not appropriate for me to comment any further at this stage.

Mr. Flannery: In view of the seriousness with which the inquest is rightly regarded, and assuming that proper precautions will be taken in the interests of safety, may we have an assurance that the Government will not intervene to stop the SAS soldiers who carried out this operation from attending the inquest?

Mr. King: My right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence and I have already made it clear that we hope that the fullest evidence can be given at the inquest. It is in everyone's interests that that should be clear, not least so that no one is in any doubt about the appalling outrage that would have been committed in Gibraltar had the terrorists' plans not been interdicted.

Mr. Cormack: Is my right hon. Friend aware that his latter remarks are those that should go out from the House? Two things are not in dispute: that those people were terrorists, and that they were planning the most brutal and dastardly outrage in the history of the IRA.

Mr. King: I agree entirely with my hon. Friend, and it cannot be said often enough. What might have happened on that occasion if more than 60kg of Semtex had gone off in that confined space in the centre of Gibraltar would have been outside the realms of any previous outrage. As my hon. Friend said, the IRA has admitted that they were its members engaged on active service.

Mr. McNamara: We are all agreed that it would have been the most terrible atrocity had those 60 kg of Semtex gone off in the centre of Gibraltar. That is why we want to know why the Government were prepared to allow a car, which had been checked through Spain, across the border and into the centre of Gibraltar, to be left alone for two and half hours when it was believed that it might contain such explosives. Why did the Government take the action that they did in relation to the car when they believed that the explosion would not take place until the procession on Tuesday——

Mr. Harris: Weasel words.

Mr. McNamara: They are not weasel words. From that decision and those deaths in Gibraltar came the deaths at Milltown and the tragic deaths of two British soldiers. They were a direct result. The Government should be concerned about maintaining peace and respect for the law in the British Isles and in Northern Ireland. That is at risk, and that is why I ask the right hon. Gentleman to ask the Secretary of State for Defence to withdraw the reply that he gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, South-East (Mr. Young) about the restrictions that will be placed on the amount of evidence that can be given by the SAS soldiers, if they attend the inquest. Will we get all the facts, or only the circumscribed facts that the Secretary of State is suggesting?

Mr. King: The first thing that I can do in response to the hon. Gentleman is simply to say, as I said in my answer, that the inquest will address matters of substance. The issues that the hon. Gentleman has raised are not for bandying across the Floor of the House. They are extremely germane to the inquest. No doubt they will have to be thoroughly examined, and will be, I have no doubt, by those concerned and the counsel representing them. In the interests of the proper proceedings that will now take place, that is the procedure that should be followed.

Identity Cards

2. **Mr. Favell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the effect of the introduction of an identity card in the Province; and if he will make a statement.

The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office (Mr. Ian Stewart): We have no present plans to introduce identity cards, but this is a matter that is regularly reviewed in consultation with the security forces.

Mr. Favell: Does my hon. Friend agree that it would be helpful to the security forces, who have to carry identity cards, if, after a terrorist atrocity, they could readily identify whether people stopped at road blocks were local, from another part of the Province, or from over the border where people do not even need to have a passport?

Mr. Stewart: I remind my hon. Friend that in Northern Ireland the security forces already have powers under the emergency powers legislation to establish identity. The question of identity cards is a practical matter and I am certainly aware of the arguments. However, in Northern Ireland the problems are different in nature from those in the rest of the United Kingdom. We would need to be persuaded that the advantages clearly outweighed the disadvantages before we incurred not only the cost and administrative problems, but the obvious difficulties of enforcement.

Mr. William Ross: If we are to have a card to identify under-age drinkers, a card to identify football hooligans, and as people in Northern Ireland already have to identify themselves when they come to vote, is there any good reason why we should not have a comprehensive identity card system, not only in Northern Ireland, but throughout the United Kingdom? Surely the only people in Northern Ireland who would object to identity cards are the fellow travellers of terrorists. Normal law-abiding citizens would be delighted to carry cards to help the security forces.

Mr. Stewart: I am aware of the points that the hon. Gentleman raises. However, this is not a simple issue. Very considerable questions are involved in the matter of implementation and enforcement. If we were persuaded that this was undoubtedly an advantage and that it outweighed the difficulties, then, as I say, that could be taken into account in future when the matter is reviewed. We keep the matter under review, as I said earlier.

Mr. Kilfedder: Why does the Minister say that it would be difficult to administer an identity card system? Could not that system be linked, as it is in other countries, with the social security system? At the moment the police and the Army can check immediately the registration and ownership of a motor car by signalling through to the central computer and receiving the answer back within seconds. Surely there is an unanswerable case for identity cards, especially as the Government have leant on the soccer clubs to force them to introduce identity cards.

Mr. Stewart: I assure the hon. Gentleman that we keep the matter under review. I note what has been said this afternoon. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will not expect me, after such a short spell, to be able to pass judgment on what is a very intricate matter. These are important questions, and I was very interested to hear the exchanges today.

Education

3. **Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what action he is taking to improve the standard of education of the lowest 40 per cent.; and if he will make a statement.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Dr. Brian Mawhinney): Curriculum initiatives, which the Government have already undertaken in Northern Ireland, are aimed specifically at enhancing the educational opportunities available to less able pupils. In addition, one of the main objectives of the proposals for education reform is to provide a balanced curriculum and common means of assessment for all children so that pupils with learning difficulties can be identified more effectively and the necessary remedial action taken.

Mr. Greenway: Does my hon. Friend accept that there is wide admiration for the education provided for academically inclined children in Northern Ireland, but real concern about the under-achievement of the bottom 40 per cent.? Does he also accept that the whole curriculum for children in that area needs to be re-thought, and that it is especially important for that to happen so that those children may be given the chance that they deserve?

Dr. Mawhinney: I agree with my hon. Friend's assessment of the situation in Nothern Ireland. I assure him that, although decisions have not yet been taken as a result of consultation on the education reform proposals, we wish to make available to children and to their teachers a system that is as flexible as possible, so that it might best be shaped and moulded to meet the needs of the less able children.

Mr. Beggs: Will the Minister assist those who are preparing for change in Northern Ireland by publishing all examination results this year and relating those results to the attainment levels and abilities of the pupils? Does he agree that qualifications must have relevance to the world of work? Does he further agree that preparation for life and work often means more than attaining a questionable little certificate at the end of one's school career?

Dr. Mawhinney: I agree that the education system should prepare people for the world of work. I agree also that education involves more than a simply utilitarian function. With respect to employment, it also involves the broadening of the mind and the developing of the personality. Having said all that in agreement with the hon. Gentleman, I am not sure that I share the perception that I have of the underlying reason for his question.

Ms. Mowlam: Is the Minister aware of the recent national report on child care, which highlights the appallingly inadequate system of child care in Northern Ireland? It is a system that provides only 2·8 places per thousand in Northern Ireland, compared with 16·7 per thousand for the whole of the United Kingdom? What is the Minister's response to those parents with nursery age children in Northern Ireland?

Dr. Mawhinney: First, I do not accept the designation of the position in Northern Ireland as appalling. Secondly, the hon. Lady will be aware that in primary schools in Northern Ireland there is a much higher proportion of nursery age children than in England and Wales.

Mr. Speaker: Order. May I ask for private conversations to take place elsewhere?

Intergovernmental Conference

4. **Mr. Canavan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what subjects were discussed at his last meeting with representatives of the Government of the Republic of Ireland.

Mr. Tom King: My hon. Friend the Minister of State and I met Irish Ministers yesterday at a meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference. A copy of the joint statement issued after the meeting has been placed in the Library. As indicated in the joint statement, among the subjects discussed were security, Government proposals for disadvantaged areas of Belfast, for promoting fair employment, the International Fund and relations between the security forces and the community.

Mr. Canavan: In view of the report that the Stalker-Sampson inquiry was discussed during yesterday's talks and that the British Government gave assurances that disciplinary action would be taken against certain members of the RUC, why is no disciplinary action being taken against Jack Hermon, who is clearly unfit to hold office as Chief Constable? If we believe even half the allegations in Mr. Stalker's book, early retirement is not good enough. The man should be dismissed and charged.

Mr. King: On the first point, the hon. Gentleman is not entirely correct. He may be aware that disciplinary charges have been preferred against a number of members of the RUC. The position of Sir John Hermon, the Chief Constable of the RUC, was considered by the Police Authority for Northern Ireland, whose responsibility it is, and its decision has already been announced.

Mr. Dykes: Does my right hon. Friend agree that, despite obvious difficulties in a number of areas, the Anglo-Irish Agreement is a developing success and that yesterday's meeting is a further example of that development?

Mr. King: I have yet to hear any convincing argument in the House or elsewhere, and nobody can seriously believe, that we are likely to be more successful in tackling the evil of terrorism if we do so in isolation in Northern Ireland rather than in co-operation with the Republic of Ireland. Yesterday's meeting was extremely encouraging in the respect that I described. It showed increasing goodwill between the RUC and the Garda, represented by the Chief Constable and the Commissioner.

I should like to pay tribute, as did the Irish Ministers yesterday, to the leadership of Sir John Hermon, especially in respect of the RUC, its growing reputation and standing and most recently in the matter of its conduct with respect to parades and marches in Northern Ireland, about which all sides have paid their compliments to the RUC.

Mr. Hume *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Mr. John D. Taylor.

Mr. Hume: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Very well, Mr. Hume.

Mr. Hume: In relation to security matters that may have been discussed, does the Secretary of State accept that the vast majority of people in Northern Ireland recognise that adequate protection for police stations is not only necessary, but seriously necessary? Can he tell me why the protection given in the city of Derry is so different from that anywhere else in Northern Ireland? It disrupts the life of the entire city and is causing serious concern. Will he consider urgently reviewing the protection that is given to police stations with a view to ensuring that adequate protection is provided which does not disrupt the life of the entire city, especially when other Departments agree that the city is starting to move forward?

Mr. King: There is a real difference between the right hon. Member for Strangford (Mr. Taylor) and the hon. Member for Foyle (Mr. Hume).

The hon. Gentleman raised a serious issue, about which I am concerned, but I hope that nobody will forget who is responsible for the disruption and inconvenience. It is the deliberate determination of the IRA to inflict, by explosion, attacks on the police stations. Evidence has already been given for that and it leads, unfortunately, to measures having to be taken. I can give the hon. Gentleman the assurance, however, that my hon. Friend the Member for Wiltshire, North (Mr. Needham), who is the Minister with responsibility for the environment, was in Derry yesterday, where he was made aware of anxieties about this matter. I have discussed the issue further this morning. We shall be anxious to see how we can tackle this real problem while causing the minimum disruption to commercial and social life in that city.

Sir John Farr: Has my right hon. Friend had an opportunity to raise with the people from Dublin a matter that is causing a good deal of anxiety in the House—the lack of security on important information that is passed from Belfast to Dublin about the movements of important people when travelling to or from Dublin to go abroad by air?

Mr. King: The matter to which my hon. Friend refers is of concern and it is still under investigation. I await a full report. The matter was mentioned in passing. Irish Ministers share our feeling to the full and the Taoiseach is on record as expressing his horror at the outrage. It is a little early to identify how the problems arose. There is considerable traffic of people backwards and forwards and, in general, security has been extremely good in terms of information. Any lapse such as this is most serious and tragic. Perhaps I might mention in passing that, as the House is meeting, the funeral is taking place at Hillsborough of the Hanna family. I know that I speak for the whole House when I say that we condemn the outrage and express our deep sympathy to the family of the victims of this latest IRA atrocity.

Mr. Duffy: The Secretary of State mentioned the International Fund for Ireland. Can he say something about any agreement that was reached at the meeting on its early and effective application to disadvantaged areas?

Mr. King: The International Fund for Ireland is already involved in a range of projects. I have expressed my hope that it will be able to play an increased role and complement some of the initiatives in which I and my hon. Friend the Minister with responsibility for the environment, whom I have asked to take responsibility for the "Making Belfast Work" initiative, have been involved. We shall be anxious to see how the fund can complement such initiatives.

Mr. Stanbrook: Is not the good faith of the Government of the Irish Republic in question? Did my right hon. Friend ask the representatives whom he saw yesterday to justify the restrictions that they have recently placed unilaterally on the extradition process from the Republic to the United Kingdom?

Mr. King: I have made clear my anxieties, and did so again yesterday, about the problems that have arisen over extradition. My hon. Friend will be aware that in respect of one problem which has arisen recently the Irish Government intend to appeal against the district court's judgment. We attach the greatest importance to effective extradition. Clearly there are problems in that area and they relate to both terrorist and non-terrorist crimes. It is also clear that the Irish Government view with some concern certain aspects of this matter which we shall discuss again.

Rev. Martin Smyth: Does the Secretary of State accept that it is inadequate for the joint communiqué merely to condemn continuing terrorist outrages in a week when we have been mourning, among others, the Hannas? We share the sympathy that the Secretary of State expressed on behalf of the House. Does he accept that there is something wrong if the brigade that is supposed to be looking after the border is logistically under strength?

Mr. King: I can assure the hon. Gentleman that our approach is a great deal more comprehensive than merely expressing our horror or outrage. We discussed several specific matters yesterday designed to heighten that co-operation, but all start from the basis of whether there can be good will and trust between the respective security forces north and south of the border. In that respect, I was much encouraged by yesterday's meeting. We have additional Army resources over those which used to exist in Northern Ireland, and it is certainly not a question of a lack of resources for the security forces.

De Lorean Motor Cars Ltd.

5. **Mr. Latham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he will make a further statement on progress in recovering public moneys owing since the collapse of De Lorean Motor Cars Ltd.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Peter Viggers): As I informed my hon. Friend on 7 June in answer to his written question, some £12·6 million has been recovered through the receivership. The recovery of further amounts will depend on the outcome of legal actions and inquiries in the United Kingdom, the United States and Switzerland. In the United States the trustee in bankruptcy has not yet paid a dividend, as the process of proving and agreeing claims is not yet complete.

Mr. Latham: Will my hon. Friend confirm that more than £50 million of taxpayers' money remains outstanding from this disgraceful scandal, which includes $5 million, which were stolen from British taxpayers by Mr. De Lorean in the GPD swindle in Switzerland? Will my hon. Friend assure us that he will continue to press hard to get back every penny that was stolen by Mr. De Lorean?

Mr. Viggers: I can certainly assure my hon. Friend that the Government are satisfied that all necessary courses of action are being followed expeditiously. As legal proceedings are pending in relation to the responsibility for those losses, it would not be advisable for me to add to what I have already said.

Mr. Cryer: Does the Minister accept that I resigned from the Labour Government, who approved the original payment, and that I criticised both the original payment and the subsequent payments by Conservative Governments? In pursuing the recovery of the money, will the Minister turn his mind to how the money was approved in the first place, the advice from civil servants and the link between the Civil Service, De Lorean and the company? Clearly, bad advice was given to Ministers, which tragically led to wrong decisions.

Mr. Viggers: I know the hon. Gentleman's long connection with the case and I recognise the points that he has made, but it would be inappropriate to add to what I have already said.

Short Brothers

7. **Sir Michael McNair-Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what further proposals he is considering for privatising Short Brothers.

Mr. Viggers: I informed the House in a statement on 21 July that the Government were ready to consider suitable proposals that might lead to the acquisition of Short Brothers by private sector interests.

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson: While privatisation remains the ultimate goal of the Government's policy towards the company, can my hon. Friend say what steps are being taken in the meantime to return the company to profitability and to give it the long-overdue capital restructuring and the same approach that has been given to other state industries that have been returned to the private sector?

Mr. Viggers: I recognise that the company would benefit from further capitalisation. However, we take the view that the proper disciplines of the private sector are appropriate to the company and that it would be for the private sector acquirers of the enterprise to decide what further capitalisation they propose to make.

Mr. Orme: Is the Minister aware of the Opposition's deep concern about Short Brothers? The firm is a flagship for Northern Ireland because of its high technology and modern development. If it were to be sold off and then broken up, that would be a disaster. The Government should leave Short Brothers in public hands and develop the company, rather than retard it.

Mr. Viggers: We are well aware of the importance of Short Brothers to Northern Ireland and I recognise that the work force must be apprehensive. However, we believe that the long-term interests of the employees and of the company generally will best be served by the company operating within the private sector.

Mr. A. Cecil Walker: Given that the production of commercial aircraft is subsidised either by open subsidy or by the construction of military aircraft, will the Minister explain why Short Brothers has been singled out and accused of being a loss-maker?

Mr. Viggers: It is quite wrong to say that Short Brothers has been singled out in terms of privatisation. The policy of privatisation—in which the Government firmly believe—has been extended to some 17 enterprises in Great Britain and we believe that it is right that companies and organisations in Northern Ireland should also benefit from the disciplines and opportunities of the private sector.

Mr. Kilfedder: If Short Brothers is sold off by the Government—and I hope that it will not be—will they ensure that the purchaser gives a guarantee to maintain the employment level in that admirable firm, which, as the right hon. Member for Salford, East (Mr. Orme) said, leads in technology in Northern Ireland? Will the Minister also ensure that the eventual purchaser will not be receiving money from Libya, especially in view of the important missile division at Short Brothers?

Mr. Viggers: We shall, of course, take account of all interests, including the national interest, in considering all the proposals that we have for the acquisition of Short Brothers by the private sector. We shall also, of course, take account of employment interests.

Mr. Jim Marshall: Is the Minister aware that in London today there are representatives of all the work force of Short Brothers in Belfast and that they are unanimous in the view that privatisation of Short Brothers would be to the disadvantage not only of their own jobs but of the company as a whole? Is the Minister further aware that they feel that if the company is sold, either wholly or in parts, that will lead inevitably to closure and to massive job losses? What reassurance can the Minister give to those people in London today and to the work force as a whole?

Mr. Viggers: The future of Short Brothers is best served, not by continued dependence on public ownership, but by the disciplines and opportunities of the private sector. I must tell the hon. Gentleman that in the 17 public sector organisations that have moved to the private sector in Great Britain there are about 655,000 workers, many of whom now find it far more advantageous to be operating within the private sector and very few of whom, I suspect, would want to be transferred back into the public sector.

Security

8. **Mr. Livingstone:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the current security situation in Northern Ireland.

16. **Mr. Molyneaux:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the current security situation in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Tom King: Since I last answered questions on 30 June, 11 people have been killed in Northern Ireland. These deaths include the murder of the Hanna family at Killeen, a technical officer and two civilians by the Falls road swimming baths, a taxi driver caught in cross fire in a Provisional IRA attack, and a PIRA member blown up by his own mortar and two others killed in apparent sectarian attacks. I must also inform the House that, sadly, the soldier seriously injured at Cullyhanna yesterday has since died.

The efforts of the security forces are continuing to yield significant results and a number of potentially serious attacks have been prevented. Since the beginning of the year a total of 217 people have been charged with serious offences, including 12 with murder and 15 with attempted murder. A total of 360 weapons, approximately 72,000 rounds of ammunition and 4,000 lb of explosives have been recovered in Northern Ireland

I also understand that the Garda Siochana has recovered some 240 weapons, 140,000 rounds of ammunition and 600 lb of commercial explosives.

Mr. Livingstone: May I join the Secretary of State in expressing shock at the record that he has read out? Does he agree that, for the security forces to be effective, they must be seen to be impartial? Has he any comment to make on the statement of a former Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, my right hon. Friend the Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees), on Channel 4 on 17 July that there was a dirty tricks propaganda unit operating in Northern Ireland? How does he equate that statement with the statement of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State in answer to me on 24 March this year, to the effect that if I had any evidence of such a unit I should make it available to him? I assume that the Secretary of State will accept the word of the right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South, so will he now hold a full public inquiry to lay the issue to rest once and for all?

Mr. King: I am not aware of the comments made by the right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees), who is one of my predecessors, but I have nothing to add to any previous comments that I have made on this matter.

Mr. Molyneaux: Further to the previous answer that the Secretary of State gave regarding risks in crossing the frontier, will he seek to convince those public figures who seem to make a habit of crossing the frontier that they have a heavy responsibility, first, to the security forces who protect them and, secondly, to the general public if they run unnecessary risks? Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman would remind them of the wartime question, "Is your journey really necessary?"

Mr. King: Until I have a full report, the right hon. Gentleman will understand if I do not follow him in detail on that. He has raised important considerations for everybody in public life and in a position of responsibility in Northern Ireland. It is our desire, and it is certainly the desire of everybody responsible for protection in the security forces, that those whom they protect should be able to live as normal a life as possible. At the same time, I accept that people have a responsibility to consider the security of those who are appointed and required to protect them.

Sir Eldon Griffiths: Against the background of killings, woundings, and grief that lies behind the list of atrocities that my right hon. Friend has reported to the House, would we not be better occupied, not in arguing the toss, as the hon. Member for Brent, East (Mr. Livingstone) just has, but rather in demonstrating our undying support for the police, the security forces and all people on all sides in Northern Ireland as they face a horrendous onslaught on the freedom and democracy for which this House seeks to stand?

Mr. King: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for the clear and forthright way in which he puts his argument. The people of Northern Ireland and the security forces have had to face a challenge, a trial, a time of endurance beyond parallel in the Western world in recent history. It is against that that one judges the efforts of those whose only interest is to dive into the gutter to find any bit of dirt that they can throw at some very brave people.

Mr. Bowis: Will my right hon. Friend say what success he is having in defeating terrorism by attacking the funds of terrorists used to buy the weapons that cause the death and destruction to which he referred—in particular by attacking a protection racket that destroys jobs in Northern Ireland?

Mr. King: I am fully persuaded that the removal from terrorists of the resources that fund much of their activity is as important as the direct attack on terrorism itself. I am under no illusion, and I know that many of their resources come not from collections overseas but from racketeering, gangsterism and Mafia-type activity throughout Northern Ireland and the island of Ireland. It is interesting that the recent efforts of the Garda Siochana in respect of cross-border smuggling show a clear understanding between our Government and the Government of the Republic of the threat posed by racketeering in all forms.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Have the security forces in Northern Ireland—in the widest sense of the Army and the police—at any stage in the past been involved in training people who work for private security firms? As I am not asking a question relating to security, I ask the Secretary of State not to hide behind that as an excuse. The question is to do with the relationship between the private and public sectors.

Mr. King: As the hon. Gentleman said, that matter does not seem to arise under this question.

Mr. Gow: Do the Chief Constable of the RUC and the General Officer Commanding, Northern Ireland believe that it would assist them in their attempts to defeat terrorism if there were the mandatory introduction of indentity cards for all in the Province?

Mr. King: No, I have had no such representations.

Kilroot Power Station

11. **Mr. Meale:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will now give the go-ahead to phase II of the development of the Kilroot power station; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Viggers: I announced on 15 July that the Government had decided to meet the need for new generating capacity in Northern Ireland, which will occur in the mid-1990s, by installing the third and fourth generating sets in the Kilroot power station as dual coal-oil fired units. On the same day I announced plans to examine ways of privatising the entire Northern Ireland electricity system.

Mr. Meale: Will the Minister explain what effect that will have on the projected time scale for lignite exploitation and on the proposed building of a lignite power station?

Mr. Viggers: After the completion of the Kilroot power station, the next generating station will probably be lignite-powered. The lignite resources in Northern Ireland remain available for development for the benefit of the people of Northern Ireland. On this occasion it was more advantageous from the national point of view, and for all concerned, that the Kilroot power station should be completed.

Education

12. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many representations he has received recently from educational groups in the Province; and on what subjects.

Dr. Mawhinney: I have in recent months received a large number of representations, written and oral, on a wide range of educational topics. These include representations on the consultation paper on education reform, substitution provisions in schools, school development proposals, the cross-community contact scheme, youth service review and funding for arts, museums, sport and community services.

Mr. Flynn: Following the decision by the High Court that the Department of Education in Northern Ireland is guilty of sex discrimination in its administration of the 11-plus examination, what is the Government's view of that judgment? What action will the Minister take to ensure that the girls who have been disadvantaged this year will have that disadvantage corrected? What guarantee will the Government give that in future the administration of the 11-plus examination in Northern Ireland will be decided entirely on merit and not on the sex of the participants?

Dr. Mawhinney: That case remains sub judice and it would, therefore, be inappropriate for me to comment.

Harland and Wolff

13. **Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the expected level of Government subsidy to be provided for any potential purchaser of Harland and Wolff shipyards; what is the present level of subsidy; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Viggers: The terms of any sale would be a matter of negotiation. Any proposal would be carefully scrutinised to take account of European Community requirements. Harland and Wolff received £58 million of Government funding in 1987-88.

Mr. Madden: In view of the persistent high unemployment in Northern Ireland and the fragile nature of the economy, why do the Government persistently push their doctrinaire and dogmatic plans for privatisation in an economy and country where those plans are most unwelcome?

Mr. Viggers: First, the amount of public money that has been spent with Harland and Wolff and with Shorts in recent years has been large. Secondly, those organisations stand to benefit from private sector disciplines and opportunities. On the question of Harland and Wolff, we have had intimations of interest from parties other than Mr. Tikkoo and, as I have previously made clear, we welcome such approaches and will consider carefully any proposals that are put to us.

Dr. Godman: As the sale of Harland and Wolff has a significance that extends far beyond Northern Ireland, especially if EC shipbuilding intervention fund money is used by the Government on Mr. Tikkoo's plans, will the Minister give an assurance that if that shipbuilding intervention fund money is used, the engines and other major items of equipment will be purchased from British companies and not from companies outwith the European Community?

Mr. Viggers: I cannot give the hon. Gentleman the assurance that he requires, although if he wishes to table a specific question I shall, of course, address that.

Rev. Martin Smyth: Will the Minister estimate the proportion of subsidies for Harlands and Shorts which are actually going to subsidise employment in Scotland and England?

Mr. Viggers: The hon. Gentleman makes a fair point. There is certainly some benefit that flows to parts of the United Kingdom other than Northern Ireland through those subsidies.

Mr. McNamara: The disciplines of the private market have generally meant capital reconstruction and large falls in the number of people employed. Will the Minister give an assurance that there will be no capital reconstruction and no sell-off of Harlands and Shorts on the cheap to the private sector, and a guarantee that whoever buys the companies will maintain present employment levels?

Mr. Viggers: If the hon. Gentleman were to look at the balance sheets of Harlands and Shorts he would agree that some form of capital reconstruction is required and could be beneficial. It would be for the future owners to decide on future employment levels.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Winnick:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 28 July.

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today.

Mr. Winnick: What is the most up-to-date excuse that the Prime Minister can offer for the latest appalling trade figures, which show how fragile is the economic recovery of which she constantly boasts? Is the Prime Minister not concerned that the trade figures will merely give further ammunition to her dear and close friend the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) in his criticism of the Government, when he is, after all, only trying to help?

The Prime Minister: As I indicated on a previous occasion, the present current account deficit is being readily financed by an inflow of private sector capital. That reflects confidence in the United Kingdom as a place to invest and is helping to finance high investment by the private sector—I am sure that the hon. Gentleman agrees with that—which will boost future export performance.

Sir Anthony Meyer: In view of this country's irrevocable commitment to full membership and participation in the European Community, does my right hon. Friend believe that our interests there are really best served by a policy of isolation, however splendid?

The Prime Minister: No, and nor has this country followed a policy of isolation. Indeed, if I may gently say so, this country has been very practical in making progress in the European Community: first, on budgetary matters; secondly, in sorting out the common agricultural policy; and thirdly, during this country's presidency of the European Community, starting on the single market to be completed by 1992. The single market now actually comes above the common agricultural policy, which seems to be left behind in the objectives of the EEC. I should also point out that, far from being isolationist, it was this Government who got a Channel tunnel started.

Mr. Kinnock: Does the Prime Minister recall just four months ago telling me that the balance of payments deficit of more than £1 billion for February was a freak? There have now been four such deficits in six months. Were they all freaks—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. I ask the House to allow the right hon. Gentleman to put his question.

Mr. Kinnock: There have been deficits of more than £1 billion four times in the past six months. Were they all freaks, or were they proof of the Chancellor's brilliance?

The Prime Minister: If the right hon. Gentleman had read the speech by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor to the Institute of Economic Affairs he would have learnt the answer that I gave to his hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick), who rather pre-empted the question that the right hon. Gentleman asked. Yes, there has been a deficit on current account. Part of it is accounted for by very high investment in this country, which the right hon. Gentleman has always wanted. Secondly, there is very high growth and a number of semi-fabricated components coming in. Thirdly, I agree that we must get some of the demand down, and I hope that the measures that we are taking to bring down inflation will also deal with the current account.

Mr. Kinnock: The Prime Minister speaks of success. Can she tell us how she arrives at the conclusion that one month's £1 billion deficit is a freak and that four such deficits are a success?

The Prime Minister: There was a change in the Common Market in the way in which imports and exports are accounted for—*[Interruption.]* I do not expect the right hon. Gentleman to know the facts, but there was that change, which affected us all. On the first quarter of the balance of payments—we now have the second quarter—there was, yes, a deficit. There was also a positive balancing factor, which was greater than the deficit.

Mr. Redwood: Will my right hon. Friend accept that one of the consequences of her early reshuffle is to take away many speculative stories from the press over the summer? The result will be that the press will have to concentrate on the precarious position of the Leader of the Opposition.

The Prime Minister: I hope that perhaps we might all have an August off.

Mr. Steel: —*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is all a waste of time.

Mr. Steel: Such enthusiasm is rare. I ask the Prime Minister whether, during the summer recess, she will ponder on the fact that throughout her premiership the Government have enjoyed the unprecedented benefits of the income from North sea oil, yet throughout she has told the country that it must endure higher unemployment, curtailments in health and education and growth in poverty, all to make sacrifices for economic recovery. Is the expected trade deficit of £10 billion by the end of the year evidence of that recovery?

The Prime Minister: The evidence of the recovery can be seen throughout the country in a higher standard of living, greater enterprise, greater profits and greater export volumes. Having heard what the right hon. Gentleman has to say, I can understand why the Liberal party is at last selling off the family steel.

Q2. **Mr. Hind:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 28 July.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Hind: My right hon. Friend will be aware of the launch of the new employment training programme in September and the opposition to it from some of the occupants of the Opposition Front Bench, from Labour-controlled authorities, such as Liverpool and Bristol, and from the TGWU, NUPE and NALGO. Will my right hon. Friend give the House an undertaking that, despite the opposition of the shortsighted in denying the long-term unemployed the skills to obtain jobs, she will presss ahead with the employment training programme as a real way of tackling unemployment?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I gladly give my hon. Friend that assurance. It is vital that the programme succeeds. We shall need a higher proportion of the work force to be skilled, and therefore many more of its members will need training. Moreover, as we enter the 1990s a smaller proportion of the work force will be leaving school. Therefore, training programmes will assume an even greater importance in future.

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 28 July.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Fatchett: Is the Prime Minister saying that it does not matter how great the trade deficit becomes?

The Prime Minister: No. We are not complacent about it in any way. There is a great budget surplus, which means that the trade deficit is not caused by the public sector in any way. Private sector investment and finance for the future is easily being met by the confidence of outside investors in the United Kingdom. I had thought and hoped that the Opposition were in favour of higher investment in industry.

Q5. **Mr. Amess:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 28 July.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Amess: Will my right hon. Friend join me in welcoming the recent remarks of Mr. Ed Koch, the mayor of New York, following his visit to Ireland? Does she agree that some of his countrymen, including candidates for the presidency, would do better to make statements following experience rather than engage in blatant political vote-grubbing?

The Prime Minister: I do, indeed, welcome Mayor Koch's remarks, which I have seen reported in the press, and I admire his forthrightness in making them. I am glad that he took time to come to Northern Ireland to see what is happening, and to do so with an open mind. If more people came with open minds and looked at what is happening on the ground, many others would be making similar remarks, which would be a very good thing for us all.

Mr. Harry Ewing: All her political life the Prime Minister has used people ruthlessly to get what she wanted for herself. Was it really necessary this week for her to use her junior Ministers and Back Benchers as she did to divert attention from the disgraceful pay-off to the right hon. and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan), and also from the scathing attack on her by her right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath)?

The Prime Minister: I remember the total ruthlessness, wholly supported by the Opposition, during the coal strike. If one wanted ruthlessness, that was it, and most of us will never forget it. That was pure Socialism—intimidating.

My right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan) will be an excellent commissioner, both for Europe and in representing this country in Europe and maintaining the British identity.

Mr. Tebbit: Will my right hon. Friend reflect further on the point made by our hon. Friend the Member for Lancashire, West (Mr. Hind) about the importance of training as a guard against long-term unemployment? Will she make time, before she goes to Australia tomorrow, to call in the Leader of the Opposition and give him a little instruction, as it is most important to both her interests and those of the Government that the right hon. Gentleman keeps his job?

The Prime Minister: No, but I think that my right hon. Friend could probably give him a bit of advice.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: If the Prime Minister is so keen on developing the road towards the internal market, why does she want to dismiss the commissioner who has pioneered that work—and, furthermore, dismiss the commissioner for the environment and consumer affairs, who has shown a great grasp of his brief and yet has been thrown aside? Will she explain that?

The Prime Minister: When the two commissioners were nominated and appointed by the Commission, I made it perfectly clear that I did not think that commissioners should stay there for too long. I believe that the new commissioner whom we have nominated—my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Richmond, Yorks—will take forward the single market. All his experience will

be appropriate to that end, and he will do the job extremely well. I did not think it right to give Lord Cockfield a further term of four years, although I am the first to admit his splendid services in starting off the single market.

Q6. **Mr. Page:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 28 July.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Page: The House knows of the increase in house prices, and with it gazumping and less than ethical behaviour by both sellers and estate agents. In the next Session of Parliament, will my right hon. Friend consider introducing legislation to bring our law more into line with that of Scotland, or a code of practice with the same status in law as the codes of practice for employment and industrial relations?

The Prime Minister: I have great sympathy with those who find themselves gazumped because of such practices. I understand that a number of the pre-eminent groups of estate agents are getting together to try to formulate a code of practice. That is very welcome news and I hope that they will be sucessful. So far, we have not thought of making it statutory.

Q7. **Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 28 July.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Kirkwood: Does the Prime Minister think it fair that a civil servant or journalist can face a two-year gaol sentence for revealing fraud, crime or abuse of official authority, yet there is no defence in law even if he or she can show that the only way of stopping such abuse was to expose it in the public domain?

The Prime Minister: I would not accept the hon. Gentleman's last premise. I do not believe that the only way of stopping such abuse is to expose it in the public domain. The way of stopping such abuse is to report it to the proper authority, where it will be taken up.

Business of the House

3.30 pm

Mr. Frank Dobson (Holborn and St. Pancras): May I ask the Leader of the House whether he will state the business for the half week when we return?

The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Wakeham): Yes, Sir. The business for the first week after the summer Adjournment will be as follows:

WEDNESDAY 19 OCTOBER—There will be a debate on a motion to approve the Defence Estimates 1988 (Cm. 344).

THURSDAY 20 OCTOBER—There will be a debate on a motion to approve the Defence Estimates 1988 (Cm. 344).

FRIDAY 21 OCTOBER—There will be a debate on the educational needs of industry on a motion for the Adjournment of the House.

Mr. Dobson: How long is the spillover session before the Queen's Speech likely to last? An enormous queue of Government business seems to be developing. Can the right hon. Gentleman put an end to the rumour that the spillover period is likely to last so long that Her Majesty may be tempted to combine the Queen's Speech with her Christmas day broadcast?

When does the right hon. Gentleman propose to have health questions and social security questions, now that his right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has bifurcated the old Department, so that we can question the two Secretaries of State separately? Will he also be arranging during the spillover period for the Chancellor to come to the House to give us the Treasury's latest estimate of the likely annual trade deficit, currently believed privately to be about £10 billion?

Will the Leader of the House take note of the serious criticisms made by the Select Committee on Energy of the Government's plans to sell off the electricity supply industry? Will he assure the House that no legislation will be brought before it before that report has been fully debated here and before the consultations proposed by the Select Committee have been completed?

To return to the subject of strip searching of women at Greenham common, will the Leader of the House recognise that the parliamentary answer given by the right hon. Member for Tonbridge and Malling (Mr. Stanley), and the two subsequent letters from Defence Ministers to my hon. Friend the Member for Stalybridge and Hyde (Mr. Pendry) are plainly and flatly contradicted by the sworn evidence of a police witness? Therefore, will he arrange in the spillover period for a Minister to come before the House to put the record straight?

Mr. Wakeham: I cannot at this stage tell the hon. Gentleman exactly how long the spillover session will be, but it will be a sufficient time to deal with the outstanding matters. Judging by the Session so far, that will not be unduly long.

I can confirm that arrangements have been made for the Department of Social Security and the Department of Health to have separate slots for oral questions. The Department of Health will be top for questions on Tuesday 1 November, and if the House is still sitting the Department of Social Security will be top for questions on Monday 14 November.

On the question about the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I am sure that my right hon. Friend would come to the House if he had anything important to say. I do not believe that he will necessarily accept any instructions or guidance from the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson), whose judgment in these matters is somewhat faulty.

The report of the Select Committee on Energy which has just been received deals with an important subject to which I am sure the House will wish to return, but perhaps we should wait until there has been a chance to study the report rather than the press reports about it, which do not seem to present the full picture.

With regard to strip searching at Greenham common, my hon. Friend the Minister of State for the Armed Forces gave a very full reply to a parliamentary question by my hon. Friend the Member for Dover (Mr. Shaw) yesterday confirming that his predecessor's answer was correct. I have nothing further to add to that answer.

Mr. Michael Latham (Rutland and Melton): Will my right hon. Friend arrange for a statement to be made in the recess and repeated during the first week we come back on the report of the inspector on the Barlow Clowes scandal that is likely to be produced during the recess? Will he ensure that if, in the recess, the inspector holds the Department of Trade and Industry even vaguely liable, immediate and full compensation will be paid to the distraught savers?

Mr. Wakeham: The House is aware that inspectors have been appointed under the Companies Act 1985 to investigate the affairs and membership of James Ferguson Holdings plc, the parent company of Barlow Clowes. In addition, Sir Godfray Le Quesne expects to complete his report on the DTI's handling of the case before the end of the recess, provided that there is no legal impediment. The report will be published as soon as is practicable. Any statement should await the outcome of those investigations.

Mr. Tom Pendry (Stalybridge and Hyde): Notwithstanding an apology of sorts to Stella Mann-Cairns from the current Minister of State for the Armed Forces yesterday, in which he said:

"I should like to take this opportunity of offering your former constituent an apology for the treatment to which she was subjected and the distress which the circumstances of her arrest must have caused her",

following her successful court action against the Ministry earlier this month when strip searching at Greenham common was proved, is the Leader of the House aware that to date no statement of apology either to me or to the House has been given following the denial by the Minister at the time, the right hon. Member for Tonbridge and Malling (Mr. Stanley), that strip searching had taken place? At least he had the decency to resign from the Government this week, no doubt over this issue.

Is the Leader of the House aware that there is an early-day motion signed by 113 right hon. and hon. Members demanding an apology from the Secretary of State for Defence and from him for the disgraceful, despicable and degrading practices which are taking place at Greenham common? Will he either apologise or resign at the earliest possible moment?

Mr. Wakeham: I have nothing to add to what I said to the Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson),

except that, first, my right hon. Friend did not resign from the Government on this issue and it is quite wrong of the hon. Gentleman, who knows that it is wrong, to say that that is the case; and, secondly, if he is quoting from letters or answers, he should quote in a more balanced way.

The judgment of the Newbury county court did not imply that the lady had been strip searched. In the case of other personal searches conducted at Greenham common at the time, to the best of our knowledge, the practice of the Ministry of Defence police conducting the searches did not include a requirement to remove all clothing.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I remind the House that business questions are about business for the week that we come back. Any wider issues can possibly be raised in the summer Adjournment debate.

Mr. John Hannam (Exeter): May we have a debate as soon as we get back on the Select Committee report on electricity privatisation? Is my right hon. Friend aware that the press reports were a grave distortion of the conclusions of the Select Committee, which were generally supportive of privatisation? Is he further aware that most of us fully support the proposals of our right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy, which will create greater diversity of supply and therefore downward pressure on prices?

Mr. Wakeham: My hon. Friend is right. I remember the warm welcome given to the announcement by my right hon. Friend of his proposals on 25 February, including that by a number of members of the Select Committee.

Mr. Alex Salmond (Banff and Buchan): Will the right hon. Gentleman allow time when we return to debate the other report released yesterday by the Select Committee on Energy, which described the costs of relocating the Department of Energy to Buckingham Gate as unjustified and excessive and which suggested that the Department and staff be relocated outside London? In particular, it suggested that the oil division staff should be relocated to Aberdeen, where there are only 21 employees of the Department at present.

Mr. Wakeham: It would be more helpful to the House to rely on our usual practice of the Government first responding to the Select Committee report. Then we can consider any debates that might arise.

Sir Anthony Grant (Cambridgeshire, South-West): Is my right hon. Friend aware that before the House reassembles in October it is likely that the Secretary of State for the Environment will make a number of decisions on county structure plans which are of immense importance to various localities? As there will not be an opportunity to question him in the House, will my right hon. Friend urge the Secretary of State to let hon. Members who are concerned know of his decision at least at the same time as he informs the press and media and not afterwards?

Mr. Wakeham: That sounds like a reasonable request. I shall certainly refer it to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Will the Leader of the House arrange for a debate on the Common Market when we come back, so that the Prime Minister can take part in it? On the Jimmy Young programme yesterday she tried to give the impression to the nation that she had suddenly become an anti-marketeer. Perhaps a debate would give her a chance to explain why, in spite of all the cosmetics that were used yesterday, since 1984 the Prime Minister has presided over the handing over of more than £5 billion net of taxpayers' money to the Common Market, has gone along with the single European market theme, and has allowed and cajoled Britain into becoming embedded in Common Market bureaucracy—even more, some would say, than did the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath), who is supposed to be her right hon. Friend.

Mr. Wakeham: My right hon. Friend's leadership in dealing with Common Market matters in recent years has been an example to a great many other people of how these things should be done. I can promise the hon. Gentleman this: we shall return to these issues because we have a matter of unfinished business to deal with. It will be dealt with in the overspill, and when it is the hon. Gentleman can contribute to the debate.

Mr. Tim Devlin (Stockton, South): Is my right hon. Friend aware that during the recess Cleveland county council will be considering its response to the Butler-Sloss report on the child abuse controversy in that county? Will he therefore arrange for a statement on that response to be made to the House when we reconvene, so that Cleveland, which is a Socialist local authority in the hands of the town hall unions, will not be tempted to tackle this matter by means of a media-relations whitewash?

Mr. Wakeham: Certainly we shall refer to these matters and discuss them again in the House. I hope that my hon. Friend will let me wait until after the recess to decide on the form in which it would be most appropriate for those discussions to take place.

Mr. Frank Cook (Stockton, North): When considering the petition just made by the hon. Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Devlin), will the right hon. Gentleman bear in mind the fact that much of the damage that surrounded the Cleveland child abuse inquiry came as a result of the same sort of irresponsible accusations as those that have just been made by the hon. Gentleman? Remembering that we are talking about child abuse and the damage that can be done to families, will the Leader of the House give an undertaking that inquiries will be allowed to get on with their work of inquiry and to come up with responsible clinical results and recommendations without interference from busybodies like the hon. Member for Stockton, South?

Mr. Wakeham: I do not think that I disagree with the hon. Gentleman that inquiries should be allowed to get on with their work and that their reports should be considered at the conclusion of the inquiry, but the hon. Gentleman did not put his point in the constructive way that he usually does.

Mr. Richard Holt (Langbaurgh): Will my right hon. Friend take it from me that there is no need whatsoever to introduce this unconstructive attitude into the Cleveland child abuse case? If my right hon. Friend had listened to me several weeks ago when I asked for a debate on the matter, these exchanges would not have happened and we would not have had to wait for the whitewash by

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Cleveland county council. The House is superior to that body and should have had an opportunity to express its opinion.

Mr. Wakeham: I certainly listened to my hon. Friend's advice, and I am sorry that I was unable to accept it. My hon. Friend is being optimistic if he thinks that another debate in the House would resolve many of the substantial issues arising from the case; more substantial remedies are required.

Mr. Archy Kirkwood (Roxburgh and Berwickshire): Will the Leader of the House confirm that there are a number of outstanding matter days yet to be allocated to the Scottish Grand Committee? Is this not an unsatisfactory state of affairs, and will he correct it early in the overspill period? What provision is he making in the overspill period for a debate on the non-formation of the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs?

Mr. Wakeham: Both matters must be dealt with and are best discussed through the usual channels.

Mr. Patrick McLoughlin (Derbyshire, West): Will my right hon. Friend arrange for an early debate on questions? Some of us will have learnt with some sorrow of the decision to take social security questions on Mondays. In the past, an average of 300 questions have been tabled for health and social security matters, but only 50 for Scottish Question Time. Some 55 minutes is allowed for Scottish Question Time, yet we will be allowed only 35 minutes for questions to the Department of Social Security. Will my right hon. Friend reconsider the matter?

Mr. Wakeham: My hon. Friend makes a good point, but Question Time is ordered for the convenience of the House in a way that we think most likely to receive general support. I shall bear in mind my hon. Friend's suggestion, but I do not believe that I can make an early change.

Mr. Bill Michie (Sheffield, Heeley): Bearing in mind the questions and concern expressed about the balance of payments, will the Leader of the House find time for, and guarantee, a debate on the manufacturing base of this country, which at present is in disarray? We cannot cope with the expansion that the Government claim is happening and therefore cannot control the economy. After 10 years of warnings about what would happen, we need to have a discussion about the manufacturing base of this country so that we can run it properly.

Mr. Wakeham: If the hon. Gentleman has not recognised that the economy is being run substantially better than when his party was in government, he has much to learn. We shall return to issues of the economy in the autumn, when no doubt the hon. Gentleman will have an opportunity to put his views.

Sir John Farr (Harborough): Will my right hon. Friend take careful note of what my hon. Friend the Member for Rutland and Melton (Mr. Latham) said about Barlow Clowes? My hon. Friend's view is supported by many hon. Members. When does my right hon. Friend expect the Firearms (Amendment) Bill to return from the Lords, and are the Government contemplating adding an amendment to deal with the possession and sale of crossbows?

Mr. Wakeham: I cannot say at this stage what will be dealt with when the Bill returns to the House. We shall deal with Lords amendments when it returns, at which stage there is limited scope for changing a Bill. I recognise the anxiety that has been expressed about Barlow Clowes, but it would not be right for me to add to what I have already said.

Mr. Greville Janner (Leicester, West): May we have an early debate on the problems of young first-time house buyers that have been created by the constant series of increases in mortgage rates? Young people have been encouraged to buy their own homes, but they have no control over what they must pay because interest rates are being increased to cope with the balance of payments deficit. Is it not time that the Government and the House had some regard to the miseries that these increases are creating for young people who are fortunate enough to be in work?

Mr. Wakeham: I am sure that the hon. and learned Gentleman will agree that under the Government home ownership has increased throughout all sections of the community. I hope that that is welcomed by the hon. and learned Gentleman and every other hon. Member. These matters are debated in the House from time to time, but I cannot promise an early debate.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton (Macclesfield): Will my right hon. Friend give an assurance to the House that, if the report on Barlow Clowes is published about the time that the House reassembles, there will be an immediate statement from the Department of Trade and Industry and an early debate?

Will my right hon. Friend say whether, in the light of the separation of the Departments of Health and Social Security, time will be made available to the House to debate whether there should be a separate Select Committee? The present Select Committee would be happy to continue to monitor both Departments.

Mr. Wakeham: On my hon. Friend's second point, I have no plans at present for any change in the basis of Select Committees. However, it is early days yet and I want to take soundings from all parts of the House before any final decision is made.

On the matter of Barlow Clowes, I do not believe that it would be right for me to add anything further. However, I recognise the strong concern in the House and I will ensure that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry is aware of it.

Mrs. Gwyneth Dunwoody (Crewe and Nantwich): Will the Leader of the House ask his colleague with responsibility for social security to come to the House before we rise tomorrow and make a statement about the changes in the consultation paper on bed and board lodging for women's refuges? The paper contains no suggestion that any change has been considered which would protect women who are the subject of violence and who need urgent support. If the proposed changes are made, the refuges will close.

Mr. Wakeham: I cannot promise the hon. Lady that there will be a statement in the House, but I will certainly refer her comments to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and ask him to write to her, if that would be appropriate.

Mr. James Hill (Southampton, Test): Is my right hon. Friend aware of the most serious problem I have outlined in my early-day motion on cricket in schools?

[That this House recognises the value of cricket as a contribution to the health of school children and to this country's prospects of future success in international cricket; and calls on the Government to establish a national committee to develop criteria for the teaching and assessment of this sport and to issue guidelines to local education authorities to provide adequate funding for both indoor and outdoor cricket pitches, so that in the future more youngsters will take up cricket as a profession.]

In England, we have suffered a series of humiliating defeats and we have also seen behaviour by members of the English cricket team which cannot be approved. Most schools now completely ignore cricket. There is a need for the Government and local education authorities to turn sports sections towards our national game.

Mr. Wakeham: The answer I have before me is probably not adequate for the immensity of the problem facing us, but the Education Reform Bill includes provision for physical education to be a foundation subject within the national curriculum. Guidelines will be produced in due course on attainment targets, programmes of study and assessment arrangements for physical education. I am not sure whether my hon. Friend thinks that that is a comfort, and I am not sure that I do.

Mr. Allen McKay (Barnsley, West and Penistone): May I return the Leader of the House to the recent report by the Select Committee on Energy? I agree that we should look in depth at the report and the Government's response to it. Does he agree with me that it would be wrong, given the conclusions of the report—they do not take a lot of reading—to introduce a Bill to privatise the electricity industry before the House has debated the report and the Government's response to it?

Mr. Wakeham: I do not accept that. I have said that we will be returning to that matter. I think that the hon. Gentleman will agree that a substantial number of the recommendations in the report refer to regulatory requirements that will happen post privatisation and on which the Government have not yet made their proposals known. To that extent, the Select Committee's report will be valuable to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy.

Mr. David Wilshire (Spelthorne): Can my right hon. Friend say when the House will have an opportunity to enable those of us who believe in the fundamental importance of family life to register our total opposition to the proposal to reduce the age at which children can get married without their parents' consent?

Mr. Wakeham: I cannot promise my hon. Friend an opportunity in the business in the first week after the summer recess, but it is an important matter and there are a number of ways in which my hon. Friend could bring it before the House. I suggest that he takes up one of the opportunities available to him.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): There is great disappointment on both sides of the House at the failure of the Select Committee on the televising of proceedings of the House to publish a report before the summer recess, which all of us were led to believe would be the case. When may we expect a report? Will the Leader of the House give an assurance that he is not dragging his feet—in conjunction with hon. Members on both sides who are still smarting from the decision of the House to allow the experiment to go ahead—to delay the production of a report? When does he expect the cameras to be in the Chamber? To what parliamentary event can we look forward? It will not now be the State opening, but will it be next year's Budget?

Mr. Wakeham: The hon. Gentleman is taking advantage of the opportunity afforded by the absence of the big fellow who usually sits beside him—the hon. Member for Warley, East (Mr. Faulds)—to express his views more freely than he sometimes does. I reject entirely his comments about the progress of the Select Committee. What is more, every member of the Select Committee, of whichever party, will agree that it has made good progress. It will report as soon as it can. It has not delayed consideration of the complex issues, but is considering them properly. I cannot give a date, because that depends on the rest of the Committee agreeing to the report, but we shall announce it as soon as possible.

Mr. Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South): Is my hon. Friend aware that there is bound to be anxiety about the Prime Minister's statement this afternoon which appeared to rule out legislation on gazumping? Will he arrange for the Minister responsible to make a full statement on the negotiations that will take place with estate agents between now and October, and at that stage will the Minister make it plain that if no effective code of practice is in prospect the Government will consider introducing legislation?

Mr. Wakeham: I can go no further than my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister went, but I did not hear her comments in the same way as my hon. Friend did. She said that she thought a substantial amount could be achieved by voluntary means. My hon. Friend and I will agree that, if the voluntary approach is possible, it would be the best way of proceeding at this stage.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): Now that there is clear evidence that people in Harvard Securities have been manipulating the price of over-the-counter stock, and it is clear that many investors will lose more money in the coming months—people who invest in OTC stocks sold by Harvard Securities—is it not about time that the Department of Trade and Industry or someone moved in to close that company? Does not the investor protection legislation that has been introduced by the Government during the past few years extend as far as protecting those who, because of bad judgment, persist in wasting their money and throwing it down the drain of the over-the-counter market?

Mr. Wakeham: The Government are as committed as any to stamping out fraud and abuse wherever it occurs, and have taken practical steps to make the job more effective. The hon. Gentleman would be better advised to pass any evidence in support of his allegations to the appropriate authority, but I shall refer his comments to my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

Mr. Andrew Mitchell (Gedling): Has my right hon. Friend had a chance to read the excellent report published

[Mr. Andrew Mitchell]

on Monday by the Services Committee on access to the precincts of the House? Is he aware of the considerable anxiety on both sides of the House about the use and abuse of our facilities by lobbyists and researchers? Will he find time for a debate on the matter either during the overspill or early in the new Session?

Mr. Wakeham: It is an excellent report on a very important subject in which many hon. Members take a close interest. The report proposes that its recommendations on photo-identity passes should be implemented at the beginning of the financial year 1989-90. I hope that it will be possible to arrange a debate in time to allow that to happen, should the recommendations be approved by the House.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): Will the Leader of the House arrange for a statement to be made when the House returns after the summer recess about the anti-dumping application by the textile industry against the imports of Turkish acrylic yarn? Is he aware that this problem has caused the loss of nearly 600 jobs in the Bradford textile industry which the area and the economy can ill afford? The anti-dumping application should be pursued with vigour by the relevant Ministers at the Department of Trade and Industry to encourage the EEC commissioners—about whom there has been so much fuss, but who are still in office—to do something about the anti-dumping application instead of the EEC trampling all over us, as it usually does.

Mr. Wakeham: I do not accept what the hon. Gentleman says, except to agree that this is an important subject. I will see my right hon. Friend and, if a statement is appropriate, one will be made.

Mr. Nicholas Baker (Dorset, North): Is my right hon. Friend aware of the widespread interest and concern on both sides of the House about the provisions of the Democratic Oaths Bill introduced by the right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) and supported by the hon. Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer) and a substantial number of Labour Members, which seeks to abolish oaths of allegiance to the Crown and to substitute democratic oaths? Will my right hon. Friend find time for a debate on this Bill in the next Session? It is quite possible that after the Labour party elections we will have a Labour Opposition who are no longer loyal but are opposed and antagonistic to the Crown.

Mr. Wakeham: In all friendliness to my hon. Friend, I must say that I have a list of Bills for which I am not prepared to find time for debate and the Bill to which my hon. Friend refers is pretty near the top of the list. If my hon. Friend believes that this is an important matter—as it is—and he wishes to bring it to the attention of the House, may I respectfully suggest that he finds another way of doing it.

Mr. Paul Flynn (Newport, West): Has the Leader of the House observed the outbreak of a new illness among Members of Parliament, one of the symptoms of which we saw demonstrated by the hon. Member for Dorset, North (Mr. Baker)—increased noisiness and yobbishness? Although the disease has yet to be classified by medical science, it goes under the name of PRT—pre-recess tension. Will the right hon. Gentleman guarantee that in the next Session we will work towards a more rational division of the parliamentary year for briefer Sessions and briefer recesses?

Mr. Wakeham: With regard to the question of absence through illness, it is a fine judgment for others to make about who seems to be suffering most at the present time. However, I realise that the parliamentary year is a serious matter. I like the recesses to be long and the Sessions to be short. I work very hard for that as best I can. If the hon. Gentleman will promise to help me, we may make better progress next year.

Mr. John Bowis (Battersea): My right hon. Friend may be aware of the acute anxiety felt in the training world, particularly among those dealing with the disadvantaged and the disabled, at the allocation of training places and training supplements for the scheme coming into effect in September. Will he talk to his colleagues at the Department of Employment to ensure that that anxiety is resolved as soon as possible so that when we return in October a satisfactory statement to that effect may be made.?

Mr. Wakeham: That is an important matter. I understand that talks are going on, and I have no reason to believe that they will not be resolved satisfactorily.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): May we have a very short debate on the valuable facility provided by Her Majesty's Foreign Office to right hon. and hon. Members about to travel overseas whereby they are briefed on the local circumstances and, particularly where these circumstances could be adverse, are advised how to react in a dignified way? Would it be possible during that debate to discover, although there might be security implications, whether that advice extends to every hon. Member, including even the Leader of the Opposition?

Mr. Wakeham: Advice to every hon. Member travelling abroad is available from the Foreign Office which, I know from personal experience, is as helpful as it can be in the circumstances. The fact that advice is issued does not mean that it is read or understood. Each hon. Member must decide how best to use the advice.

Mr. James Couchman (Gillingham): In the light of the review of the Anglo-Irish Agreement which is to take place in the autumn, will my right hon. Friend arrange for an early full day debate, perhaps on the Adjournment of the House, on the subject of Northern Ireland? Such a debate would give us the opportunity to discuss the grotesque irresponsibility of Opposition Members, including the Opposition Front-Bench spokesman, who has called for troops out. In the light of what my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland told us this afternoon, a more inappropriate call cannot be imagined.

Mr. Wakeham: That is a very important subject and I should like to be able to organise a debate on it, but I do not immediately see the prospect of that in the near future.

Mr. Tony Favell (Stockport): My right hon. Friend will be aware of the current interest in the possible introduction of a British photo-identity card. Eighty-four per cent. of the people taking part in a television poll voted in favour for such cards. As the Home Secretary is now

taking soundings among the police, may we expect a statement within the first few weeks of our return after the recess?

Mr. Wakeham: My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary said last week that they were not persuaded that a case had been made for a national identity card, but that the matter would obviously be kept under review. In my work as chairman of the committee on the misuse of alcohol, I can tell my hon. Friend that the committee believes that there is a case for a voluntary identity card to try to curb some of the worst excesses of under-age drinking, which is a problem that is causing us much concern.

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): I support the call of my hon. Friend the Member for Southampton, Test (Mr. Hill) for assistance to improve the game of cricket in this country, bearing in mind the serious decline affecting children and their attitude to games and our present lack of success in international cricket. Will my right hon. Friend accept that what is not covered in the Education Reform Bill—for all that he said—is the real need to enshrine in the Bill the fact that cricket should be referred to by name in the Bill and that there should be proper cricket coaching for boys and perhaps girls? Does he believe that the Marylebone Cricket Club needs some assistance in choosing its team to represent the country? Could not the Government do something to assist Graeme Hick to be selected for England?

Mr. Wakeham: My hon. Friend tempts me into areas into which I should not stray, particularly as I was at school with Peter May. I had better not deal with his job as I have quite enough to cope with in my own. I agree with my hon. Friend to the extent that competitive sport is an important part of a child's upbringing whether he is particularly good, only average or below average—as I was as a cricketer. I was rather better as a scorer than a batsman.

Second Severn Crossing

4.7 pm

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Paul Channon): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a statement. I am now able to announce the next step in the provision of the second crossing of the River Severn.

The Severn bridge is important to Wales and to economic development on both sides of the estuary. That is why in July 1986 we announced that a second crossing would be built at the English Stones, and that preparatory and survey work would proceed with a view to providing that crossing in the mid-1990s if traffic levels showed it was needed by then. The Government have now decided to give the private sector a major opportunity to participate in the provision of this important project.

Essential geotechnical and hydrological surveys are being carried out urgently, and will be completed early next year. As soon as possible after that, I shall be publishing guidelines and inviting bids to build the new bridge. Promoters will be asked to submit proposals on two bases: to design and build the new bridge and to finance and operate it in conjunction with the existing bridge; or to design and build it with the Government responsible for funding and operation. In either case the costs will be recovered through tolls. Promoters will be asked to indicate possible completion dates and the toll levels associated with them. Whichever option is chosen, legislation will be needed to provide, amongst other things, for levying tolls.

We also need to take immediate steps to place the finances of the existing bridge on a sound footing. This is required to meet the objectives laid down when tolls were first introduced in 1966. The accumulated deficit of the bridge is now approaching £100 million. It is therefore proposed that the tolls on the existing bridge should be increased with effect from 1 September 1989 to £1 for cars and £2 for lorries. The present strengthening will have been completed before the new tolls are introduced.

Mr. Robert Hughes (Aberdeen, North): There is only one item of substance in the Minister's statement, which is that the Severn bridge is important to Wales and to economic development on both sides of the estuary. The statement brings forward the completion of the bridge not one iota. There is no starting date, finishing date or target date. There is nothing except a hype for private industry. All the Minister has said is that he intends to ask private industry to submit bids as soon as practicable next year.

Will the Minister tell the House which solution he prefers? Does he prefer the wholly private sector solution? Does his statement mean that the new company, if there were to be one, would take over the running of the existing bridge too, and become an entirely private company, as is the case with the Dartford-Thurrock crossing? Why does he not take the most obvious and direct solution and have the bridge built with public money and by direct public tender, which he has the opportunity to do?

Secondly, is it not the case that his statement is an attempt to dampen down the anger that there will be on either side of the bridge about the doubling of the tolls, and the fact that he has now totally abandoned any possibility of free estuarial crossings? Tolls must be paid by people who need proper investment in their areas, but which they are not getting from the Government.

Mr. Channon: I am a little astonished by the latter part of the hon. Gentleman's question. He speaks about abandoning free estuarial crossings, but it was his party when in office which introduced tolls on the bridge. The history of the Severn crossing is that the Labour party, when in office, has tolls, but when out of office says it will not. That is the standard against which we must judge the hon. Gentleman's remark.

My statement advances the building of a new crossing considerably. We are now asking for designs. We shall give the private sector the opportunity of participating in this important project next year on these two bases. They can come forward with suggestions for funding in the public or in the private sector. My right hon. and noble Friend Lord Crickhowell, when he made a statement a few years ago, made it perfectly clear that the public sector would proceed with a view to providing the crossing in the mid-1990s if traffic levels showed that it was needed. One of the potential advantages of the private sector is competition. Private promoters will be asked for a range of opening dates and associated tolls.

The hon. Gentleman asked me about my preference. I have none. I am happy to await the outcome of the competition, but anyone living in Wales or Severnside is likely to prefer the private sector solution.

Mr. Gwilym Jones (Cardiff, North): My right hon. Friend will not need me to tell him that the increase in charges will not be warmly welcomed. No matter how much of a saving the Severn bridge represents, there will always be a response of wanting something for nothing. The only appropriate consolation for this increase will be his firmest commitment that the second crossing will be in place by 1996 at the latest, because he will know as well as I that estimates of traffic volume across the Severn bridge have notoriously underestimated the problem.

Mr. Channon: I am grateful to my hon. Friend, and I fully understand his worry about the existing tolls. However, the present tolls are lower in real terms than they were 20 years ago. Even after the increase, they will be lower than tolls on other estuarial crossings.

From what my hon. Friend said about the desirability of an early start and completion of this crossing, it sounds as though he will be one of the supporters of a private sector solution, because private promoters will be asked for a range of opening dates and, therefore, there may be the prospect of advancing the project much faster.

Mr. Roy Hughes (Newport, East): Does the Minister appreciate that his statement will be recognised throughout Wales as nothing more than a sprat to catch a mackerel? Does he appreciate that it is important that our main point in and out of Wales should not be handed over to private speculators? When will he recognise that tolls are nothing more than an abomination, especially when the Treasury is receiving no less than £16 billion from motor taxation, and only £3·6 billion of that is being spent on roads and maintenance?

Will the right hon. Gentleman also recognise the cost of delays in collecting tolls, which is an important commercial consideration? Will he reconsider the recommendation of the Select Committee on Transport which called for their abolition? Does he recognise that the basic figures for the existing bridge are a complete farce? The bridge cost £8 million to build, £52 million has been collected in tolls, and there is now a debt of £100 million. Why should there be this additional tax on Wales, an area of such deprivation and mass unemployment?

Mr. Channon: Again, I find it astonishing that the hon. Gentleman should launch a strong attack on tolls across the Severn, when it was his own party that introduced them. It was his party that retained them when it had a second period in office. His party was in office from 1966 to 1970 and from 1974 to 1979, and it did nothing about the tolls, but now that it is out of office it complains. I hope that any reasonably minded person in Wales and Severnside will recognise that my announcement is an opportunity for the bridge to be completed earlier than it otherwise might have been. The promoters will be asked to give a range of opening times, and at the end of the day we shall see whether it is a private or public sector bridge.

The hon. Gentleman referred to private speculators. Of course, the private sector will build the bridge whichever solution is chosen, and, therefore, the hon. Gentleman is talking only about its financing. The private sector might provide a Severn crossing more quickly than would otherwise be the case.

Sir Anthony Meyer (Clwyd, North-West): I am not sure whether my hon. Friend has said anything about access roads to the new crossing, but will he ensure that access roads are so designed as to provide for toll plazas of reasonable width? One of the main problems of the present bridge is its narrowness and the inevitable queues to the toll booth.

Mr. Channon: My hon. Friend has mentioned two extremely important points. Of course, we shall have to provide access roads in time for the completion of the new Severn crossing. That is a matter which is in hand and in which my Department is involved.

It will be important to make sure that the toll plazas do not cause delay. The advances in techniques used at the Dartford bridge have made it a far quicker operation, and I believe that by the time the Severn crossing is open there will be further advances.

Mr. Donald Anderson (Swansea, East): Is it not clear that the doubling of the tolls is the price that the people of Wales must pay to make this second bridge construction and financing attractive to the private sector? That is the motive behind the doubling of tolls. Is this not clear proof that, when it comes to the test, the Government will always give priority to privatisation and the ideological obsession of rolling back the frontiers of the state rather than the regional development needs of Wales?

Mr. Channon: No. The tolls were put on in the first place by the party which the hon. Gentleman supports. They have now to be increased, because we have had two reports from the Comptroller and Auditor General saying that the increase was long overdue. I am surprised that Opposition Members should disagree with the Comptroller and Auditor General's desire to see a proper economic situation prevail at this bridge as at other estuarial crossings.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): I welcome my right hon. Friend's statement about the second crossing—I am a frequent user of the Severn bridge—but can he explain why those who have to cross estuaries, alone of all people

who use trunk roads, have to pay for that privilege? Also, when will there be automatic tolls on the Severn bridge to speed up the crossing?

Mr. Channon: My hon. Friend will know that successive Governments of all political persuasions have taken the view that it is right to charge tolls on certain estuarial crossings. Next week, I shall go to the start of the new Dartford crossing, which will be financed by tolls and provide an extremely important service to travellers and the economy as a whole. The policy has been followed by successive Governments.

The House should realise that tolls on the Severn crossing have increased only twice since the bridge was opened 22 years ago in 1966. The increase that I have announced should be compared with the toll across the Humber, which is £1·50 for cars and £8 for lorries, and an increase is proposed.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones (Ynys Môn): Is the right hon. Gentleman's statement made with the full authority and consent of the Secretary of State for Wales? I see that the Under-Secretary of State for Wales is here, but will the right hon. Gentleman confirm that the Secretary of State for Wales agrees with the main thrust of the statement, which is that the second crossing is to be financed by private funds? Has the right hon. Gentleman discussed with the Secretary of State for Wales how the programme for a second crossing fits into an integrated road network for Wales? I am sure that he appreciates that it must be viewed in the wider context of the development of east-west roads and the much needed north-south road.

Mr. Channon: As the hon. Gentleman knows, we have not necessarily decided to build with private financing. We shall have a competition to see whether there should be private sector financing or Government responsibility for funding. We shall see what comes forward and make a decision accordingly. I take the hon. Gentleman's point about the provision of roads. My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Wales and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales will examine carefully what the hon. Gentleman has said. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is, of course, in agreement with the statement and the presence of my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Wales proves it.

Mr. Michael Stern (Bristol, North-West): Does my right hon. Friend agree that his statement will be welcome in my constituency and in Northavon as it puts a terminal date on the uncertainty about the southern link road, its route, its grade, and its relationship with the Avonmouth relief road? Would my right hon. Friend care to estimate the cost to the motorist or lorry driver of going around via Gloucester?

Mr. Channon: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for what he says. I read with interest what he said when a similar statement was made a few years ago. It is difficult to estimate the cost of going around the estuary, but I should have thought that it would be infinitely greater than taking the crossing.

Mr. Paul Flynn (Newport, West): Does the Secretary of State recognise that he has made one statement which he hopes will be eclipsed by another? There is to be an increase in tolls which is unpalatable to all parts of the House. The right hon. Gentleman has tried to eclipse that announcement with his re-announcement of a recommitment made two years and four days ago when the Secretary of State for Wales announced that there was to be a second Severn crossing.

Is it not true that the absence of the Secretary of State for Wales today is proof that Wales and its Secretary of State have received a bloody nose with this decision? Does the right hon. Gentleman agree that there has been a great change of attitude towards tolls? Does he agree that the increase has nothing to do with the original cost of the bridge, which was £8 million? Tolls have gone up because of the Government's disgraceful neglect and the fact that the bridge has been shaken into premature senility by lorries which could have been controlled five or six years ago. The Government are culpable, and we are paying for their incompetence.

Mr. Channon: I am afraid that I do not agree with a great deal of what the hon. Gentleman said. I assure him that there is a need in any case to increase tolls on the Severn crossing, for the reasons that I have given. The report of the Comptroller and Auditor General criticised the fact that tolls have not been increased. They have been increased only twice in 22 years. They were imposed by the hon. Gentleman's party when it was in office. If it is so wrong to have tolls, why on earth did the Labour party impose them in the first place?

If the hon. Gentleman reads the statement which was made in 1986, he will see why I have made this statement. The former Secretary of State for Wales said that this is a major piece of infrastructure and that

> "The Department of Transport has the technical expertise, which clearly makes it appropriate for it to be the responsible Department."—[*Official Report*, 24 July 1986; Vol. 102, c. 612.]

As for giving my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales a bloody nose, since I was his Parliamentary Secretary in the early 1970s I have taken the view that it is much better not to fall out with him on anything, and nor have I on this.

Mr. David Nicholson (Taunton): Is my right hon. Friend aware that rapid completion of the second Severn crossing will be of great importance to Wales and the English side of the Bristol channel, given the rapid growth of the Welsh economy recently and the expectation that that will continue under the present Government? Is he aware that involvement of the private sector in this enterprise is greatly welcomed and may well be the harbinger of private sector involvement in future desirable infrastructure projects?

Mr. Channon: I am most grateful to my hon. Friend, and agree with him.

Mr. Alun Michael (Cardiff, South and Penarth): Does the right hon. Gentleman accept that the failure of the Secretary of State for Wales is reflected in his announcement because the Secretary of State would have had to declare it a "pay more" initiative? It is all initiatives from the Secretary of State for Wales. Does the right hon. Gentleman recognise that local authorities and industry in Wales have made great efforts to achieve economic recovery and that both have pleaded for the burden of the toll to be lightened because it is a tax on being Welsh, on doing business in Wales and on tourism in Wales? Will the right hon. Gentleman think again?

Mr. Channon: I cannot agree. If it is such an awful thing to have tolls on estuarial crossings perhaps it would have been better if the hon. Gentleman's party had not introduced them.

Mr. James Couchman (Gillingham): I am tempted, in view of today's news that the Severn bridge is to be closed for a couple of weekends soon, to ask whether that is a necessary step for having a second crossing, but that would be frivolous. As one who spent seven weeks serving on the Select Committee which considered the Dartford-Thurrock bridge, may I be assured that my right hon. Friend will do the most exhaustive studies into wind shielding before any Bill is committed to a Select Committee?

Mr. Channon: Yes, I certainly will. We are minded to have wind shielding on the bridge because winds on the Severn are thought to be considerably greater than those on the Thames.

Mr. Gareth Wardell (Gower): Is the Secretary of State saying that there is a choice here between further increases in tolls and the quick erection of a new crossing using public funds, and waiting for a long time for a bridge if public funds are to be used? If the answer is yes, provided that the necessary toll increases are reasonable, from my end of the M4, the view is that, the sooner a second crossing is built, the better it will be. I hope that the Secretary of State can tell me whether I have summed up the situation correctly and whether we are likely to have a second crossing in the very near future so that there can be more inward investment in Wales. We must remember that 1992 is looming large.

Mr. Channon: I am grateful to the hon. Member, especially for the constructive way in which he asked his question. He is not quite right. There must be an increase in tolls whatever happens. As I have already said, the Comptroller and Auditor General has severely criticised the present regime. It is clearly necessary to bring tolls up to date. The hon. Gentleman may very well be right when he says that, if there is a private sector solution, that may result in a second Severn crossing being available more quickly.

Mr. Michael Colvin (Romsey and Waterside): Will my right hon. Friend tell contractors who are submitting designs to bear in mind the fact that, by the time the new Severn crossing is constructed, approval may well have been given for the Severn barrage which will generate power by using the tides and have a road across the top of it? Will my right hon. Friend bear in mind the traffic that is likely to travel on that road before finalising designs for the second crossing?

Mr. Channon: My hon. Friend raises an interesting point. I shall consider it carefully.

Mr. Win Griffiths (Bridgend): Has the right hon. Gentleman's Department made an in-depth study of the level of toll likely to be necessary on the new bridge if it is to be run by a private company? Does he have a view about what would be an acceptable toll if the bridge were built by a private company? As the new bridge would be in competition with the existing one, would the Government automatically increase their tolls to enable the private operators of the second bridge to make a profit? Does he agree that if the bridge is built entirely with private money there will be no access to money from the European regional development fund? Under the rules of that fund, although the bridge is not in an assisted area, money could be forthcoming as it would assist considerably an assisted area—Wales—which is eligible for funding. Is this not a missed opportunity?

Mr. Channon: I certainly do not agree with the hon. Gentleman's point about the European Investment Bank, which I am hoping to meet. I shall certainly examine the point in conjunction with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales. We must see what level of tolls is proposed, whether it is acceptable and whether a solution involving that comes from the private sector. *[Interruption.]* Let us decide that matter when we have more evidence. If there were a private sector solution the odds are that we would run the two crossings together, as is the case with Dartford, to which my hon. Friend the Member for Gillingham (Mr. Couchman) referred. That seems to have been widely accepted. All those considerations must be taken into account when a decision is finally taken. All that I am saying today is that here is another opportunity which will have to be considered carefully and it may well provide a quicker solution to the problem.

Mr. Gerrard Neale (Cornwall, North): I congratulate my right hon. Friend on accepting the need for a second connection between the south-west and south Wales and on seeking possibilities of encouraging private investment in such a scheme so that it does not impact so much on the rest of his road building programme. Does he accept that it makes the case for extending the principle to non-estuarial crossings and seeking more private investment to accelerate the road building programme? Will he press his colleagues in the Treasury to review what many of us on this side consider to be a somewhat eccentric interpretation of the Ryrie rules, so that this matter will encourage more money and speed up the road building programme?

Mr. Channon: I read with great interest my hon. Friend's article on that very point a few weeks ago. He will not expect me to comment on the Ryrie rules, but I shall draw the attention of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer to what he says about them. I am grateful for what he said about the possibilities. We shall have to see what is proposed, and at the end of the day Parliament must decide whether to build the crossing with the normal method of financing or with private finance.

Mr. Frank Cook (Stockton, North): In considering the need to attract private capital and to keep toll charges as low as possible for consumers, will the Secretary of State bear in mind the amendment to early-day motion 1425 in the name of the hon. Member for Devon, North (Mr. Speller) which proposes

"that consideration be given to the possibility of combining this second Severn Bridge with a hydro electricity generating scheme."?

Will he bear in mind the fact that in drawing the outline for the design of the bridge he can incorporate hydro-electric schemes which would bring in income and reduce the need for higher toll charges, which in turn could reduce both the most adverse, disadvantageous ecological effects that environmentalists dread from the Severn barrage and the need for more nuclear power? Will he take that into account and include it in the design specification?

Mr. Channon: I shall study with care all that the hon. Gentleman has said and all that my hon. Friend the Member for Devon, North (Mr. Speller) has said.

Mr. Michael Jack (Fylde): Does my right hon. Friend agree that the time savings that will result from this bridge will be welcome and that the decision to press ahead with the new bridge is wholly justified in the light of the £56 million which has already been spent on maintenance of the existing bridge?

Mr. Channon: I understand my hon. Friend's point, and I agree in particular with his first point that the time savings will be welcome.

Mr. Chris Butler (Warrington, South): Will my right hon. Friend tell me whether the £1 level will be sufficient to pay the debt, or will we face ever-increasing tolls on the Severn bridge in future? Is there a difference in writing off the debt between the Humber bridge, the Mersey tunnel and the Severn bridge?

Mr. Channon: Each is a different case. As I have explained to the House, we have not yet written off anything. We are considering a proposal to write off a proportion of the Humber debt, which otherwise would be utterly unrealistic. I should like to receive firm proposals on Merseyside, and anything that my hon. Friend can do about that would be appreciated.

There is no doubt that there is a need now to increase the tolls on the Severn bridge. In real terms they are less than they were in 1966. If my hon. Friend is interested, I can give him a list of the tolls on other estuarial crossings, and he will find that some are higher than the Severn crossing toll. If I have not dealt fully with his point, I shall write to him.

Mr. Alan Williams (Swansea, West): I am not astonished at the absence of the Secretary of State for Wales. Clearly he has been defeated in Cabinet on the issue of Government funding for the bridge. Will the Secretary of State confirm that today's statement does not commit the Government to one extra, single penny towards the construction of the bridge? He has put up a smokescreen behind which to announce a draconian doubling of the tolls on the bridge. There is no clear statement on dates for the completion of a bridge. Do we understand from his announcement that the decision on dates will be not according to traffic flows, but left to the whim of a private investor? That seems to be what he has been saying.

Will the Secretary of State note that in his statement he talks of

"providing that crossing in the mid-1990s if traffic levels showed it was needed by then",

which is far less specific than the announcement yesterday in the Welsh Select Committee by the Secretary of State for Wales, who said that he expected it to be completed by the mid-1990s on current traffic flows? Who is right? Who is wrong? Does he agree unequivocally with that estimate by the Secretary of State for Wales?

What does the Secretary of State mean by saying that private investors may operate the bridge

"in conjunction with the existing bridge"?

Does that mean privatisation of the existing bridge, or handing managerial control of the existing bridge to private operators? In either case, what has happened to the Government's commitment to competition as the best way of achieving results? Is this not the reverse, in that the Government are saying that we need a private monopoly of the two bridges to obtain the funds to build a bridge at an early date? Is it not a fact that, because of the need to make a profit on the second bridge if it is privately constructed and owned, he cannot allow low tariffs or tolls on the existing bridge, even at the levels he has announced today, because that would divert traffic from the new private bridge to the existing bridge?

As the new bridge is crucially needed for Wales, as the Secretary of State said, as part of our regional policy to help Welsh industry develop, and as, by the time the bridge is completed, if it is, the Government will have robbed Wales of £1 billion in regional aid, why will not the Minister undertake to provide Government funds for the bridge and give us some of our money back?

Mr. Channon: I am absolutely astonished at the grudging way that the right hon. Gentleman greets this announcement. I am surprised because, before he started to speak on Welsh affairs, he used to be reasonable. I do not know what has happened to him in recent months—and, incidentally, nor does his hon. Friend, who is not present.

In answer to the right hon. Gentleman's important point, my right hon. Friends have made it perfectly clear about public sector financing of this bridge. They will

"proceed with a view to providing that crossing in the mid-1990s if traffic levels showed it was needed by then."

If the bridge goes ahead in the public sector, that was, is and will remain the case. As the right hon. Gentleman said, it will depend on traffic levels. If the bridge goes ahead in the private sector, which it may or may not do depending on whether private sector competition shows that that is the better solution, it will be open to promoters to propose schemes which will provide, conceivably, for an earlier opening of the crossing. I should have thought that that would be welcome to people in Wales and on Severnside. If that is an insuperable objection to involving the private sector, it is someting to be debated at the time. Let us see what comes forward. Running the new bridge in conjunction with the existing crossing seems likely to prove extremely satisfactory for the Dartford-Thurrock crossing and I see no reason at this stage why it should not prove satisfactory for the Severn crossing. We are not at that stage yet, so we must wait to see what develops.

The important point is that I have announced today a major opportunity to create the bridge. As soon as the geological and hydrological surveys are completed, we shall have a design and build competition for the new bridge. It makes much more likely the provision of a second Severn crossing in the mid-1990s. That is a substantial step forward, and I am utterly amazed that the Opposition should respond to the announcement in their typically grudging and mean-spirited way.

BILLS PRESENTED

HEARING AID COUNCIL 1968 (AMENDMENT)

Mr. Jack Ashley, supported by Mr. Malcolm Bruce, Mr. Allen McKay, Mr. Alfred Morris, Miss Emma Nicholson and Mr. Roger Sims, presented a Bill to amend the Hearing Aid Council Act 1968: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time tomorrow and to be printed. [Bill 213.]

CONTROL OF INTERCEPTION

Mr. Bob Cryer, supported by Mrs. Alice Mahon, Mr. Harry Barnes, Mr. Bernie Grant, Mr. Eric S. Heffer, Mr. Ken Livingstone, Mr. Harry Cohen, Mr. Ron Brown, Mr. Dennis Skinner, Mr. Eddie Loyden, Mr. Dennis Canavan and Mr. Bill Michie, presented a Bill to further control electronic interceptions, eavesdroppings and telephone interceptions; and for connected purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Wednesday 19 October and to be printed. [Bill 214.]

Adjournment (Summer)

Motion made, and Question proposed,

That this House, at its rising on Friday 29th July, do adjourn until Wednesday 19th October, and that the House shall not adjourn on Friday 29th July until Mr. Speaker shall have reported the Royal Assent to any Acts which have been agreed upon by both Houses.—*[Mr. Durant.]*

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): I should tell the House that Mr. Speaker has not selected the amendment standing in the name of the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer).

4.43 pm

Mr. Alfred Morris (Manchester, Wythenshawe): It must have been the expectation of right hon. and hon. Members in all parts of the House that, in a Session that commenced over 12 months ago, there would have been less unfinished Government business this July than in previous years. The backlog is, of course, a tribute to the Government's critics on both sides of the House and in all parts of another place. Of course, we all know that the last edition of *Hansard* before the recess will be fat with written replies to ministerially inspired questions, which the Government have been too shy, or too fly, to give while the House is still here to hold them to account.

The issue that I want briefly to raise, as the Leader of the House may have anticipated, is one of the first importance to millions of disabled people and their families; and at the outset I acknowledge that the right hon. Gentleman is not unfamiliar with some of the more daunting trials of disability.

My concern in this debate is about information that Ministers have now withheld from Parliament for over two months and which, on present plans, will not be published even tomorrow. By any reckoning, it must be totally unpardonable for the Government to scuttle into the recess without a debate on the long-awaited results—known to have been with Ministers since May—of a new and definitive survey of Britain's disabled population by the Office of Population Censuses, and Surveys. It is, by common consent outside this House, quite disgraceful that we have been unable to debate the OPCS's findings and have not even been told officially what they are.

Rumours abound that the results fully vindicate the charge, long made by voluntary organisations, that Whitehall has been grossly understating both the number of disabled people and the scale of deprivation among them. Nor is there simply rumour. "Whitehall sources" who have seen the OPCS's findings say that they show there are now more than 6 million people with disabilities in the United Kingdom, large numbers of them pensioners who live in poverty.

That is double the figure given by the Amelia Harris report, commissioned by the then Labour Government 20 years ago, and Whitehall sources are said to have told parliamentary journalists that the new findings are seen as "disastrous" by Ministers in their implications for public spending.

"We never truly knew what the numbers were until now", one senior journalist has been told,
"but we do now and there's no going back."
His source went on:

"We now know who these people are. We almost know their names."

The OPCS's report is said to give special emphasis to the problems facing elderly people with severe disabilities,

who are excluded from the Government's official estimates of losers from this year's social security changes. Many of them suffer multiple deprivation and the Government are said to be delaying publication of the new survey's findings in an attempt to find ways of disguising their significance. They are in no doubt that, if Ministers had published the OPCS's findings when they first became available in May, the public would already have demanded urgent action to relieve the suffering they reveal.

The Government's only recent initiative to help people with severe disabilities has been to set up the Independent Living Fund at a cost of £5 million. That was done a full two months after the Social Security Act 1986 came into force and two years after the Government had been told unequivocally what its effects would be for severely disabled people, old and young alike, striving to sustain their independence on inadequate incomes. They are people whose claim, and compelling need, was for benefits as of right.

Mr. Tom Clarke (Monklands, West): Would my right hon. Friend agree that, in addition to the important point that he is making, it is astonishing that we are almost at the end of the second Session of Parliament after the Royal Assent was given to the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act in 1986, yet the Government still do not have proposals for its full implementation? The fact that the Government have dealt so inadequately with the Griffiths report suggests that—alas—these matters are not given the priority that my right hon. Friend would have given them.

Mr. Morris: I utterly agree. Moreover, I take this opportunity to pay further tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) for his work in piloting that important piece of legislation to the statute book. He has support from right hon. and hon. Members on both sides of the House and it is grossly unacceptable that there should still be delay in implementing legislation of such importance to disabled people, their carers and their families.

The Independent Living Fund is a sticking plaster if ever there was one and, unless there is rapid action to translate the OPCS's data into social security benefits and the report by Sir Roy Griffiths into a coherent policy for community care, more and more disabled people will be consigned to the fringes of society. Sadly the OPCS's findings are already outdated by the punitive effects of the Social Security Act for very large numbers of the most needful disabled people and their families.

The Amelia Harris survey in the late 1960s, now reported to be extensively revised by the new OPCS report, found that two thirds of all people with an appreciable or severe disability were over pension age. On that basis, of the new figure of 6 million there must now be some 4 million disabled pensioners. Yet the Government's estimate of disabled losers from this year's social security changes left out disabled pensioners, as well as disabled children and people with disabilities who are unemployed. That is why the Government's estimate of 80,000 disabled losers so sharply contrasts with that of around 1 million made by the Disability Alliance, which represents over 100 voluntary organisations of and for disabled people.

When the Secretary of State for Employment, then the Secretary of State for Social Services, commissioned the OPCS's survey, the impression was given that the incomes of disabled people would be protected until its findings became known and a full review of current benefits had taken place. Whenever MPs pressed for improvements in benefits they were told to await the OPCS's findings, while the Government perfected their plans to make some 1 million disabled people worse off last April.

In a recent letter to the then Minister for Social Security and the Disabled, the Disability Alliance wrote:

> "We believe that the proposed publication of the OPCS's survey in September, in a manner apparently designed to stifle public debate, is demeaning to millions of people with disabilities. We urge you most strongly to make the survey's results available immediately so that they can be fully discussed before Parliament goes into Recess."

But the Government are packing us off tomorrow having resisted every parliamentary attempt to secure publication of a social document which, if it appears in September, will no doubt do so under the guidance of "news management" specialists of the highest skill.

That is seen outside the House as an inexcusable case of deliberately avoiding parliamentary scrutiny and debate. Many will think it demeaning and contemptuous not only of disabled people but also of Parliament itself. If the Government still refuse at least to publish the findings they received from the OPCS in May—there is still time to do so before we rise for the summer recess—we must hope that news editors, now forewarned, will prove more than a match for the "news managers" when the OPCS's disturbing revelations finally see the full light of day.

It is no exaggeration to say that people with disabilities have been thrown into more confusion and despair by the Government's legislative programme for this Session than I can remember for 20 years. In almost every policy area, the Government either ignore them or positively harm them. As the Leader of the House knows from our debate on 20 July, there is deep concern among disabled people about the poll tax. In education, representations in both Houses on behalf of children with special educational needs have been swept aside; in housing, Shelter has reported both that the number of new houses built by local authorities and housing associations has declined and that most of the housing stock suitable for adaptation has been lost to local authorities; in the inner cities programme, the access needs of disabled people are apparently being left to chance.

Throughout the last Parliament, the Government seemed committed to driving people into residential care by ensuring that the money available from supplementary benefit was vastly greater in private residential homes than for disabled people living in their own homes. So towards the end of 1986, Sir Roy Griffiths was asked to investigate and to recommend a solution.

At least the Government have published the Griffiths report but, unlike others by the same author, it is gathering dust because its findings and suggestions do not fit in with the prevailing ideology of bashing local authorities. That too is indefensible and we need to know the Government's response to the Griffiths report before the House rises tomorrow.

The argument about the deeply harmful effects of the Government's legislative programme for disabled people is not only one between Ministers and the Opposition parties in this House. It is an argument, indeed a fierce clash, between the Government and all the major voluntary organisations of and for disabled people. They deserve a definitive response to the concerns they are expressing, before this House rises for the recess tomorrow.

4.53 pm

Sir Ian Lloyd (Havant): I shall not follow the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris) in the subject that he knows so well and on which he speaks with such great authority. However, I am equally concerned about the public scrutiny of decisions of great importance and relevance to public policy. I wish to refer to two in particular which I think we should know more about. I refer first to the decision not to fund in full, or at least on the previous scale, the fast breeder reactor development in the United Kingdom and, secondly, to the decision effectively to cancel the extremely ingenious and promising British technological development known as HOTOL, the spacecraft which will apply new British technology to the conquest of space.

The relationship between the two projects will interest the House. In a sense, both have been either curtailed or placed on the slow burner for very much the same reason. In the case of the fast breeder reactor, the Government's reason is that they can see no particular requirement for the fast breeder reactor for 30 to 40 years. In the case of HOTOL, the main reason given was that there was no foreseeable market requirement for space launchers well beyond the end of the century. I believe that the phrase was "no foreseeable need".

Why are those two decisions important? I am raising the question of the fast breeder reactor this afternoon not because I am well known as a pro-nuclear buff, although I believe that the nuclear contribution to our civilisation in the civil sector is of immense importance, that it will grow in importance and that it is indispensable—I am raising this issue for a much more basic reason.

I refer the House to the international conference which took place in Toronto two or three weeks ago on the crisis of atmospheric pollution in our civilisation. I draw the House's attention to one of the principal conclusions reached by that conference:

"Humanity is conducting an enormous, unintended, globally pervasive experiment whose ultimate consequences could be second only to a global nuclear war."

The conference warned:

"without rapid remedial action, the world's temperature will rise by between 1·5 and 4·5 °C before the middle of the next century. . . . That would devastate coastal areas and islands by flooding, contamination of water supplies by salty waters, loss of farmland, and a dramatic increase in the number of tropical cyclones."

I will not develop that point further, but I should like to draw the attention of the House to some of the conclusions which the scientific journal *Atom* has reached on very much the same subject. It has pointed out that there are two consequences of what is happening, one of which is already accepted because we could not possibly stop it—it will probably inevitably take place over 10 to 20 years; the other is possibly within the limits of control, but both have substantial and devastating effects on the atmosphere. The article points out:

"A warming of 4·9 °C would be comparable to that which occurred between the coldest period of the last ice age 18,000 years ago and the present interglacial—all within the next 100 years! . . . in a mere 42 years, the world would be warmer, on average, than at any time within the recorded history of mankind . . . It is therefore crucial that science receives the support it requires to sharpen our understanding of the greenhouse effect"—

for that is what the phenomenon is—

"and its potential impacts on environment and society. The longer we wait, the larger will be the climatic change to which we are committed."

In what way can we contribute to that scientific understanding? As I understand it, the main way is by enlarging the present generation's scientific knowledge of the atmosphere, and of inner and outer space. In what way do we do that? We do it best by increasing our potential for placing scientific instruments in space. How can we best do that? By developing what are known as spacecraft—and the most eligible spacecraft available to the United Kingdom is HOTOL. So, where do we go from there? What judgment has been reached on HOTOL?

I can do no better—the House can do no better—than refer to the report of the House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology, and to some of its principal conclusions on space, which I believe are of outstanding importance. The Committee took evidence from the director general of the space agency in France, who reached an interesting, if Gallic conclusion, which is nevertheless relevant. For France,

"man in space . . . was simply a matter of sovereignty, 'like the sea around the United Kingdom'",

and therefore seen as a matter of immense and overriding importance.

British Aerospace, in its evidence to the Select Committee, said:

"Between now and the end of the century there will be a dramatic acceleration in space exploitation in line with the growing realisation by the civil and military communities of the substantial benefits that it offers".

The judgment of British Aerospace should not be lightly overridden, however biased or interested it may be. Another example is the recent decision of a major United States firm voluntarily and on its own account to reinstate the Atlas-Centaur production line to produce launch vehicles for commercial availability.

Other interesting and important conclusions of the House of Lords Select Committee include the following from the university of Southampton:

"Few of the potential benefits from space activities will be fully realised until a routine, low cost, re-usable launcher with simplified logistics is developed."

The United Kingdom Industrial Space Committee regarded this as an "over-riding priority", and British Aerospace stated:

"Many people believe that space is the key to national security and economic well-being. But the key to space itself is the launcher."

Superficial and rather glib comparisons have been made with Concorde, but the university of Bristol makes the following comment:

"Unlike Concorde, there seems to be every prospect of a genuine economic return because the basic cost of launch is massively reduced."

The House of Lords Committee itself then makes the interesting statement:

"Opting out is not an option . . . The Committee recommend that the United Kingdom play a visible and effective part in the exploration and exploitation of space."

At this point, the following recommendations fully serve my purpose. The Select Committee states:

"keeping the space budget fixed at about £112 million, has got the level wrong. This level of spending gets the worst of all worlds—too much for real savings, too little for lasting achievements. If the budget is to stay at this figure, the United Kingdom might as well bow out of space now."

It concludes:

"the Committee do not find it reasonable to suggest that it is for private industry to step in where Government itself has declined to act. The Committee have argued repeatedly that British industry should spend substantially more on R & D, especially on D. They have also welcomed the systematic

efforts now being made to capitalise upon exploitable areas of science. But they do not look to private industry, in space or any other field"—

and nor, for all my political philosophy, do I in this context, because it is totally unrealistic—

"to be the major source of funds for activities where the commercial returns, even if they were assured, lie well outside normal commercial timescales."

The word "timescales" brings me to the essence of what I have to say. I say it with the greatest reluctance, but it seems to me that in both these contexts the Government's policy is unimaginative, short-sighted and dangerous when considered in the fundamental context of the national interest. I ask myself, because I must, why that is so. Why have we spent only three hours in the past year or so debating fundamental scientific policy matters of this kind? Why do highly responsible and senior Ministers, whom I greatly respect in every other sense and who have before them the evidence that I have cited today, reach the decisions that they do? Can it be purely a matter of finance? Is it because they see a figure such as £5 billion and react—understandably, after the long history of uncontrollable subsidy—by saying that we must have no more of this? I entirely agree with that judgment, but there are areas in which the time scale is so long that it is entirely unreasonable to expect the private sector to undertake the risks inevitably involved. That is where a mistaken judgment has been made.

A sum of £5 billion is the kind of amount that has been bandied about in relation to HOTOL, but it is £5 billion over 10 to 20 years, and thus involves a maximum of £500 million or a minimum of £250 million per annum. Even then, I agree with the House of Lords judgment that this must be shared with Europe as a whole, because it is a project best brought to fruition on a European basis, with a major British contribution, but I cannot see such a contribution being based on the present arrangements or the judgments on which they are founded.

Those sums should be compared with the £2 billion per annum allocated by the Government for subsidy to the coal industry and other global budgets of that magnitude. In that context, £250 million does not frighten me. We must look critically at the balance of all these matters and if it means a little more stringency elsewhere, I would support such stringency so that resources can be released for major efforts in this direction.

Mr. John Wilkinson (Ruislip-Northwood): Apart from blindess and apparent ignorance, is not the problem the lack of any forum in this House such as the old Select Committee on Science and Technology whereby my hon. Friend and others with great expertise in these matters can bring that expertise to bear and enlighten and advise Ministers? Does my hon. Friend agree that the HOTOL project required only £4 million to £5 million per annum for the next three or four years until project definition was completed? If that had been successful, more would then have had to be spent for development. Nevertheless, we are talking about tiny sums compared with the £50,000 million per annum that we spend on social security.

Sir Ian Lloyd: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend on both points. This House is enormously indebted to the other place for taking up the gauntlet that we flung down and establishing its own Select Committee on Science and Technology. We have certainly missed the contribution that such a Committee could make. The establishment of a parliamentary office for science and technology may in due course make a modest contribution, but it is no substitute for a House of Commons Select Committee.

To my mind, the situation reflects a fundamental weakness in the organisation of the whole scientific community within the total community of the United Kingdom. When I say that that is a criticism of my party's Government, I hope that the Opposition will not gloat, as they made the same mistake. That failing has been a feature of both major parties throughout all the years that I have been in the House, and it will not be put right until the lack of balance is properly recognised at the very top. So far, it has not been recognised and there is no sign that it will be.

I therefore ask my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House to urge his colleagues to consider most carefully not just what I have said today but the evidence on which my comments have been based. That evidence is of profound importance, and I have seen no convincing arguments to refute it. Until I hear or read these arguments, I cannot support my right hon Friends in their decision to curtail the development of the fast breeder reactor or to reduce substantially—virtually to abolish—support for HOTOL.

If the greenhouse effect which I have described proves to be a major environmental phenomenon that successive Governments will have to address towards and beyond the end of the century, and if as a result—this is conceivable, although not yet proven—there has to be a dramatic and major reduction in the burning of coal and other fossil fuels, there will be only one alternative. By "major reduction" I mean thousands of millions of tonnes. All the fashionable alternative energies will not bridge the gap that will be opened when it is ordered that thousands of millions of tonnes of fossil fuels will not be burned. At the most, the fashionable alternative energies will produce 20 per cent. of our energy requirement. There would remain, of course, 80 per cent. If we have to reduce 80 per cent. to 40 per cent., the gap, as it were, of 40 per cent. can be filled only by nuclear power.

Will the gap have to be filled by nuclear power worldwide? I remind the House that the Chinese are now burning 1 billion tonnes of coal a year. Indeed, they take first place in the worldwide league table of coal burners. If nuclear power has to be generated on such a scale, it can be done with safety for our civilisation over a prolonged period only if we use fast breeder technology, which burns uranium 10 times more efficiently than the pressurised water reactor.

These are the perspectives that I believe the Government have neglected. If they have not, I should be delighted to know why and how.

5.12 pm

Mr. Archy Kirkwood (Roxburgh and Berwickshire): It is always a pleasure to participate in a debate after the hon. Member for Havant (Sir I. Lloyd) and the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris) have contributed to it. The hon. Member for Havant, in speaking of science and technology, and the right hon. Member for Wythenshawe, in talking of disability, have raised important and urgent aspects of public policy. They are right to argue that the Government should bend their mind to these considerations before the House rises for the summer recess.

[Mr. Archy Kirkwood]

I crave the indulgence of the House to raise a more human, more urgent and more current issue, which is the conditions that prevail in the prisons of the United Kingdom generally and particularly, because it is the area that I know best, in Scotland. I am not sure of the proprieties, but it occurs to me that I have not yet advised the hon. Member who represents the constituency in which Glenochil prison is to be found——

Mr. Nicholas Budgen (Wolverhampton, South-West): I should sit down.

Mr. Kirkwood: Perhaps it is right that I should do so. If I should have informed the hon. Member concerned —I want to refer to Glenochil—I apologise in advance to whoever it might be.

There is deep and widespread anxiety in Scotland about what is going on in Glenochil. The general public are perplexed. Trouble is brewing, and I believe that it will continue to brew over the summer months. That belief is shared generally by the public in Scotland. If some of the worst predictions and fears are fulfilled, we may find that during the summer additional damage will be done to the fabric of the prison building. There is the danger that injuries will be sustained by prisoners, prison staff and the officers and wardens who look after the staff. The disturbances could easily get out of hand. There is a potential crisis in Scottish prisons generally, and in Glenochil especially.

Glenochil has been the subject of great controversy over recent years because of fatalities and other incidents. The prison authorities in Scotland decided to make Glenochil a full-blown prison in its own right earlier this year. A riot started on 4 May, which lasted on and off for nearly five days. Since then there has been what can be described only as a war of attrition between the prison management and the prisoners. My information comes from press reports. It is only through these reports that I and the general public can learn of anything that is going on in the prison.

Press reports suggest that the riot was caused by a lock-down after an assault on a prison warden. Following that assault, every prisoner was locked up and all visits were cancelled. An open day was allowed, and press reports suggest that it showed a great sense of hopelessness. There were allegations of brutality and of continuing and persistent degradation. The authorities allowed the open day to take place, but when the members of the press asked to cross-examine some of the inmates who were involved in the original fracas which caused the riots, they were told that they were not available. If prisoners are locked up for 23 hours out of every 24, I fail to see how inmates can be described as not available.

There are more than 400 prisoners, and they have in various ways made allegations. These include having to strip naked before they are fed. It is said that they have to hang from cell bars before they receive their food. The prisoners are locked up for 23 hours of every 24. They have no toilet facilities and none of them has any bedding facilities. If my memory serves me right, a 27 -year-old hanged himself in the prison in June.

The press reports and the other pieces of information that are available to me are extremely disturbing and worrying. The management say that the trouble has been caused by a hard core of difficult and intractable recidivist prisoners who are not responding to reasonable attempts to compromise. It is alleged that they are leading a revolt and are responsible primarily for the trouble.

I was prompted to raise this issue this afternoon when I read a letter printed in the *Glasgow Herald*. It caused me a great deal of deep concern. The letter was written by Stephen Small from Her Majesty's prison, Peterhead. He explains in his letter—I think that the *Glasgow Herald* was right to publish it—that he was a prisoner in Glenochil until recently. He was there until he committed an offence, after which he was taken to Peterhead so that the matter could be investigated.

In a disturbing letter, he states:

"There were a few minor incidents between Christmas and May. Then on May 4, at 4.30 pm in D hall, an officer offered a prisoner a 'square go' during an argument. The prisoner overcame the officer but was then attacked by another officer. The fuse was lit.

There was a very heavy Mexican stand-off and everyone was locked up until the police came in to take statements, which they did that night. We were told we would be locked up that night and told the reason.

There was no trouble that night. The following day everyone was expecting to get back to normal. We didn't. We got no slop-out, no exercise, no visits and late, cold meals. By teatime, people started smashing their cells. We weren't told anything about what was happening. The following day things got worse. Again, no slop-out or exercise or visits or hot food. The whole prison erupted."

This prisoner argues that there was

"no small core of hard men. Instead, there were 200 very disgruntled inmates who had up to that time done absolutely nothing wrong."

His conclusion is:

"The reason it has continued so long"—

that is, the riot—

"is that the Governor . . . has taken it upon himself to ride roughshod over the regulations contained in the Prison Scotland Act 1952. No less than 25 regulations are being broken . . . every day."

That contradicts and refutes the allegation that a small hard core of difficult prisoners is causing the problem.

I do not blame the warders or the staff, however. I think that the filthy conditions are a direct result of the prisoners' activity. Prison officers can now patrol A hall only in full riot gear, and live in constant fear of being taken hostage. According to the press reports, they are pelted with urine and human excrement every time they enter A hall, and there have been three reported attempts at snatching officers and 12 alleged assaults.

There has been much talk of prison management breaking prisoners, or trying to bend them to their will. If the press allegations are true—they are the only information available to me; I have not visited the prison, and am not even an expert on the penal system—the management must be held at least partly responsible. I certainly think that there can be little excuse for denying prisoners slop-out rights for so long, and for denying them exercise rights for a total of 432 hours since the problem blew up in May.

I should like to call for an urgent independent inquiry, into Glenochil in the first instance but also into the general position, taken against the background of the recent difficulties and disturbances in Peterhead, Barlinnie and Perth in Scotland, not to mention Haverigg and Lindholme in England. This is a matter of public concern which requires urgent attention from the Government if we are to avoid trouble over the summer months.

My constituents, and other people in Scotland, are concerned to see in television sequences drugs being handed from cell to cell by inmates. It is also worrying that warders and staff are taking such long spells of sick leave. That, I believe, is symptomatic of the pressure under which they are working. It is also a disgrace and a scandal that some 5,588 prisoners are locked up in Scotland, which is a much larger proportion per thousand head of population than in any other civilised country on the continent.

The problem needs both urgent short-term action and longer-term investigation. There are long-term solutions to be found without much difficulty, including better access to parole. Only violent criminals really need to be gaoled. Far too many people are now in prison for defaulting on fines, for instance, and the number on remand—although the problem is worse in England and Wales than in Scotland—is also far too large. I was impressed by the recent report by the Church of Scotland, which advocated a wide range of non-custodial options. A number of other regimes are available to the Government, and could be made available in turn to the courts to accommodate and lessen the problem. The report also mentioned the probation service, which is woefully underdeveloped and under-resourced at present.

We were expecting a Government White Paper about the prison service with reference to Scotland. It should have been published by now, but the most recent news is that we must wait until September for this important document. Nor has the parole review yet been published which was to examine the Scottish position with a view to bringing the qualifying period for parole in Scotland into line with that in England. That too should be done as a matter of urgency.

There is a legal fiction in this country that we imprison people not for purposes of retribution, but to try to rehabilitate them. That has been blown out of the water by the disturbances that we see from day to day in our prisons, particularly in Scotland. Of course no hon. Member would or should condone violence or vandalism in prisons. It is a matter for the courts in the first instance to decide how crimes should be punished and dispose sentences. The Government, however, have a responsibility to provide public policy, resources and organisation to meet the needs of the day, and I do not think that that duty is being discharged.

The Government should immediately close A hall in Glenochil and relocate the prisoners until the problem can be investigated by an independent inquiry. They should then set up a wide-ranging inquiry into the state of the prisons in the United Kingdom. If they do not do that over the summer, I fear that the consequences may be not just more damage to the fabric of our prisons, but injury and loss of life to prison inmates, warders and staff.

5.25 pm

Sir Anthony Meyer (Clwyd, North-West): I shall be a good deal briefer than any hon. Member who has spoken so far.

There is a matter that I would have wished to raise if the House had not been about to disperse, and which may develop rather too swiftly during the recess. The "bed and breakfast" racket has been with us for some time now, but there is an ingredient which, if not new, is becoming increasingly prominent.

The seaside resort of Rhyl in my constituency is a very pleasant place to be. For a long time now, the advantages of being unemployed in Rhyl rather than in Manchester or Liverpool have been sufficiently manifest to attract to Rhyl people with little chance of finding a proper job there, other than the briefest of seasonal employment at the most down-market end of the tourist trade. As a consequence, the level of unemployment there appears to be scandalously high for about nine months in the year.

Now, however, the nuisance is becoming something rather worse. A number of rather dubious firms have begun to realise that a steady and lucrative business can be built up not just by providing bed-and-breakfast accommodation for those with no job and nowhere to live, but by attracting people to such accommodation from far afield. What is more, the profits are so substantial and so certain that the firms are now in the market to buy up property for that purpose.

The profits are substantial because the scale of lodging allowance paid by the DHSS for this so-called hostel accommodation is higher than the level of housing benefit that would be paid by the council—which would, of course, have asked the rent officer to fix a reasonable rent. Such firms are making a fat and assured profit, and they are making it entirely at the taxpayers' expense.

Recently, the YMCA building in Rhyl came on the market. The council, in pursuance of the Government's intention that it should act as enabler rather than provider of housing, invited the Clwyd Alyn housing association to buy it, and to convert it to sheltered housing as part of the much-needed housing improvement in this rather rundown part of the town. The housing association, however, was easily outbid by a speculator, who then resold the YMCA premises to a company called Bideawhile, which has converted it into what it openly describes as a DHSS hostel.

Let me quote from a letter that I have received from Rhuddlan council's housing director:

"If this property was providing for a local need, then, no doubt, we would not have the same concern, but it would appear that the premises are filling up with families who are being encouraged to move here from other areas by press advertisements. The Area Office of the Clwyd Social Service Department is particularly concerned at the increasing workload that is being placed upon them, as already they have been consulted by 13 families who arrived at the former YMCA building, and have subsequently approached the Social Service Department with their problems, and some of these families are already known to have serious problems. Examples of places from where they have come include Trafford, Salford, Halifax, Winsford, Preston and Blackpool. As a result of contact with Social Service staff in their home towns, it is known that a family from Trafford and a family from Halifax both voluntarily walked out of secure Council housing accommodation in those areas to move to this new accommodation in Rhyl.

The following example of a press advertisement was spotted in the Manchester Evening News on the 22nd June, 1988 and read as follows:—

'SINGLE MOTHERS/PARENTS and children. Secure accommodation offered. DHSS welcome. Telephone Rhyl 4201 (Office Hours).'"

That is the number of the YMCA building in Rhyl.

The housing director continues:

"I have had discussion with the Deputy Manager of DHSS in Rhyl who advised that they have no power to prevent this type of situation arising or increasing. He advised that provided his staff were satisfied the claimants were genuinely in residence in this type of accommodation and were not here on holiday, then the claimants were entitled to board and

[Sir Anthony Meyer]

lodging payments, up to the maximum set down in DHSS regulations . . . The only limitation on payments of this nature would be to single persons under the age of 26."

That process is also damaging the efforts of the council and others to improve the West End of Rhyl, which is a rundown housing area.

As the housing director puts it:

"Rhyl West End is considered a stress area by Community Agencies as a result of the high levels of unemployment . . . anti-social behaviour, drugs and a general high demand being made upon various agencies, particularly Social Services. It has also been our housing stress area . . . with the high concentration of houses in multiple occupation. In a determined effort to reverse the decline of the Rhyl West End, the Council has adopted a housing strategy involving the declaration of Housing Action Areas, and with the support of the Welsh Office has either completed, or work is in progress on, six Envelope Schemes involving some 250 properties."

All that good work is liable to be undone if more and more properties in the area are snapped up by unscrupulous operators who will then scour the country for problem families with the promise of seaside accommodation paid for by the DHSS, and pour them into this most unsuitable accommodation, lining their pockets nicely at the taxpayers' expense.

It is easy to diagnose the problem; it is a lot harder to suggest a solution. There is an obvious racket, and an obvious discrepancy between the money that can be provided by way of housing benefit and what the DHSS can pay for bed and breakfast—and it is usually the sketchiest of breakfasts.

One thing is clear. This is a problem which calls for the tightest possible co-operation between the Department of Social Security, the Department of the Environment and the local authorities. I am not sure that the present arrangements have resulted from such tight co-operation, and I hope that during the 10 weeks of the recess those Departments and local authorities will put their heads together to good effect.

5.31 pm

Mr. Alun Michael (Cardiff, South and Penarth): I want to touch on another housing scandal, which also results directly from the Government's policies and shows the unacceptable face of the so-called enterprise economy. I want to challenge the Government on a matter of vital and urgent importance to millions of people which is given fresh impetus and urgency by the Prime Minister's shocking and uncaring reply in the House this afternoon.

The Prime Minister was asked about problems with house prices and she said that that should be left to action by the voluntary sector. The Leader of the House said the same. They meant that they do not care and will not act. I warn the Prime Minister and other Ministers that they cannot sweep aside the scandals of gazumping and the house price spiral so easily. Many right hon. and hon. Members have demonstrated that by signing early-day motion 1311 tabled by me and my hon. Friend the Member for Torfaen (Mr. Murphy) a couple of weeks ago. Many people outside the House applauded its terms. Let me briefly remind the House of what it says.

The motion suggests that we should regard a decent standard of housing for all as a minimum objective in a civilised society, and notes the appalling effects of the present spiral in house prices, particularly on young couples and other first-time buyers. It deplores the way in which gazumping can, at the last minute, snatch security from people who thought that they had reached agreement on a price for a home of their own. It calls on the Government to introduce emergency legislation for England and Wales, including the Scottish system for registering price agreements, at an early stage in order to achieve fairness for buyers and sellers alike, and to curb the excesses created by the pressures of the present over-free housing market. We hoped that that gentle appeal to common sense might receive a response from the Government, or perhaps a promise of emergency legislation, or at least a statement.

Mr. Roy Beggs (Antrim, East): Does the hon. Gentleman agree that any such legislation should also apply to Northern Ireland, because exactly the same thing is happening there?

Mr. Michael: I hesitate to suggest that something should be introduced for Northern Ireland, but I would happily endorse representations from Northern Ireland Members who sought the same end that I do in respect of England and Wales. There is a clear need for emergency legislation, and if the situation is the same in Northern Ireland I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will support my point this afternoon.

We expected some action from the Government—perhaps a promise of emergency legislation. After all, many hon. Members have illustrated the problem. We expected at least a statement, but at first there was nothing. Then, the weekend before last, it seemed that the Government had decided to respond to our plea and to do something. In a number of television and radio interviews, we saw and heard the then Secretary of State for Industry and Consumer Affairs talking of action to end gazumping and the house price spiral.

What a welcome and refreshing piece of news that was. The Minister specifically mentioned gazumping and the Scottish law, so we were pleased to have some reaction. We were a little perturbed at the suggestion that a voluntary code of practice for estate agents was all that was needed, but at least there seemed to be something on which we could comment; something on which a debate could be founded.

However, when we asked for details the following week, a mystery seemed to shroud the whole affair. There was no statement in the House of Commons. No consultative document was produced. There was not even a press release, although, as I have said, there was media discussion. When I contacted the Minister's private office, his staff could give no information.

Therefore, I tabled a series of written questions to Minister's from the Department of Trade and Industry asking for details of the proposals on which they intended to consult. The reaction has been simply to deflect those questions to the Attorney-General, the Secretary of State for the Environment, or whoever they could think of, exposing the fact that there was never any intention to tackle the problem of the house price spiral. There are no proposals. The announcement of consultations was clearly a sham and a piece of media hype. Instead, we have a shoddy case of buck-passing.

In my string of questions came the honesty of an answer from the Under-Secretary of State for Wales. When I asked what proposals he had under consideration to end

the practice known as gazumping in Wales and to slow house price rises, and what consultations he intended to undertake, he answered:

"I do not consider that Government intervention in the market for owner-occupation would improve the situation."

To say that that is an honest answer is to highlight its only virtue. Like the answers given by the Prime Minister and the Leader of the House this afternoon, it exposes the Government's callous indifference to a real problem. It exposes the Government's intention to run away from the scandal of house prices. It exposes the cynicism of a Government who want to look as if they are listening when they have in fact closed their minds to all pleas.

The Attorney-General and the Under-Secretary of State for the Environment have also given stonewalling responses which confirm that from the Welsh Office. The hon. Member for Broxbourne (Mrs. Roe) told my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Darling):

"House prices are determined by individual buyers and sellers, and the Government do not propose to intervene in private negotiations."—[*Official Report*, 4 November 1987; Vol. 121, c. *725*.]

What an appalling and heartless response that is. Anyone—that must include most hon. Members—who has sought a first home or to move house will know that that is a traumatic and difficult process, governed by forces far outside the control of the individual buyer or the individual seller. Those answers expose the narrowness and bigotry of Ministers. The media hype of the Department of Trade and Industry appeared to offer care and humanity for a brief moment, but even that is being snatched away from us. Let me make it clear that, in his non-statement, the Minister was offering us very little in the first place. To suggest that a voluntary code for estate agents would solve the problem is manifest nonsense.

Rather than inaction or a voluntary code, the Government should bring in the best aspects of the Scottish legislation—it does not have to be the complete system—as quickly as possible, so that everyone is protected within a framework of law. There would be no need to bring in all aspects of the Scottish system. All that is needed is that element of certainty by which a price can be agreed and remain certain before all the legal niceties have been worked through.

At the moment, uncertainty is damaging to everyone. Those of us with homes do not gain, because if we sell our house it will have gone up just as much. Those without a home have the horror of seeing prices escalate beyond their reach. It is the young couples starting out in life and the elderly who want security in their old age who are most damaged by that situation.

The Government should come clean. If, as the Minister seemed to suggest on radio and television, the Government consult on the matter, they should set out the basis of consultation. Certainly a large number of people have a great deal of experience to recount because they have suffered personal loss in recent weeks and months. Talk of a voluntary code is a diversion. If the Government do nothing, they should say so clearly, and explain to people their reasons for that extraordinary and callous neglect. They should either give us the basis of the negotiation or say that they will do nothing before the recess so that we know where we stand.

Without an immediate and positive response now, before the recess, the Government must stand exposed by the answers of Ministers, the Leader of the House and the Prime Minister. They must stand guilty of failing to act, they must stand guilty of a cover-up, and they must be exposed as guilty of running away from the house price scandal and abandoning millions of ordinary people who need a simple framework of legal protection as they undertake the single most important financial transaction of their lives, to put roofs over their heads.

5.40 pm

Sir Fergus Montgomery (Altrincham and Sale): I am grateful for the opportunity to raise three issues before we adjourn for the summer recess.

In 1984, the Government were so concerned about advances in medical science relating to research projects involving the human embryo that they established a special committee of inquiry under the chairmanship of Lady Warnock. That report, which was far from unanimous, was subsequently debated in Parliament and it was clear that there was general opposition to the use of the human embryo for the purposes of research. Mr. Enoch Powell, who at that time was a Member of Parliament, chose to use his place in the private Members' ballot to introduce a Bill—the Unborn Children (Protection) Bill—to prevent the use of the human embryo for experimental purposes.

When that Bill was debated in Parliament, it received an overwhelming majority on Second Reading, but it failed to make progress due to the vagaries of our private Members Bill procedure, which make it possible for a small but determined handful of hon. Members to block progress on any Bill, no matter how great the support it enjoys in the House.

In the next Session, the Bill was again given a substantial majority when it was reintroduced by my hon. Friend the Member for Hyndburn (Mr. Hargreaves). Again, a majority blocked its progress. In the ensuing Session, my hon. Friend the Member for Bury, North (Mr. Burt) made an unavailing attempt to get the Bill through, and in the current Session, the Bill has been picked up by my hon. Friend the Member for Lancashire, West (Mr. Hind).

I should have thought that it was obvious that the House wanted to legislate on that subject. Recognising that, the Government produced a consultation document, and after receiving evidence, last year published a White Paper setting out their plans for legislation which would involve bringing forward a Bill with alternative clauses —one allowing embryo experimentation and one preventing such experimentation. Indeed, during the last general election, they gave a commitment that legislation would be brought forward as soon as practicable.

Therefore, I hope that the inclusion of such proposals will appear in the forthcoming Queen's Speech. But there are disturbing rumours that the Government have no intention of taking action on that important issue. I do not believe that the House should rise for the summer recess until we have had an assurance from my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House that he accepts that failure to legislate would be greeted with profound disappointment by many hon. Members and by millions of people in the country.

Similarly, we cannot go into recess with clear consciences until we have reached a decision on abortion law reform. I have raised that issue before, and I make no apology for raising it again.

[Sir Fergus Montgomery]

It was clear from the repeated majorities in favour of the Bill introduced by the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton) that the House believes that the time is long overdue for the reform of our too-liberal abortion laws. The Abortion (Amendment) Bill was a limited measure and would have allowed the House to reach a decision on this important issue. However, the Bill was lost because a small but determined group of opponents used the procedures of the House to prevent the necessary votes from being taken. All that was needed was a little extra time. All the arguments had been made and people outside Parliament could not understand why, having debated the issue, Parliament was prevented from expressing its will.

I hope that, before we rise, we can receive from my right hon. Friend an assurance that in the near future the Government will find some way for the House to reach a conclusion. I warn my right hon. Friend that the problem will not go away. If no action is taken, similar Bills will continue to appear, and the more that opponents of abortion reform do to prevent a decision being reached, the more the House will be brought in disrepute.

Unless those matters are dealt with before the House rises, many right hon. and hon. Members will not be able to start the recess with easy minds, and we will join that other large group of deeply troubled people—the Barlow Clowes investors, some of whom, through the collapse of the Barlow Clowes companies, have lost their entire life savings. Those people were not greedy, and they were not speculators; they are ordinary retired people, some of whom invested their redundancy payments in that unfortunate venture. They have in common a sense of disbelief and shock at what has happened to them.

I am always wary of giving publicity to constituents' private problems, and many constituents have told me about their heavy losses over this fiasco. However, a church in Altrincham has been hit by that debacle. A recent article in the *Manchester Evening News* stated:

"An Altrincham vicar fears his church has lost £42,500 invested in the crashed £190 million empire of Cheshire tycoon Peter Clowes.

Building work at St. John the Evangelist, in St. John's Road, Altrincham, has been left unfinished after construction of a parish and community centre in the west end of the Victorian building stopped days after the crash."

It went on to say:

"they went ahead with the investment on the advice of 'a practising Christian', Mr. Gordon Pettie. His Poynton-based Gordon Pettie Investment Services was last week suspended by Fimbra, the watchdog for financial intermediaries.

The money came from the sale of the church hall alongside St. John's, which is a landmark in the Altrincham area."

Later in the article the vicar stated:

"'What really sold us on this investment was that the brochure for BCI portfolio 68 implied that all the money would be invested in gilts.'

In the event, when the liquidators moved in they discovered that out of £138 million invested in the offshore BCI fund only £2 million had been placed in gilts, and there was only a further £24 million in bank accounts."

I was delighted that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry set up an urgent inquiry by Sir Godfray Le Quesne, and we can expect a report in mid-October. I went to see my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on behalf of my constituents. He told me that he had read every letter that had been sent to the Department of Trade and Industry by Barlow Clowes investors. He had been saddened and upset by some of the letters; he promised that the report would not be a whitewash and that it would get at the truth.

However, I was disturbed to read in the *Daily Mail* on 25 July:

"A battle between Trade Secretary Lord Young and virtually the entire Tory party is boiling up over the Barlow Clowes financial scandal.

He has told MPs he will vigorously oppose Whitehall compensation for about 17,000 small investors."

It continues:

"But Lord Young, fully backed by the Treasury, is digging in hard. It is not so much the money as the principle. If the Government is found to have been negligent, the Barlow Clowes affair could become the benchmark for other cash claims on Whitehall when other firms crash on the Stock Exchange."

That is not good enough. If the report proves that there were faults in the Department of Trade and Industry, then some compensation must be paid.

Many of my constituents have told me that they invested in Barlow Clowes because it had the stamp of approval from the Department of Trade and Industry. Many investors feel that they should have been alerted long before the crash.

Therefore, before the House rises, there should be a statement that the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has not set his face against compensation, if it is proved that there is culpability at the Department of Trade and Industry. I hope that justice will be done for the 18,000 unfortunate investors.

I hope that we can have a statement on those three important subjects—the protection of the human embryo against experimentation, abortion law reform and the need to reassure the Barlow Clowes investors—before the House rises for the summer Adjournment.

5.49 pm

Mr. John Garrett (Norwich, South): I want to follow the issue raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Michael), although I hasten to add that there was no collusion between us.

Before the House rises, I wanted to consider the stress that is caused by the shortage of affordable housing to rent and to buy, which is at its worst in East Anglia, and worst of all in my constituency. The problem is reaching crisis proportions, and is a result of Government policies, high mortgage rates, uncontrolled house prices and a virtual end to house building by local authorities.

I shall exemplify what I have to say by showing the extent of stress caused by these factors in my constituency. In Norwich, a small terraced house costs about £45,000 —although it may have gone up while I am speaking. It is not unusual for the price of a house like that to rise by £1,000 overnight. Gazumping is rife. Many of my constituents have complained to me that they wish that the Government would follow through an ostensible promise made by a Minister last week to do something about gazumping, if only by moving to an approximation of the Scottish system.

Norwich has the highest rate of house price increases in the country. Last year, house prices in the city rose by 40 per cent., and in the last quarter by 25 per cent. I do not know whether the changes in the Finance (No. 2) Bill will make any difference from the end of this month, but at the

moment it looks as if house prices are rising geometrically, with about 50 per cent. increases every half year, as against 40 per cent. in the whole of last year.

East Anglia in general, and Norwich in particular, have traditionally been low-wage areas. Many people there work in occupations with an average wage of £6,000 a year. So even if a building society or insurance company is willing to offer a multiple of three times a person's income, the cheapest house is still out of reach. If a person and his partner can raise between them three times the former's income and one and half times the latter's, the smallest terraced house will still be out of their reach.

The council's waiting list contains 5,000 applicants—the highest number ever—of whom 3,500 are now in shared accommodation. Five hundred elderly or disabled people are on the waiting list for sheltered accommodation, of which the city has 170 units. The waiting list for such accommodation can be imagined. A typical elderly person waiting for transfer to more suitable accommodation—typically from a house on an estate into a ground-floor flat, sheltered accommodation or a bungalow—has a wait of four and a half to five and a half years. Many of them die while on the waiting list.

A single person's average wait on the list is five years or more, so many single people end up sharing accommodation in houses in multiple occupation. The number of such houses in the city has risen dramatically in recent years. Many of them are overcrowded and unsatisfactory, with poor facilities and inadequate fire safety standards. The council's programme of inspection has been put under pressure by the sheer number of properties to be visited, and it is not even known for certain how many there are.

Many families with children in upper flats are in desperate need of suitable accommodation. There are 1,700 such people on the waiting list with 50 per cent. or 100 per cent. priority. Not one of my surgeries goes by without a couple or a single parent being reduced to tears by the fact that they are stuck in an upper flat with no prospects for years to come of moving themselves and their children into a more appropriate property with a garden and a space to play in which the children can be supervised.

Norwich city council used to have one of the finest housing records in the country, with 25,000 council houses under its control. Ten years ago it built 528 in one year; in 1988 the prospect is that it will build 76, of which 20 or 30 will be sheltered accommodation. It will take 20 years to clear the backlog of private house owners who are waiting for home improvement grants under present Government allocations.

The city of Norwich housing committee's annual report shows the financial contribution that the city can make to decent housing. Like any other district, it draws up an annual housing investment programme for new housebuilding, improvements and modernisations. This year's bid was for £22 million, part of which would be met by borrowing. However, borrowing for housing investment by local authorities must be approved by the Government, who have consistently refused to allow Norwich to invest in local housing. The amount approved was £5 million. As a result of being able to keep 20 per cent. of the funds realised from the sale of council houses, the final outturn was £12 million. Local freedom to set a realistic and responsible budget for housing investment has all but disappeared.

To summarise: extraordinary market forces in the private sector have driven owner-occupation beyond the means of many local people—particularly young people setting out on an independent life, and newly married people. These forces have created a shortage of rented accommodation too. Government policies on housing investment mean that the council is trying to meet the need for affordable rented property without adequate resources, which are continually refused by the Government. As a result, housing waiting lists are longer and longer, there are new levels of homelessness and more people are being forced to live in overcrowded and unsatisfactory conditions.

As I said before, Norwich has an exceptional record for good housing. I am pleased to say that it has been under Labour control for 55 years. It now has the largest Labour majority in its history and I have no doubt that it will be under Labour control for the rest of my lifetime.

Given the opportunity, the council could provide the decent housing for which it was famed until the onset of this Government. Government policies have forced all this housing stress on my constituents, and that is a matter that should be drawn to the Government's attention before the House rises.

5.58 pm

Mr. Michael Latham (Rutland and Melton): I thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, for calling me, as the first non-knight to speak from the Conservative Benches in the debate.

I agree with the remarks made by my hon. Friend the Member for Altrincham and Sale (Sir F. Montgomery) about Barlow Clowes. I raised this subject with my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House in business questions this afternoon: it is a matter of the greatest importance. If, when the report appears during the recess—as presumably it will—it blames the Department of Trade and Industry directly or indirectly, many hon. Members will expect immediate action to be taken to compensate those who have been left in a distraught state.

There is no point in shirking this. We must ask ourselves, in the event that the DTI is blamed, who takes the responsibility? If nothing happens and we go on as before, we shall have to conclude that ministerial responsibility no longer counts for anything in this country. I shall expect something to be done immediately if blame is apportioned to the DTI—and so will my constituents who have been affected. I cannot say this too strongly to my right hon. Friend.

A few days ago, a disturbing report appeared recommending that the Government should consider abandoning the formula of the resource allocation working party—the so-called RAWP formula—which was first put in place by the last Labour Government, specifically by the then Minister of State responsible for the Health Service, Roland Moyle.

I first entered the House as a Member representing Leicestershire in 1974. At that time the Leicestershire health authority—or its predecessor, the area health authority—received only 75 per cent of average National Health Service funding. Largely as a result of the RAWP formula, it is now up to 96 per cent., but I stress that we are still 4 per cent. below the average. The RAWP formula should not be taken away from Leicestershire. Further, it should not be taken away from the whole Trent region,

[Mr. Michael Latham]

which, as the hon. Member for Ashfield (Mr. Haynes) knows only too well, is poorly funded. It is essential to the Trent region and Leicestershire district health authority. I entirely understand why Ministers want to help London hospitals, but they must not do so by messing around with the RAWP.

We must give more attention—I know that we had a debate on this subject on Tuesday—to the state of our roads, especially our motorways and the need for more bypasses. The M1 and M25 are an absolute scandal. It is disgraceful that deplorable forecasts were made years ago, yet we are still building new roads that will be over capacity before they are even opened.

When Ministers bring forward the transport policy programme allocations to local authorities later this year, money should be found for essential bypasses. Traffic is fast grinding to a halt in Oakham in my constituency. We must have a bypass, but it appears that it could be 10 years or more before anything is done. As a modern industrial country, we should be ashamed of the state of the M25 and M1 and of the delay and inconvenience that they are causing motorists and lorries taking essential exports abroad.

Please will my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House, as a matter of urgency when we return after the recess, arrange for the annual debate on the reports of the Public Accounts Committee? There is an essential wealth of material to be brought to the attention of the House about gross waste of money by one Department after another, especially the Ministry of Defence. We need to hear how Ministers will respond to the reports of the National Audit Office and the Public Accounts Committee. Apart from my constituency work, I regard serving on the Public Accounts Committee as the most important and constructive work that I do in the House.

6.1 pm

Mr. Roy Beggs (Antrim, East): I welcome this opportunity to bring to the attention of the House a problem about which I feel as strongly as hon. Members do about the problems in their constituencies—the Government's privatisation proposals for Northern Ireland.

It has already been said that the Northern Ireland electricity service will be privatised. An announcement has been made about Harland and Wolff, and, to top it all, Short Brothers plc is to be privatised. My right hon. Friend the Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneaux) will address these problems later, but I express my views in the hope that the Government will respond positively to our joint appeals.

Today, a group of responsible trade unionists from Belfast came to London to express to hon. Members their concerns about the disasters that they perceive of massive job losses and irreparable damage being done to the Northern Ireland economy at a time when we need evidence of continuing good will and support. I sincerely hope that the Government will not try to provoke confrontation and industrial conflict, because it can and should be avoided at all costs.

Ulster Unionist Members do not dogmatically support nationalisation or privatisation. We recognise the merits of privately managed industry, and, in certain circumstances, further privatisation of industry in Northern Ireland may gain acceptance and support, but the time and circumstances are not right for wholesale privatisation. It is being done for the worst possible reason—to gain the Prime Minister's approval by implementing her policies regardless of the consequences for Northern Ireland. To some, that would seem the only possible reason for the lemming-like rush to privatisation.

The Shorts sell-off will be regarded as sounding the death knell for Ulster industry. Following the proposals for Harland and Wolff and the Northern Ireland electricity service, it shatters confidence in our fragile economy and will produce uncertainty across our weak manufacturing base.

As elected representatives, we cannot condone complacency or inefficiency. Evidence of industrial co-operation between trade unions and management has shown a commitment to higher productivity, greater efficiency and a desire to give value for money. Our recent experience is a catalogue of collapse among major industries. Private sector companies such as ICI, Courtaulds, Klingers, British Enkalon and Careeras in Carrickfergus—which for several years received Queen's awards for exports—have all closed down, despite their efficiency and productivity. Confidence is therefore not inspired by claims that private sector industry will secure long-term employment.

Jobs at Shorts can be sustained until it is profitable. Jobs in all sectors could be secured if assistance were given through public funding. The current spate of privatisation proposals do nothing to give hope to young graduates, school leavers, the long-term unemployed, those undergoing retraining or those whose jobs are threatened.

Privatisation could result in more damage to our industrial base than the sustained terrorist campaign of the past 20 years. If there is a withdrawal of support for large industries, terrorists will claim success and say that they have had a further victory in their "Brits Out" campaign.

Hundreds of companies take sub-contract work from large firms, thus providing employment throughout the Province, in which people from all sectors can share. The whole industrial community, because of the position at Shorts, feel threatened. Managers employed in the public sector foresee an opportunity for greater reward in private industry. Their interest in, and judgment of, privatisation is coloured by the salary increases that have occurred after denationalisation.

As elected representatives, my colleagues and I continue to support the public funding of industries in Northern Ireland. Since direct rule was imposed, the policies pursued by successive Governments have not produced peace, security or prosperity. We are tempted to ask whether privatisation is the final sabotage. When will the Government listen and respond positively to Northern Ireland's representatives?

Shorts is recognised internationally, and operates at the frontier of modern technology. We want it to remain a single entity. We accept responsibility for the allocation of necessary funding from the Northern Ireland block grant to sustain existing industries until there are other employment alternatives for our people. The credibility gap between the ordinary people of Northern Ireland and the Government is growing and becoming more difficult to bridge.

We appeal to the Government to recognise the special difficulties of Northern Ireland, such as high unemployment, which at current job-creation rates, will not be significantly reduced for nearly 20 years. There are more people unemployed than there are employed in our wealth-creating manufacturing sector. We have still to benefit from the boom in British business that is so often referred to. Government support for our large industries is needed to maintain progress, to maintain the confidence of existing investors and to encourage potential overseas investment in Northern Ireland.

I am tempted to ask whether there is a deliberate policy to secure equal unemployment for everyone in Northern Ireland. The privatisation proposals could achieve just that. We ask for an opportunity to get Northern Ireland manufacturing industry on a sound base before any decision on privatisation is taken. Her Majesty's Government could prove that there is no economic withdrawal by withdrawing the proposals to privatise Shorts.

I appeal to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and his Ministers to undertake to support the management and trade unions at Shorts with an imaginative investment policy, to modernise facilities and machinery and support development projects that will ensure the continuation of Shorts as a design/engineering aircraft manufacturer. That is a much better option than a sell-off, with all its dangers for future employment. I hope that there will be a positive response before the House adjourns.

6.11 pm

Sir Dudley Smith (Warwick and Leamington): As I said yesterday in the debate on immigration, in global terms we are a small island with a large population. It is vital that we should consider in detail the structural and physical development of our country so that sensible, enlightened and protective systems are in place at the beginning of the next century.

With some glaring exceptions, our record on planning and protection has been fairly good, particularly when compared with continental countries. It has been better than large city reconstruction, where architects and builders have effectively ruined so many city centres. The pressures for expansive further development appear to be irresistible—some of them have been mentioned today by Opposition Members—and it is essential that we should adopt a fresh and refined approach.

For years I have been saying that we must guard against the ultimate concrete jungle running from the Trent all the way to Brighton. However, every generation and every decade brings with it more building and a worrying diminution of the countryside. There are new pressures, for a variety of reasons. The chief reason is the need for less land for agricultural purposes, and there is the question of what use should now be made of it. More and more people want to live in the south-east—in London, the home counties and the southern part of the west midlands.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Sir Dudley Smith: Usually I would willingly give way, but I wish to be brief because many colleagues want to take part in the debate. I intend no discourtesy to the hon. Gentleman, and I hope that he will understand.

My concern has been stimulated by developments in my immediate area. The probable opening of the M40 motorway next autumn has turned mid-Warwickshire into a gold-rush area. Everything is booming. The value of many houses has doubled in a short time. With the coming of the motorway, people, companies and national organisations are discovering that mid-Warwickshire is the heart of England and that it has excellent communications, is pleasant and desirable, with a good infrastructure and atmosphere. The result is escalating house prices, almost on a par with London, and the inevitable pressures for much more building.

The extraordinary thing is that our population has increased far less than was anticipated 30 years ago and will show only modest increases for the foreseeable future; yet we have a vast concentration of population in the south-east and it is now beginning to spill over into the west midlands. The penalties are over-priced property, traffic snarl-ups of horrendous proportions, referred to by my hon. Friend the Member for Rutland and Melton (Mr. Latham), and a general environment that is far less attractive than it used to be.

It is opportune that this week the Countryside Commission produced a discussion paper entitled "Planning for change: Development in a green countryside". That should be debated in the House and I hope that we will have an opportunity to do that when we return in the autumn. After reading the excellent report, which is still in its draft discussion stage, and listening to the debate in my area on the intensifying pressures, I am convinced that we need to embark on some essential courses.

We must maintain the integrity of the green belt and the continued separation of urban and rural areas. There must be a much more determined bid to convert derelict, vacant and available land in towns and cities into housing areas. I know that there are already rules on that, but they do not appear to be effective enough. We need a latter-day Domesday Book survey, a veritable crusade by the Department of the Environment, to achieve an impact. We must retain the integrity of attractive and well-developed communities, such as those in mid-Warwickshire, despite the calls for considerable expansion due to population pressures.

We need new villages, attractively and imaginatively developed on suitable sites, with housing of an expensive and modest type, which is compatible with a village atmosphere and which does not look as if it had been transported from an urban housing estate. We need to revise our planning laws, particularly the appeals procedures, which at present enable many developers to press and press until finally they overthrow the decisions of elected councillors and the wishes of the local residents.

Those are vital and substantial matters for the future. They certainly need to be discussed, and I commend a reading of the report to all hon. Members who are interested in the future of our country. It is our responsibility, and we must discharge it properly.

6.17 pm

Mr. Harry Barnes (Derbyshire, North-East): The motion we are discussing says:

"the House shall not adjourn on Friday 29th July until Mr. Speaker shall have reported the Royal Assent to any Acts which have been agreed upon by both Houses."

I do not know whether there are any outstanding Acts or whether the poll tax Bill has yet returned for its Royal

[Mr. Harry Barnes]

Assent. If it has not, I would gladly see it lost until the next general election rather than put such a constitutional and democratic monstrosity on the statute book.

We are about to move into recess for almost three months. That harms considerably our constituents' interests. Hon. Members have no parliamentary avenues for the redress of grievances on behalf of constituents. There are no parliamentary questions, written or oral, no petitions can be presented, no early-day motions can be presented for Departments to read, no Adjournment debates and no interventions or contributions in debate. There is one value in Parliament going into recess for three months, and that is that no fresh legislation can be put on the statute book in that time.

The position for constituents is serious. The only avenues that remain open to hon. Members are to write letters to Ministers, many of which take a considerable time to be answered during the recess, or engaging in publicity. The chances for publicity are greater for some hon. Members than for others. As an honest tradesman and a new Member, I am wedged between my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) and my right hon. Friend the Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn). Their avenues for publicity may be somewhat greater than mine, However, if the House is sitting, I can follow parliamentary avenues.

I grant that it has been a long slog since Christmas and that the House has examined a vast amount of legislation. Hon. Members are ready for a meaningful break. I suggest that we develop different working patterns, and I am glad that the Leader of the House and my hon. Friend the Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) are present to hear my suggestion. I believe that we should operate in three or four-week cycles and then have a week off from parliamentary duties so that we can concentrate on constituency work and catch up on correspondence. We could then limit ourselves to a six-week summer break which would be concentrated more clearly on holiday periods and party conferences. In that way, our constituents would not lose their avenues of redress. Our constituents' interests dictate the introduction of such a working pattern, and it would allow constituency and parliamentary matters to be dealt with fully and properly.

A delegation from Derbyshire county council has just visited the Department of Trade and Industry. The council wants intermediate status to be given to the Chesterfield travel-to-work area. To make the sort of speech that I should make about the proposal will mean a wait of three months, but perhaps I may mention it briefly today. The criteria for determining the map of assisted areas were set out by the former Minister of State, Department of Trade and Industry—the hon. Member for Kingston upon Thames (Mr. Lamont)—when the review of regional policy was presented to the House on 28 November 1984. He said:

"The map has been drawn on the basis of objective criteria, and unemployment, long-term unemployment, job opportunities, industrial structure and peripherality, have all been taken into account."

Earlier, he said:

"In redrawing the map we considered the present and future employment patterns of each area, along with other factors, including the risk of distortions where non-assisted areas are adjacent to assisted areas."—*[Official Report*, 28 November 1984; Vol. 68, c.936-42.]

If I had time, I would establish why those criteria mean that the Chesterfield travel-to-work area, which covers Chesterfield constituency, sections of Bolsover constituency and the great bulk of my constituency, should be considered for intermediate status. The area has suffered tremendously from cuts in the coal industry and its future is unsure. It requires Government assistance, and certainly intermediate status.

An area that retains an element of coal mining and coal dependency will have tremendous problems when electricity is privatised, with all that that entails for the competitiveness of coal. The ports Bills that are proceeding through the House—my district council has laid objections to the North Killingholme Cargo Terminal Bill and the Associated British Ports (No. 2) Bill—will allow cheap coal from overseas to flood into Britain, and we know that South African and Colombian coal is produced in circumstances of great exploitation. A map given to me by the Opencast Executive of British Coal shows its interests in the constituency. Opencast developments would turn the area into a dustbowl. They will produce some jobs, but they will not be permanent and they will not replace the jobs lost in the deep mines.

Another problem in the area is the non-development of the east midlands railway line. The east coast line is being electrified, and the danger facing Derbyshire is that places such as Sheffield will be linked to the east coast line, so that passenger and goods development will be maintained in the north while the east midlands will be unable to compete. It could lead to a decline in goods services in the east midlands. In that context, there is a clear case for granting intermediate status, as one method of Government assistance, to the Chesterfield travel-to-work area.

Much more could be said about that, and I hope to do so in the House in the future. If we had more sensible working practices, that opportunity would come sooner rather than later.

6.25 pm

Mr. John Wilkinson (Ruislip-Northwood): I hope that the House will not rise for the recess until the Government have made a statement on the reasons why they decided not to support further the HOTOL project. It would have been even better if the Government had allowed parliamentary time to debate an issue of such magnitude. It was an abuse of the House that my right hon. and learned Friend the former Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster announced in a written answer that the Government would withhold further funding for the project.

There is no project of comparable significance for the future of space development in Britain, and experts much wiser than I have commented that the project offered immense hope for the future. Conventional launchers, such as Ariane, the Atlas Centaur and the shuttle, will prove far too costly in the future, and when horizontally launched reusable space vehicles become available, projects such as HOTOL will become the norm because they will be infinitely cheaper than conventional systems for putting payloads into space.

In November last year the Government were in a minority of one in dissociating themselves from the European Space Agency's long-term space programme. The Government decided not to support the optional

programme, Ariane 5—a man-rated heavy launch vehicle —secondly, not to support Hermes—a re-usable mini-shuttle—and, thirdly, probably not to support Columbus —a manned module—although they withheld their decision on this. I am glad to learn that the United Kingdom will participate in a platform associated with Columbus, which is of the greatest importance because it is Europe's contribution to the international space station project that is being led by the United States.

Space stations are the building blocks for future space activities. The Soviets know it well and have concentrated on ambitious programmes. For example, they are developing a very heavy launcher—Energiya—which will form the basis of a shuttle system. They have a somewhat less powerful launcher, the HL16, which will carry a space plane rather like Hermes. They have had Salyut and Mir space stations in orbit for protracted periods. They intend to send probes to Phobos, and eventually they will send their space vehicles to Mars and beyond.

In short, what is at stake is of the greatest strategic, as well as commercial and technical, importance, yet my right hon. and learned Friend the former Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster thought it appropriate to fob off Parliament with a curt written answer.

My right hon. Friend the Leader of the House will have found me repetitious and boring in the past, because for week after week and month after month before the ESA ministerial Council meeting last November I suggested that the Government should find time to debate space policy. It seems to have been impossible for them to do so, so it is not surprising that they were at odds with expert opinion. In that sense, in this country we are somewhat poorly provided in Parliament. In the United States, in Congress there are Senators Glenn of Ohio and Jake Garn of Utah and a former senator of New Mexico, all of whom have been astronauts. Congressman Nelson, the chairman of the present House of Representatives space committee is also an astronaut. In the United States, space is a normal activity. It is a totally everyday activity whose commercial potential and strategic significance are understood.

In this country, we believe that space is weird and wonderful, out and beyond and fantastically expensive. Are we to suggest that our people in future will not be able to play a part in space activities commensurate with their technical competence and their undoubted innovative genius? The Government have been woefully shortsighted.

My emotions have alternated between fury and sorrow. To be candid, sorrow has predominated. I do not particularly blame my right hon. and noble Friend Lord Young, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. He does not have experience of international collaboration. My right hon. and learned Friend the former Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster similarly lacks such experience. Collaboration is the name of the game. Space is a totally international business. We have had a meaningful, worthwhile space programme in Europe because we have collaborated and worked together with partner nations.

By opting out of the European space plan in November, the Government have put themselves at a disadvantage. If we hope to attract partners for HOTOL, it would have helped if we had supported other programmes in the European Space Agency's overall strategic programme. International collaboration is a game of quid pro quo. We enter some programmes which do not appear to have short-term national interest to us and support programmes which may be of benefit to other partners. Overall, however, the benefit to all partners is indubitable and must be recognised.

I know that the Government judge these matters by short-term commercial criteria. We opted out of the launcher business deliberately when we allowed the Blue Streak launcher, which became Europa I, to be cancelled. Fortunately, the French pursued the Ariane series of rockets. Arianespace, the commercial launch company, is now making extremely good profits. It has a large order book and with the temporary failure of the shuttle programme it offers great potential for the future. Had the French not shown their strategic vision, Europe would be out of the space business in any significant sense.

The Government said that the European Space Agency was an expensive club. They said so out of sheer prejudice and blind ignorance. With its Ariane series of launchers, the Spacelab, the meteosat series of remote-sensing satellites and with ERS1 in the future and other new programmes, not to mention scientific programmes like Giotto and others, ESA has shown that Europe, for a relatively small investment, can offer a capability fully comparable with the United States of America and the Soviet Union, although on a smaller scale.

I do not want to see this country relegated to the third eleven. It is not worthy of the United Kingdom. In the technical area within Europe, we should be playing a leading role. We have the capacity to do so. When Ministers and others say that we cannot afford it, I ask, as I said to my hon. Friend the Member for Havant (Sir I. Lloyd): if we can somehow find £50,000 million per annum for social security, why cannot Ministers find £4 million in the next four years to continue the project definition of HOTOL? Ministers' statements are not true. They do not make sense and the Government are shortsighted. I am very sad and particularly regret that the Government did not act in the proper parliamentary way and allow us a debate or at least make a statement to the House so that we could question Ministers on what appears to be a quite extraordinary decision.

6.34 pm

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): We should have at least two debates before we adjourn. The first should be on the Committee stage of the European Communities Finance Bill whereby the House is asked to vote £800 million extra to the European Community. We understand that that may be paid before Royal Assent. Although that may be just legal, it is dodgy.

The second debate that we should have is even more important, not in procedural terms, but in current terms. We should debate the appointment of commissioners to the European Economic Community. There have been acres of space and comment in the press and commentary in the news media on that subject. My hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) has raised questions germane to that matter relating to the Westland affair. The new appointments risk weakening our interests in Europe.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Spearing: If my hon. Friend will excuse me, time is of the essence and I want to make as brief a speech as possible.

[Mr. Spearing]

One of those to be appointed as a commissioner has a questionable track record and we do not know the other. The latter will be a novice and less experienced than the former Member of this House, Mr. Clinton Davis. Lord Cockfield did his job too well. He spilt the beans and said what it was all about. It is wrong, therefore, for the Prime Minister to attach M. Delors. Anyone who knows anything about European legislation and the speed with which it is now coming out of Brussels will be aware that 80 per cent. of the legislation will come from Brussels in a few years time is a very reasonable estimate from M. Delors and reflects the degree to which the House will lose power.

We should not expect any of our commissioners to do anything about that. They take a treaty oath and one of the major objectives of the treaty of Rome is European union. Two rookie novice commissioners can at best only affect the speed and possible terms of the movement; they cannot question the principles.

Recently the Prime Minister covered up the embarrassment of the appointment with her reshuffle and by banging the nationalist drum. I agree with the objectives of that in terms of her approach to the EEC, but she does that on entirely the wrong basis. She does it from a basis of certain ignorance. That ignorance was also shown by the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) about 14 years ago. He said that the powers of the Queen would not be affected. He did not realise that this legislation reaches the citizens of this country direct without requiring Royal Assent or Her Majesty's signature.

I want to raise the question of ignorance by referring to what the Prime Minister said in an article in the *Sunday Express* last Sunday. She was talking about power and Parliaments and said:

"When Europeans start talking about European union and this, that, and the other, I always say: 'What do you really mean? I can't see any of you going home and saying to your Parliaments: 'Look, I've taken away all your rights to do anything about what happens in this country; it's all going to Europe.'

They are not going to do it, however much they talk. I wouldn't be prepared to do it anyway."

The Prime Minister has done that. However, I must be careful. She used that little word "all". That is the way the Prime Minister goes about her work. She will include a little word which qualifies quite a lot.

We have given that power away. The Prime Minister has done that perhaps unwillingly. We have the Single European Act, which neither the Prime Minister nor the Foreign Secretary signed. In fact, the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office was sent off to sign it before she was a Privy Councillor.

That Act is still not properly printed in this country in terms of the new treaty of Rome. That says:

"Resolved to implement this European Union."

Note the capital E and the capital U. That is not economic and monetary union, because the last line of the preamble to the single European Treaty says:

"approved the objective of the progressive realization of Economic and Monetary Union."

There are two different things. The European Union is in the treaty of Rome to which the Government have given their assent.

Article 8A of the Single European Act provides:

"The Community shall adopt measures with the aim of progressively establishing the internal market over a period expiring on 31 December 1992".

It says "expiring" and not "starting".

Article 100A, which is important, says:

"The following provisions shall apply for the achievement of the objectives set out in Article 8A. The Council shall, acting by a qualified majority on a proposal from the Commission in co-operation with the European Parliament".

In other words, anything to do with the realisation of that market in 1992 can be achieved by the majority vote of the Council of Ministers, even against the will of the Government and possibly against the will of the House.

Yet the Prime Minister says that she has not given power away. She implies that she has by the use of that misleading word "all". When talking on the Jimmy Young show she gave the impression that in future she will be able to hold the line, but that is not true because the Single European Act was put through the House in the summer of 1986. However, the small print was not understood by Conservative Members.

The Prime Minister wants the fruits of European union, or at least economic and monetary union, but the means by which it will be achieved are, of course, ill based. It is not a co-operative organisation, such as GATT or the European Free Trade Association or any of those things that hon. Members think it may be. The EEC is coercive and autocratic. The power is in Brussels. It is arbitrary political power, and we are told that it can be controlled in one of two ways: by the House taking power to control what our Ministers do there—and if the Prime Minister is concerned about parliamentary power, that is something to which she would agree and which she would implement —or by all the power going to Strasbourg and there being some sort of European Parliament, which would be a united states of Europe without the states, because there is no power for national assemblies in the treaty of Rome. The Prime Minister cannot bluster and fluster, because it is in the treaty and she has done what she told Jimmy Young she would never do.

I turn briefly to the questions of my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell), because they are important and they have not been properly answered. We must remember that terrible weekend when there was the official leak of the letter of the Solicitor-General, which was clearly solicited with a view to it being leaked before 4 pm on Monday 13 December 1986. It was only by getting it out at that time that the views of the then Secretary of State for Defence could be put into question with the imprimatur of the Solicitor-General. That letter contained many qualifications that were not part of the leak, so it was clear what was intended. It is a matter of evidence that the Prime Minister not only knew of it, but she condoned it; indeed, some people believe that she may have suggested it.

In paragraph 183 of its fourth report 1985-86, HC 519, the Select Committee on Defence said:

"In replying to a supplementary question after her statement in the House on 23 January the Prime Minister said of the extract from the Solicitor-General's letter: 'It was to get that accurate information to the public domain that I gave my consent'. In her statement the Prime Minister had said that her office did not seek her agreement, and later in answer to supplementary questions she said 'I have said that I was not consulted at the time' and 'I say again that I was not consulted'. In confirmation of this Sir Robert Armstrong told us that he asked both Mr. Ingham and Mr. Powell whether they sought clearance from the Prime Minister and they told him they did not. Sir Robert understood from the Prime Minister that her words in column 455 of 23 January, quoted

above, were a slip of the tongue. When questioned on the point on 27 January the Prime Minister explained that she had given her consent to an inquiry but did not give her consent to the disclosure."

It continues in bold print:

"The evidence is that the action of the Prime Minister's office on 6 January in relation to the disclosure was without her direct authority. She has stated that she had no knowledge on 6 January of what was taking place. We accept this."

The Prime Minister may not have had any knowledge on 6 January. She said that she was not consulted at the time, but she may have been consulted before.

On 23 January 1986, the Prime Minister said:

"In so far as what my office said to the Department of Trade and Industry was based on the belief that I should have taken that view, had I been consulted, it was right."

In other words, she said that they had acted in line with what she would have done had she been consulted. However, they would not have done that without knowledge of what was in her mind.

On the same occasion, the right hon. Member for Woking (Mr. Onslow) asked the right hon. Lady a friendly question and she hit out from the boundary. She walked down the crease. She said, "We must get this into the public domain." She further said:

"It was to get that accurate information to the public domain that I gave my consent."—[*Official Report*, 23 January 1986; Vol. 90, c. 450 and 455.]

That was quoted by the Select Committee.

How did she get out of it? That could not have been the consent to the inquiry, because the question of the right hon. Member for Woking was not about that. The Select Committee took up that matter and asked questions of that economist of the truth, Sir Robert Armstrong. It was followed up in questions 1251 and 1252.

"1252. You have not taken any opportunity to clear that up yourself in the post facto of your inquiry? (Sir Robert Armstrong.) I gather from the Prime Minister it was a slip of the tongue."

A slip of the tongue, which we all sometimes make, is when we say something that is not true. I suggest that this was not one of those at all. It was something that was only too true and something that the Prime Minister wished she had not said, which was consistent with the slip of the tongue phrase.

It also explains that enigmatic point that she made in a television interview. The interviewer asked:

"But why on that date, though, January the 27th, were you so down that you said, 'I may not be Prime Minister by six o'clock tonight' after the Westland debate?"

The Prime Minister replied:

"You suddenly come out with these things."

I suggest that she said it for the reasons stated in the Select Committee report and *Hansard*, which I have quoted. The Prime Minister was being quite honest—"Yes, I did give my consent." Of course, it could have been given some time before that weekend.

The Select Committee then made some remarks about the behaviour of the right hon. and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan). It said at paragraph 177:

"Although those involved must carry blame for what occurred, what seems especially reprehensible is a manner of doing business where the direct and honourable course does not present itself to the exclusion of all else."

It continues at paragraph 179:

"This was an outrageous way in which to treat a Law Officer of the Crown".

They solicited an opinion, which was immediate and conditional, and then used it for purposes of civil war inside the Government.

Having studied the texts that I have quoted, I suggest that the culpability for that unfortunate incident in which the right hon. and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks —now the commissioner-elect—was involved is to be shared in equal measure by the Prime Minister. If by any chance she did not know that it was going on, what sort of Government are they and what sort of Prime Minister is she? What sort of political integrity is it that allows a Government to be run on that basis? She cannot have it both ways. She either knew or, if she did not, she was running a Government which had run amok through civil war.

We should have a debate on this matter before we adjourn. I shall briefly put to the House the questions which the Prime Minister should answer, and they are the questions which should be debated.

First, is it not a fact that the Government resisted the drafting and method of introduction of the Single European Act but nevertheless introduced it to the House against the initial desires of the Government?

Secondly, does not majority voting deny the Government and Parliament power over large areas of legislation, and is that not contrary to the spirit of what the Prime Minister declared on the Jimmy Young show she would never do?

Thirdly, was not the Prime Minister's slip of the tongue on 23 January 1986 in fact a correct statement and the "slip" arose only because she said something true which she would have preferred not to have said?

Fourthly, as all the evidence and what the Prime Minister said about her wishes shows that she approved the principle of disclosure of the Solicitor-General's letter, should she not share the strictures of the Defence Select Committee? Should she not appoint the right hon. and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks to the Commission of the EEC? Should she not share to some extent the fate that befell that right hon. and learned Member, and should she not consider whether she should remain as Prime Minister?

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. There is very little time left and several hon. Members still wish to speak.

6.50 pm

Mr. Ivor Stanbrook (Orpington): I am sorry that the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) has chosen to speak at some length, thus taking up precious time available before the House rises for the summer recess, on a subject which has already been debated many times.

There are many reasons why we should not adjourn tomorrow and there are many subjects which we ought to discuss, but there is one which I venture to suggest we must debate before the House rises as it involves a matter which will have to be adjudicated on by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Treasury before we resume in the autumn. I refer to the entitlement of colonial service pensioners to war service being counted towards their pension entitlement.

Do you realise, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that all public servants in Britain are entitled to count war service—either the whole of it or half of it, depending on whether their pension is contributory or non-contributory—towards

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their pension, but that that is not true for those whose service was overseas? This is a curious anomaly which affects a branch of the public service which has rendered signal, loyal and devoted service to the country in tropical climes, often in adverse, primitive and distressing circumstanc

About 4,500 people are involved, and they are retired and mostly in their seventies. The number is therefore diminishing yearly. Why are they not entitled to count their war service towards their pensions? The answer is that, although they are all British citizens who, apart from their service abroad, have always been resident in Britain, they were employed and paid by the colonial Governments they served. That is despite the fact that the Secretary of State recruited and trained them and sent them out to our colonial empire to do service for the Crown.

Because these people were not employed by the British Government, they were told that they could not count their pre-appointment war service towards their pension entitlement. Teachers, local government officers, policemen and other civil servants are entitled to count such service. Colonial service officers are the only exception.

This is a great injustice, and it ought to be remedied. Not many people are involved, and not much money is involved. I must say that I would be a beneficiary if any such claim were granted, but it is such a stark injustice that I feel obliged to draw attention to it. I understand that, in the next few days, presumably, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office will again consider what claims to make by way of its estimates for the coming year.

If the Treasury does not agree to a Department's claim, after negotiation, the matter is referred to a thing called the Court of Star Chamber. At one time, I understood from reading the newspapers—I know that I should not have done it—that my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House would be chairman of the Court of Star Chamber. I understand, however, that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy has been appointed to that function. That is a pity, because I have been asking my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House about this matter for weeks in the hope that he would remember it when he came to help adjudicate on this small claim on public expenditure.

I have just discovered that if the Department concerned does not include a claim in its preliminary Estimates, the claim gets nowhere. How, therefore, am I to ensure that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office puts this entirely just, overdue and well-merited claim to the Treasury in the first place? There is provision for superannuation payments to overseas service officers, but how do I know that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office will include this extra item so that it might be considered by the Treasury? I am sure that the Treasury would agree to the claim if it considered the merits of the case, but if the Foreign and Commonwealth Office does not put it forward, the claim can get nowhere.

I am therefore forced to raise the matter now. There is overwhelming support in the House for the claim to be met. Early in this Session I tabled an early-day motion commending the claim to the Government. No fewer than 260 hon. Members signed it in its original form. Another 88 signed an amendment suggesting that the claim should be met immediately. That means that some 348 hon. Members support the claim. That is an absolute majority in the House.

What more does one have to say to persuade the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to put the claim before the Treasury, for the Treasury, having considered it on its merits, is bound to grant it? We are talking about a budget of thousands of millions of pounds. There must be an order of priorities. No doubt there are other considerations which must be taken into account, but an exception or anomaly which is an injustice, and which involves a debt of honour which should be paid, should be put at the top of that list of priorities.

The claim should be met before other and more substantial new claims are met. I hope that, as a result of my raising the matter today, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office will include the claim in its draft estimates which are to be put to the Treasury in the next few weeks, and that the Treasury will see the merit of the case. If it does, it will at last have brought some justice justice to a small and dwindling group of people who have devoted their entire lives to the service of this country abroad. They deserve to have this injustice remedied. I hope that my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House will, in so far as he has influence in the matter, support it.

6.59 pm

Mrs. Alice Mahon (Halifax): The House should not rise for the recess until we have thoroughly discussed the Government's claims that savings released through competitive tendering for hospital services have in any way contributed to improved patient care. I challenge that claim with the full backing of the victims of this policy, who include patients, workers and users of the Health Service. When the savings—£106 million at the last DHSS estimate—are claimed, they do not account for the full costs of abandoning workers to the dole queue and of further reducing low-paid workers' wages. They certainly do not take account of the reduced services to patients and the increased stress on other workers left to pick up the burden of extra work.

I worked for many years in the National Health Service and later as a member of my local health authority. I voted and campaigned against the privatisation of the local laundry and domestic services. It will come as no surprise to hon. Members to hear that, because of the way in which the Government have packed district health authorities with their supporters, I lost the vote. In my authority, 250 workers, most of whom were women, lost their jobs when Mediclean gained the contract. By any standards that has been a failure. Initially, the contractors thought that only half the hours needed to clean our hospitals was necessary. Those who stayed to work for Mediclean lost their bonus, holiday pay, sickness benefit and holiday entitlements, and were expected to work twice as hard as previously. After 12 months there had been a 100 per cent. staff turnover and a report from the local infection control committee which warned that unhygienic conditions were prevailing. That pattern has been repeated across the country. Since then, complaint after complaint has been ignored and if people visit my local hospitals they will see that they are dirtier than previously.

Many low-paid workers lost their jobs and many remain unemployed, but unemployment statistics do not show that. It is well known that part-time women workers

often do not have any entitlement to benefit in their own right. Mediclean has failed on six of the 37 contracts that it is known to have held since 1983, which is a failure rate of 15 per cent. But in my book it has failed the NHS, because the in-house staff offered a much better service.

When staff are sacked to make way for private operators, redundancy costs are not systematically accounted for in the savings figures, but the financial and human costs are undoubtedly high. Health authorities are expected to recoup redundancy costs against savings over the period of the contract, but if a contractor is sacked or pulls out, as often happens, the authority must carry the whole cost itself and that is not accounted for.

I challenge head on the claim that savings have been made for taxpayers. Ninety-two thousand ancillary workers have lost their jobs, which is 30 per cent. of all ancillary staff in the NHS, since contracting out began. When people are thrown on to the dole or forced to claim other benefits, it is at a great cost to taxpayers. Moreover, it is immoral to throw people out of work just to save money. Many of those jobs provided secure and regular work for thousands of people and even if we thought that they were low paid—for many years I was a shop steward working on their behalf—they at least had a secure income. We have lost national insurance contributions and taxes to the public purse because of this policy. If I had more time, I would detail exactly how much we have lost.

Even the National Audit Office, which does not normally side with low-paid workers, has admitted that savings from privatisation have arisen from less favourable conditions for workers. These people take home only £70 a week. We are witnessing an increased casualised work force replacing a stable established one. As wages and conditions deteriorate, so do standards in the Health Service.

I dispute for other reasons the Government's claims about savings from competitive tendering. The exercise has never been properly examined. Staff time, preparing timetables, specifications, evaluating bids and monitoring contracts involve enormous costs which are not easily measured. The Government have not taken them into account. They have never tried to quantify that aspect of this costly experiment, in which public money, standards and livelihoods are at stake, nor have many district health authorities, although individual managers have recently said that 80 per cent. of their time is spent on competitive tendering.

I cannot conclude without talking about my experience of the laundry services in Halifax. The new Secretary of State for Health was the Minister for Health when we were forced to privatise our laundry services. Although we twice won the in-house tender—the second time by a margin of £250,000—after the 1983 election we were instructed to go out to tender and we are now putting out our laundry services. I shall invite the Secretary of State to come and see the disaster that he has created for us in Calderdale. We have no new linen for new babies, surgeons are complaining that there is no linen in the theatre and elderly patients are having to sit without underwear. That is disgraceful.

Privatisation in the Health Service has meant selling NHS workers' jobs to the lowest bidder. The only real savings come from job losses, cuts in wages and service standards, and poorer working conditions. One central point which is all too often passed over in debates about Health Service funding needs to be reinforced. It is that as the largest employer in western Europe there is nothing outdated or imprudent about the NHS recognising its responsibilities to its work force. A civilised society has a duty to care not only for its sick and elderly, but for its carers. A system which sacrifices people to the demands and dictates of a market which has nothing to do with quality or caring and everything to do with shortchanging the workforce and patients on jobs and services is not only inhuman but inefficient, as the limited experience of introducing competition into the Health Service has shown. It is vital that we have a statement from the Government before the House goes into recess.

7.6 pm

Sir Charles Morrison (Devizes): I welcome the arrival of the recess, because it gives Ministers time to relax and ponder objectively what they have done, what they have not done, what they intend to do and what they should do. If they do all that, they should have a full and mentally exciting recess.

Foremost in the matters that Ministers should consider, particularly in the Treasury, the Department of Education and Science and the various Departments directly concerned, is the state of British scientific research and the research councils. It is extremely worrying that I should have read in an article in *The Independent* recently:

"Britain is shutting down its science".

It is worrying to learn that already proposed cuts amount to almost £20 million for arable, horticultural and poultry research. It is worrying to learn that the Institute for Marine Biochemistry at Aberdeen faces outright closure and that the Institute for Oceanographic Sciences and Terrestrial Ecology may lose a quarter of its scientific staff. Those examples cover only a small area of science. There are many other research councils and establishments which are also facing considerable cuts.

The achievements of British scientists are remarkable, but if investment in research is cut, their ability and chances of maintaining that record of achievement in future will be enormously reduced. I understand that total expenditure on research and development as a percentage of gross domestic product has remained at its 1964 level in Britain, while in other countries, such as France, Germany, Japan and the United States, there has been a steady increase to the extent that the United Kingdom has now been overtaken.

Naturally, industry has a part to play, but industry-sponsored research is likely to be mostly market-orientated. In a science-based world, the Government have a growing responsibility to finance fundamental research. That may be relatively remote from the market and may not always produce results, but the benefits of fundamental research today will provide the basis for market-orientated research tomorrow and a new product for consumers the day after.

In his Dimbleby lecture this year, the president of the Royal Society, Sir George Porter, said:

"There are no obvious limits to the advancement of knowledge or to the practical application of this knowledge to improving our health, wealth and happiness. In health, medical research has still much to do to reduce the suffering still with us. In wealth, rich as most of us are in material things compared with our ancestors, we have seen only the beginning of what will be available to us."

It is my sincere hope that a high proportion of what will be available will have been British-researched, British-developed and British-made. If it is so produced,

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we shall be able to take pride in it. It will be good for exports, it will save imports and it will be good for the balance of payments. My brief plea to the Government tonight is that they should make available more money for research. The Government now claim that Britain is a rich country and becoming even richer. Our investment in science is a measure by which to judge that claim.

7.12 pm

Mr. Frank Dobson (Holborn and St. Pancras): A number of interesting and important matters have been raised in the debate. I shall confine my remarks to three of them and, briefly, to the matter to which the hon. Member for Devizes (Sir C. Morrison) referred—the Government's lack of investment in research.

Britain used to be renowned for inventing things that British industry was then extremely poor at developing. It appears that the Government have applied some Right-wing think tank to the task of eliminating that embarrassment and that its answer is not to do more to develop inventions but to cut research and thereby to stop the inventions occurring in the first place. That does not seem to be the most sensible way of developing a modern economy.

My second topic, housing, was referred to by Conservative and Opposition Members. The housing situation in this country is quite deplorable. We should remember one or two basic facts. In 1979, the year the Government came to power, 240,000 new homes were completed. Last year, only 202,000 new homes were completed. In the public sector—that is, council housing and housing association housing—104,000 homes were completed in 1979, compared to just 30,000 last year. It comes as no surprise to anybody with sense that one of the results of that has been a massive increase in homelessness. The figure was a little more than 50,000; it is now 112,000.

It is a sobering thought for all of us tonight that within a mile or two of the House more than 7,000 parents are trying to settle their children down for the night in bed-and-breakfast hotels, where all the members of a family are expected to live, wash, cook and eat in one room. It is a disgrace and a shame on all of us that that is happening. It is a shame on the Government, who produced a White Paper about the future of homelessness that did not even mention the word "homeless" or "homelessness".

All over the country tens of thousands of people are living in ever more crowded conditions because they cannot move out of their parental homes. Many newly married couples have to live with their parents and couples with children have to bring them up in their parents' homes. That is not a sound way to begin married life or to try to bring up children.

All over the country—I emphasise that—people who are not well-off are finding it more and more difficult to find somewhere to live at a price that they can afford. That is not a characteristic that is confined to the inner cities. Some of the greatest difficulties are to be found in rural areas, where massive house price increases combined with the sale of council housing are causing many villages—particularly attractive villages—to become no-go areas for farm workers, for people who deliver the milk, for people who deliver the post, for the local bobby and for the local primary school teacher.

All over rural Britain, large numbers of people who are absolutely vital to the continuing organisation of the local community are finding it impossible to get anywhere to live because places to rent have disappeared and places for sale are priced far beyond their reach. Nowhere is that more true than in East Anglia, where there have been staggering increases in house prices. Under this Government, house prices have doubled in the country as a whole, and in East Anglia, London and the south-east they have more than trebled. While that remains the case, large numbers of the less well-off will find it more and more difficult to find somewhere to live.

I agree with the hon. Member for Devizes (Sir C. Morrison) that our people have a right to the benefits of science and space, but they have rights more basic than that. They have a right to a decent home, and we should meet that basic need before we even start talking about science and space.

My hon. Friend the Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) referred to the appointment and dismissal of British members of the European Commission. The Prime Minister, who originally chose Lord Cockfield, has decided to dump him. In view of his opinions, I cannot say that I blame her, although it causes me to have doubts about her judgment in appointing him in the first place.

However, I unreservedly deplore the right hon. Lady's decision to dump Stanley Clinton Davis, the Labour nominee, who has served the country and the Community well since he was appointed three and a half years ago. He was fit to be appointed originally, and he is fit to continue in office. He has been caught between the upper millstone of the Prime Minister's spite against anyone who is not a member of the Tory party and the nether millstone of her desire to appoint her right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan) as the senior British commissioner.

Mr. Cryer: Does my hon. Friend agree that if my amendment had been selected, we could have had a statement from the Prime Minister explaining the criteria on which she has based her decision to hand this soft job, involving loyalty to the Common Market and not to this place, to her crony the right hon. and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan) at a salary of £90,000 a year and probably double that in expenses?

Mr. Dobson: I accept what my hon. Friend has said. Anything that would get the Prime Minister to come to the Dispatch Box to explain what went on and why she made the appointments would be a step forward. On Tuesday, the Prime Minister said that the right hon. and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks as "an excellent nomination". After paeans of praise that beggared belief, she challenged the Labour party

"to put up names that are as distinguished."—[*Official Report*, 26 July 1988; Vol.138, c. 251.]

The word "distinguished" has several meanings. It can be used to describe something of conspicuous excellence but it can also be used to describe something that is differentiated from others by character. I can only believe that the Prime Minister was referring to the latter meaning.

In the light of the character and record of the right hon. and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks, no one could

justify his appointment. He resigned from the Cabinet in disgrace during the Westland scandal. The actions for which he was responsible were described as "outrageous" and "reprehensible" by the Select Committee on Defence, on which the Conservative majority believed its duty to Parliament and the people to be above its duty to its party.

The Select Committee's report said:

"The disclosure of the Solicitor-General's letter without his permission was an improper act."

That was a charge of impropriety. The report said:

"Mr. Brittan, a Queen's Counsel, would have been aware of the . . . confidentiality of Law Officers' advice".

That was a charge of unprofessional conduct.

The Select Committee said:

"Only by releasing the information unattributably could the disclosure be limited to those parts of the letter that damaged Mr. Heseltine."

That was a charge, it would appear, of deception.

When asked by the Select Committee about all those things, the right hon. and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks refused to answer. The Committee was referring to the partial disclosure of information of the same degree of security confidentiality as that released by Mr. Clive Ponting. For that, Mr. Ponting fetched up at the Old Bailey. It now appears that for the same action the right hon. and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks has fetched up in Brussels on £95,000 per year. There seems some difference in the treatment given to those people.

Mr. Spearing: Does my hon. Friend remember that Mr. Ponting sent his piece of paper to my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) who then passed it on to the Chairman of the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs—it did not go outside those circles—whereas the right hon. and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan) was responsible for authorising his press secretary to ring the Press Association?

Mr. Dobson: As ever, my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) behaved as we all should, honourably.

If the Prime Minister challenges the Labour party to produce someone with that sort of record as the Labour nominee, I am afraid that we will be unable to meet her challenge. We do not have anyone with such a scandalous record in public office. We do not have anyone on our side who has been so comprehensively described, one might almost say blackguarded, by a Select Committee.

However, the members of the Select Committee were decent and careful people, and stated in the last paragraph of their report:

"As far as individuals are concerned, we have made our best judgments on the evidence before us. If anyone feels himself or herself to have been traduced by our findings, we are prepared at any stage to take oral or written evidence, in public or in private, from anyone involved in the events we have examined. If that evidence leads us to modify our conclusions, we will of course make a further report to the House."

I understand from the Clerk to the Select Committee on Defence that no person asked to be heard further or asked that further evidence should be considered either in public or in private. Presumably the right hon. and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks accepts as reasonable the charges levelled against him by the Select Committee.

There are those who say that it was not the fault of the right hon. and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks and that in a sense he was behaving decently because he was, in the American phrase, "taking the rap". But who was he taking the rap for? If one reads the Select Committee's report, the answer appears to be, for the person in charge of the Prime Minister's office. I know that some of my hon. Friends have suggested that that is Mr. Bernard Ingham, but I do not think that he is that important. I think that the Prime Minister is in charge of the Prime Minister's office.

The fact is that the Prime Minister was responsible for all the wrongdoing listed in that report and that she remains personally responsible. That is why many people is this country, a large number of Opposition Members in public and a substantial number of Conservative Members in private will say that the right hon. and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks is getting his money and has got his appointment because he agreed to pay, and has paid, the price of covering up the Prime Minister's involvement in all those disgraceful events.

In those circumstances, what can we say? One thing that we can say is that the right hon. and learned Gentleman is either the fall guy or that he is wicked because what is outlined in the report is wickedness in public life by any standards. We do not think that somebody who can reasonably be described a wicked and who has not disputed that should be appointed; nor do we think that somebody who has been a fall guy for the Prime Minister should be appointed.

Mr. Latham: Will the hon. Gentleman assure the House that before he made that personal attack on my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan) who is a Back Bencher, and called him "wicked", he gave him notice that he was going to do so?

Mr. Dobson: I put a note on the board this morning.

Sir Fergus Montgomery: Just before this speech.

Mr. Dobson: No, I did not do that just before my speech. I put a note on the board this morning in Norman Shaw north.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I have been reflecting carefully on the hon. Gentleman's remarks. If he is saying that the right hon. and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan) is wicked, that is an expression which Mr. Speaker would not accept. The hon. Gentleman should withdraw it and think carefully of an alternative form of words.

Mr. Dobson: If "wicked" is out of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, behaviour which is "outrageous" and "reprehensible"—that is a quotation from the Select Committee on Defence—must be in order, because I am entitled to quote from the Select Committee on Defence. I will stick by that. Either the behaviour was "outrageous" and "reprehensible" and the right hon. and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks should not be appointed, or he was covering up for the Prime Minister and she should not stay in office.

If we are to have a reputable Parliament, we must have people who report and explain themselves to this Parliament. Perhaps the best development that could come out of this whole affair would be for us to adopt the procedures and attitudes of the American Congress and ensure that any further nominees for important public office would have to appear before Select Committees of this House at which both the Government and they themselves would have to justify their appointment.

7.25 pm

The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Wakeham): Having added up, I find that I am the 18th speaker in this relatively short debate. We have had many speeches and nobody seems to be very much against the idea of a holiday, although one or two do. I think that we have earned a holiday and I wish everybody in the House a good holiday when we rise.

I shall do my best to answer the points that have been raised, but I must deal with each one briefly and I must go at a pretty fast pace if I am to do so.

The right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris), who courteously sent me a note because he thought that he might not be back—I am delighted to see him in his place—is a great and internationally recognised expert on disabled people. I think that he would be the first to admit that the Government's record of increasing assistance to disabled people by over 80 per cent. in real terms is a pretty good record by any standards.

The right hon. Gentleman asked me specifically about the disability study carried out by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys. I have checked, and I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that that study was sent to the printers as soon as it was ready. It will be published in early September. There has been no unnecessary delay on it.

We are making good progress in the staged implementation of the Disabled Services, Consultation and Representation Act 1986, and have already implemented sections 4, 5, 6, 8(1), 9 and 10 and are currently addressing section 7.

My hon. Friends the Members for Havant (Sir I. Lloyd), for Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Wilkinson), and for Devizes (Sir C. Morrison) all raised in their different ways the Government's commitment to research. I shall make some general remarks about that, but will deal first with the fast breeder reactor and the HOTOL project. I recognise the considerable knowledge of my hon. Friend the Member for Havant in these matters. It is greater than mine. In the relatively short time when I was junior Minister in the Department of Trade and Industry and took part in some of the decisions on our research projects, I found them some of the most difficult decisions because in the end they are always decisions about priorities and about choosing between one thing and another. From my experience, it is sometimes very difficult to make that choice.

The Governmnt's decision to cut the funding for the fast breeder reactor programme was based on the fact that the commercial requirement for fast reactors in the United Kingdom is likely to be some decades way. The Government's aim was to obtain a position in that technology for this country, but at an economic cost.

The Government have concluded that any further development of HOTOL must take place on the basis of international collaboration. We will support efforts by United Kingdom companies to find suitable collaborators, but will not provide further financial support in the foreseeable future. A memorandum has been sent to their Lordships' Select Committee on Science and Technology in response to its report on United Kingdom space policy. Copies of that memorandum have been placed in the Library today.

Mr. Wilkinson: Will my right hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Wakeham: I cannot possibly give way to anyone, as I have only just enough time to finish.

The hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) rightly raised the subject of prisons, especially Glenochil. It is regrettable that a small number of inmates continue to behave in a disruptive manner in a modern establishment with good facilities. The governor is moving fast towards normalising the regime for the large majority of inmates, but control must remain firmly in the hands of the governor and staff. There are 600 new prison places in Scotland and more staff have been and continue to be recruited. The White Paper, "Custody and Care", published in March, highlights the importance of security and control as well as the positive opportunities for inmates, and points the way forward to improvements in the running of Scottish penal establishments for the benefit of both staff and inmates. Nevertheless, I recognise that this is a matter of great concern.

My hon. Friend the Member for Clywd, North-West (Sir A. Meyer) referred to abuses of bed-and-breakfast accommodation in Rhyl. The Government are especially worried about the excessive and increasing cost of the use of such accommodation. We recognise the problems of seaside resorts where accommodation is used by non-local people, and we shall consider that aspect as part of the review of legislation on homelessness.

The hon. Members for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Michael) and for Norwich, South (Mr. Garrett) both referred to gazumping, an important problem which causes great concern but which it less easy of solution than the hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth suggested. All the expert bodies that have examined the matter—the Law Commission in 1975, the Conveyancing Committee in 1985 and the Conveyancing Standing Committee in recent reports—have agreed that legislation is not the answer. The answer lies in changes in practices and attitudes.

The Conveyancing Standing Committee has suggested ways in which practices could be changed so as to lessen or eliminate the risk of gazumping. The Government hope that buyers and sellers of houses and those advising them will give careful consideration to the suggestion made by the standing committee. That is why we believe that a voluntary approach is best, certainly in present circumstances. As the Member for Norwich, South pointed out, the practice in Scotland could be adopted on a voluntary basis in England and Wales and would make the problem less difficult than it otherwise might be.

My hon. Friend the Member for Altrincham and Sale (Sir F. Montgomery) raised a number of issues. The Government's proposals for legislation in relation to artificial reproduction and the use of human embryos are set out in the White Paper published last November, which was fully debated in both Houses earlier this year. We have made clear our intention to legislate in this Parliament, although my hon. Friend will appreciate that I cannot anticipate the Queen's Speech, so I cannot say any more than that.

I said something about the Barlow Clowes affair during business questions. We are determined that the matter should be examined fully and as quickly as is consistent with thoroughness. The Government are fully aware of the distress and hardship caused, and have great sympathy with those who have suffered. While so many issues are

unresolved, however, I must emphasise that the Government do not take it for granted that they will have to accept any liability to investors.

The hon. Member for Norwich, South also referred to the shortage of housing in Norwich and East Anglia. The Government fully share the concern for the homeless, and have made an extra £74 million available since last November, targeted on authorities bearing the brunt of the problem. Our concern is compounded by the number of empty properties. Authorities have more than 112,000 empty properties, 28,000, or 25 per cent., of which have been unoccupied for more than a year.

My hon. Friend the Member for Rutland and Melton (Mr. Latham) raised some important questions about the Barlow Clowes affair, to which I have already referred. He also spoke of the roads programme. I appreciate the frustration of being stuck in a traffic jam and assuming that it is all the fault of the Government. Nevertheless, we have some 350 schemes in the present programme with a total value of more than £5 billion and the roads vote provision is more than than £1 billion for the first time. For new construction, our aim is to start within the year all the planned schemes that are now ready. We hope to keep motorway delays to a minimum by careful planning, the use of lane rental contracts and mobile lane closures.

As my hon. Friend knows, the aim of the RAWP formula is to allocate resources in such a way as to ensure, over time, equal opportunity of access to health care for people in equal need by reducing historical disparities and responding to population changes. The National Health Service Management Board has explored the scope for improving the way in which the current formula measures relative need across the country. The Government will consider the resulting recommendations in the context of the wider review of the National Health Service. I assure my hon. Friend that his comments will be drawn to the attention of the Minister, as I appreciate the concern that my hon. Friend has expressed.

The hon. Member for Antrim, East (Mr. Beggs) was courteous enough to tell me that he had to leave for Northern Ireland. As the hon. Gentleman and the leader of his party will know, the debate following this one will deal in more detail with industry in Northern Ireland, so I shall not say anything further at this stage.

My hon. Friend the Member for Warwick and Leamington (Sir D. Smith), in a commendably brief speech which was nevertheless important and worthy of consideration by an audience wider than that in the House today, described problems of development in and around his constituency. The Government fully recognise the difficulties to which he referred. He was wise to raise the subject of the green belt. The Government are determined to keep the green belt, so there is no change of policy in that regard. Government policy is to encourage development wherever possible in the inner cities and on recycled land, which is an increasing part of the development pattern in this country, although there are still difficulties.

The hon. Member for Derbyshire, North-East (Mr. Barnes) was among those who were not keen to have a long recess. I appreciate his view and I assure him that Ministers do not have anything like the whole period in recess.

Mr. Tony Banks: Nor do Back Benchers.

Mr. Wakeham: I fully recognise that, although I see the hon. Member for Ashfield (Mr. Haynes) sitting on the Opposition Front Bench in a very relaxed manner and wish him a happy holiday.

The hon. Member for Derbyshire, North-East referred to practices in the House. I can only say that the current practices seem generally acceptable, although not entirely so. The Select Committee on Procedure could consider the matter again if necessary.

The decision to electrify the east midlands line is a commercial one for British Rail. Electrification would not make the service faster, but British Rail is continuing to improve the high-speed diesel service on that line.

The hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) raised a number of issues, originally with a European flavour but going on to wider matters. The hon. Gentleman's enthusiasm for getting on with the European Communities (Amendment) Bill makes me somewhat cautious and leads me to believe that I was right to put that into the programme for the overspill Session, although I have no doubt that the hon. Gentleman will be ingenious enough to find ways to raise most of the issues that he wishes to explore.

The hon. Member for Newham, South and others talked about the European commissioners and asked whether there would be a debate on the subject. There is plenty of time for such a debate. If the Opposition want to debate the matter, various courses are available to them. The new commissioners will not take office until 1 January 1989.

The hon. Member for Newham, South referred also to matters of significance and importance at the beginning of 1986. He knows perfectly well what I am about to say. As my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has said repeatedly, she gave a full account of the events surrounding the disclosure of the then Solicitor-General's letter on 6 January 1986, in her statement on 23 January and in her speech on 27 January. We have nothing to add to that except to deplore in the strongest terms the unwarranted attacks on my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan) and on civil servants who cannot reply. The hon. Gentleman would be well advised during the recess to read the statements of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and to come better informed to debates on the next occasion.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House, at its rising on Friday 29th July, do adjourn until Wednesday 19th October.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101 (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments, &c.).

HOUSING

That the draft Grants by Local Housing Authorities (Appropriate Percentage and Exchequer Contributions) (No. 2) Order 1988, which was laid before this House on 8th July 1988, be approved.

LEGAL AID AND ADVICE (SCOTLAND)

That the draft Advice and Assistance (Assistance by way of Representation) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 1988, which were laid before this House on 11th July 1988, be approved.

LEGAL AID AND ADVICE (SCOTLAND)

That the draft Advice and Assistance (Scotland) (Prospective Cost) Regulations 1988, which were laid before this House on 11th July 1988, be approved.

NORTHERN IRELAND

That the draft Corneal Tissue (Northern Ireland) Order 1988, which was laid before this House on 28th June 1988, be approved.—[*Mr. Lightbown.*]

Question agreed to.

Orders of the Day

Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) (No. 2) Bill

Order for Second Reading read.

Question, That the Bill be now read a Second time, *put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 54(1) (Consolidated Fund Bills), and agreed to.*

Bill accordingly read a Second time.

Question, That the Bill be now read the Third time, *put and agreed to.*

Bill accordingly read the Third time, and passed.

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Lightbown.]*

Northern Ireland (Economy)

7.42 pm

Mr. James Molyneaux (Lagan Valley): First, I note with appreciation the presence on the Treasury Bench of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and the Under-Secretary, the hon. Member for Gosport (Mr. Viggers), who has responsibilities for economic development. Their attendance shows that they realise that the future of the two major engineering industries are crucial to Northern Ireland in terms of jobs. They are important to the employees of the two undertakings and to those who are employed in factories in Great Britain. I trust that the presence of the Secretary of State and the Under-Secretary of State means that they are willing to listen, and having done so perhaps to grant a stay of execution.

It can be said that there is widespread recognition of the facts of life in this context by those who occupy the Opposition Front Bench, and by others elsewhere in the House. Up to that point in our consideration, there is common ground. Unfortunately, from then on there is divergence. Earlier today at Question Time, the Under-Secretary of State asserted that privatisation had been good for 17 major undertakings in Great Britain. It might have been an underestimate. My research suggests that about 28 undertakings have been privatised, but I shall not quarrel with the Minister about that.

I am sure that it will be accepted that the majority on the list could be classified as coming within what we might call the service sector. These undertakings have an advantage because they have, in effect, a captive market. Included in this category are Associated British Ports, the British Airports Authority, British Airways, British Gas and British Petroleum. These undertakings have a multitude of customers, but by the nature of their products Short Brothers and Harland and Wolff have lists of potential customers that reach single figures only.

Of the other privatised companies to which I have not referred, some may fail. If they do so, their skilled employees will be mopped up by other industries. Unfortunately, that could not and would not happen in Northern Ireland. If I might borrow a phrase from the Prime Minister, there is no alternative. That is why the Government must be ultra-careful in making their decisions.

Earlier today, my hon. Friend the Member for Antrim, East (Mr. Beggs), who is my party's spokesman on trade and industry, told the House that we in the Ulster Unionist

party have no particular hang-ups in the arguments over the merits of privatisation. We have always preferred to judge each case on its merits. Perhaps I have already implied that in service industries great benefits probably accrue from a reduction in bureaucracy. There is much to be said for making a service-type industry more responsive to its customers.

A geographically isolated shipyard and aircraft factory do not fall into that category. In Belfast, Harland and Wolff and Short Brothers plc provide the main industrial base. The stark fact is that there is no substitute or replacement to be found for either or both in Northern Ireland. It is fair to say that the Labour Government of the 1970s recognised that. For that reason they resisted all pressures to include Harland and Wolff in British Shipbuilders and Short Brothers in British Aerospace. The then Government's fear was that, when order books became slim, the two Belfast limbs would be the first to get the chop.

The memoirs of the right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees) recount the discussions on this issue. The right hon. Gentleman concluded that, if Shorts had then been included in British Aerospace, the Belfast works would probably have been closed years ago. The right hon. Gentleman's successor, who is now Lord Mason, took a similarly robust view of the shipyard and the aircraft factory. They were both ably and strongly supported by the right hon. Member for Salford, East (Mr. Orme), who had direct responsibilities and who withstood all the pressures throughout the controversy, many of which were coming from his right hon. and hon. Friends.

I do not suggest or imply that the present Secretary of State is any less robust than his predecessors. I hope that he will be equally realistic. Ten or 12 years later, who can say that the Ministers of the 1970s were mistaken? In the interval, we have seen free enterprise multinationals such as ICI, Courtaulds and British Enkalon amputate their Northern Ireland limbs when confronted with a shrinkage in world markets. In those years there was an ugly and sinister tendency on the part of national and multinational companies to close down their Ulster factory. They did so because it was in competition with other of their factories nearer to their central base and not because it was unprofitable. It would be less than truthful to suggest that such sharp practices have been snuffed out or discontinued. Like it or not, they will recur.

In the light of the bitter experience of the past 12 years, how could the Under-Secretary of State say:

"there is no future for a company that is supported by Government. The future lies in the private sector, where there is enterprise and the opportunity of growth."—[*Official Report*, 21 July 1988; Vol. 137, c. 1304.]

If the Government's approach to Shorts is based on that philosophy, there can only be disaster ahead. If Shorts is to be expected to stand on its own feet, it is being singled out for the chop.

At Question Time today, when my hon. Friend the Member for Belfast, North (Mr. Walker) asked whether it was not true that all other aircraft manufacturers in the world were dependent on Government subsidies in one form or another, the Minister—perhaps misunderstanding the question—was unable to give a very convincing answer. I have a clear duty to repeat my hon. Friend's question to the Secretary of State and his ministerial team: do they know of any major aeroplane maker anywhere in the world that is not propped up by the state in which it is situated? Do they know, for that matter, of any aircraft that has made a profit for its makers? I make an earnest plea to the Secretary of State and his colleagues to rid themselves of the notion that Shorts alone in the world, unlike all its rivals, can stand up to state-subsidised competition elsewhere.

Common sense dictates that such an experiment will fail, simply because the whole judgment is flawed. I cannot believe that the present Secretary of State would knowingly put his hand to an instrument of economic destruction that will undoubtedly bring ruin and misery to an entire community.

7.51 pm

Mr. John Hume (Foyle): The three industries under discussion—Shorts, Harland and Wolff and the Northern Ireland electricity service—have not endeared themselves to my constituents by their employment practices. But we are not interested in the doctrine of "an eye for an eye", because that leaves everyone blind. The skills and technology that those three industries represent are essential to the future of all the people of Northern Ireland, and I wish to support and protect the maintenance and development of that technology and those skills.

The Government have repeatedly sought to achieve agreement between the parties in Northern Ireland, and I support them in that endeavour: this is one issue on which we are entirely agreed. I therefore ask the Government to encourage such agreement by rewarding it.

7.52 pm

Mr. James Kilfedder (North Down): I wish to suport what has already been said by the right hon. Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneaux), and to echo what has been said by the hon. Member for Londonderry——

Mr. Hume: Foyle.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Tom King): Not Strangford.

Mr. Kilfedder: Yes, I recall that Mr. Speaker mistook the hon. Member for Foyle (Mr. Hume) for the right hon. Member for Strangford (Mr. Taylor) during Question Time.

I wish briefly to urge the Government to abandon their plan to privatise Shorts. This company has contributed enormously to technology in Northern Ireland, and if the plan goes ahead to sell it, in whole or in part, it will imperil the company's future. When the sale was announced last week, it was clear that if it went ahead the industrial vultures would descend on this company that has contributed so much, pick the bones bare and then depart. The Government say that they will protect the company because they will sell it if possible to a single buyer, but we have experience of such speculators in other parts of the United Kingdom. A buyer will come along, but he will sell what is not profitable and keep what is. I fear that, at the end of the day, despite the Government's grand words, the company and the work force will suffer.

Shorts employs 7,500 people. That is a colossal number of jobs, vital to Northern Ireland. To those jobs can be added the jobs of all those working in other companies directly linked to Shorts. There are also the jobs of people who work in shops that supply goods to the families of Shorts' workers, and there are the families themselves.

[Mr. Kilfedder]

It was nauseating to hear the unctuous words of the Minister when he made the announcement, pretending that the firm and its large work force would benefit from privatisation. I cannot see how all that work force will be maintained by a speculator who will come along to make a quick profit. As a consequence, Northern Ireland will lose the high technology that Shorts generates. Its excellent design team will be at risk. The Ulster economy, as we all know—it has been repeated often enough in the Chamber—is fragile, and such a blow will have lasting unfortunate consequences for our part of the United Kingdom.

Those unfortunate consequences, however, will not be confined to Northern Ireland. Hon. Members from Great Britain should remember that Shorts provides benefits for this part of the United Kingdom as well. The reduction in the size of the company and its work force will affect engineering firms in England that are engaged on contract for Shorts.

It has been argued that privatisation has been a success in England. That may be so, and I would not argue otherwise, but there is no comparison between the economic position in Britain—certainly in the south-east of England, where all the wealth seems to accumulate—and that in Ulster. I am not a slave to ideology, and I have no political objection to privatisation. My argument is against the privatisation of Shorts at this time and in the foreseeable future, especially in view of the vile campaign of terror being waged by the IRA.

For 20 years the IRA has sought to destroy the Northern Ireland economy, just as it sought to destroy lives and to mutilate members of the population. It has undoubtedly frightened away many potential investors, and perhaps, I regret to say, some of those who formerly provided employment in the Province. In my constituency, a building contractor—part of a worldwide concern, with its headquarters in Great Britain—abandoned work on which it was engaged in Palace barracks, Holywood, as a result of IRA threats.

I fear that the Government's announcement will appear to be a capitulation to the IRA campaign. It certainly helps the propaganda campaign—I want to emphasise that—which has been skilfully and persistently waged by the IRA and its sympathisers, particularly in the United States, against Shorts and other companies in Northern Ireland. They would love to see Northern Ireland's economy undermined, because they would then be well on their way to the destruction of that part of the United Kingdom.

Bearing in mind the courage, fortitude and restraint of the hard-working and conscientious people of Northern Ireland, the Government should have told them that they will stand shoulder to shoulder with them; that, no matter what they say and do politically in the rest of the United Kingdom, they will make sure that they in no way endanger Northern Ireland's economy and put at risk everything that has been done to build up and maintain that fragile economy. Sadly, the Government prefer to force on the people of Northern Ireland, at a bad and dangerous time, their privatisation policy, which will unfortunately have bitter consequences.

The propaganda campaign waged by the IRA against Shorts has also been waged against the Belfast shipyard. I and my colleagues in the House have paid tribute to the work force. It is composed of hard-working and dedicated people. It is my duty, and that of my colleagues, to fight for them, their jobs and the rights of their families. It is tragic that the Government also wish to privatise Harland and Wolff now.

I want to make a plea to the Government—although I am sad to say that it will probably be rejected out of hand by Ministers whose commitment is not to Northern Ireland jobs, as it should be. I plead with them to ensure that Shorts and Harland and Wolff, two great and major firms, remain within the public sector. I know that in making that plea I have the support of all people in Northern Ireland, regardless of religion and political beliefs.

The hon. Member for Foyle, referred to the work force in those two companies. I have already said that I and my colleagues are prepared to go to the United States with the hon. Gentleman and his colleagues to fight for jobs, not just for Shorts, and not just in Loyalist but in Nationalist areas. Our concern is to ensure that prosperity is restored to Northern Ireland and that the terrorists do not succeed in their vile and obscene campaign.

8.3 pm

Mr. A. Cecil Walker (Belfast, North): There are times when the rights of the people must take precedence over all other considerations. The time has now arrived when the Government must take stock of their privatisation policy in Northern Ireland and examine the social consequences of such policies on the small regional economy of the Province.

It is highly irresponsible at this time for the Government to announce privatisation plans for Shorts and Harland and Wolff. Such announcements are perceived by the population as further evidence of the Government's intention to withdraw from Northern Ireland, which can do nothing for political and economic stability and will only fuel the fires of insurrection. In addition, such decisions would be disastrous from a social and humanitarian point of view.

It is a matter of record and public disquiet that such expansion as has occurred recently has been confined to the south-east of England. But, as every hon. Member knows, there has been little sign of any significant improvement elsewhere within the United Kingdom. The recent depressing trade figures point to the folly of following policies which favour one part of the kingdom at the expense of the others.

The Government cannot stand aloof and opt out of their responsibilities to Northern Ireland, which is considered to be one of the most deprived areas in the United Kingdom.

In taking my stand tonight specifically in defence of Shorts, I ask the Government to re-examine, logically and objectively, their decision to privatise that most dynamic company in the aircraft construction and allied industries.

Shorts contributed greatly to the defeat of Nazi Germany by its superhuman efforts in the production of battle line aircraft which were renowned throughout the world for their performance and reliability in destroying strategic targets in enemy territory.

The contribution of Shorts to the commercial side of the aviation industry is also exemplary, going as far back as 1909, when a Short biplane won the *Daily Mail* award for the first British aircraft to fly a circular mile. The big flying boats produced for Imperial Airways opened up the

air routes to Australia and the far east. Today we have the renowned Skyvan and the 360, which has been adopted by more than 30 carriers worldwide.

Selling that most valuable public asset will be seen as a betrayal of the skill and innovation of the aerospace and engineering industry in Northern Ireland. The effects on the engineering industry and the local economy will be catastrophic. It will also affect many parts of the United Kingdom where engineering companies engage in contract work for Shorts.

The Government say that they wish to privatise Shorts because of financial losses, but the level of loss is not as great as the Government are making out. Last year there was a loss of £47 million, but £25 million of that was simply the repayment of loans. Because of those debts the interest charges will inevitably increase each year, and that will be exacerbated by the higher interest rates charged by outside agencies compared with the cost of Government grants or low interest loans.

It must also be appreciated that substantial losses were in part due to underfunding and cuts in Ministry of Defence expenditure. I would respectfully point out to the Government that most aircraft manufacturers throughout the world are in receipt of visible or invisible Government subsidies. It is generally recognised that high technology products require high investment to make them profitable. That is borne out by the Dutch Government supporting Fokker and America supporting Boeing.

What is needed now is a commitment from the Government to Shorts, since there is no way in which investment from within or outside the Province could compensate for the large-scale reduction in employment that would occur if the company were privatised.

We particularly need a commitment to the aircraft manufacturing sector and support for the new FJX aircraft as a worthy replacement for the SD3. It is absolutely essential that that project is fully supported if Shorts is to continue as a design/engineering aircraft manufacturer, particularly as the company has the highest concentration of research and design skills in Northern Ireland and has trained the largest number of skilled apprentices.

Contract work has provided thousands of additional jobs in other parts of the United Kingdom and other unemployment blackspots in the Province. Privatisation would deal a blow to the equal opportunities programme which Shorts has embarked upon. Such a programme cannot be successful if jobs are at a premium under privatisation.

I contend that privatisation is totally unsuitable to a small, deprived economy such as that in Northern Ireland, which is already suffering from perhaps the worst unemployment in the United Kingdom. No amount of small, transnational operations on green field sites can replace Shorts at the heart of the engineering industry. The survival of Shorts is essential to the survival of the Northern Ireland economy. Without it, we shall become an industrial wasteland, and any small, modest recovery already achieved will be wiped out and reversed.

8.12 pm

Mr. Harry Barnes (Derbyshire, North-East): The Government are convinced of the correctness of their policies and believe that they should press ahead with them despite our opposition, but they must accept that their policies are divisive. They may think that in the end they will be able to overcome that, and people will see the good that they believe they are doing. But their policies are hated by working-class people in my constituency. Applying those policies to Northern Ireland, which has a divided society and sectarian battles and clashes, is an utter disgrace. The Government should respond to the market in which they seek to operate their policies. If there is a case for sticking with or returning to some past consensus or moving towards some improvement, that case is within Northern Ireland.

Different policies need to be directed to the Irish question than to England, Wales and Scotland. Although I oppose them in a more traditional battle, the only good that can result from the Government's policies of privatising electricity, Short Brothers and Harland and Wolff is that it will bind together some of the different factions in Northern Ireland. As I have said, they may be able to produce some unity among the different parties and individuals who represent constituencies in Northern Ireland, and the political parties not represented in the House. People are being directed to fighting class politics in which working-class interests are dominant.

I recall a delegation that came over from Strabane and included representatives of Sinn Fein, the SDLP, the Ulster Unionists, Independents and others. They were here because of the flood damage in Strabane and they wanted the Government to provide funds to deal with it. Problems of that nature overcome the sectarian divide because key economic and social questions have to be faced. I ask the Government to back off from the policies they are using and to do something about uniting Northern Ireland.

8.14 pm

Mr. Jim Marshall (Leicester, South): I congratulate the right hon. Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneaux) on drawing first place in the ballot for debates on the Consolidated Fund. I am sure that we all agree that it is the best position in the list. I thank the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland for being present on the Government Front Bench to reply to this short debate. It shows that he considers of paramount importance the economy of Ireland and the possible privatisation of the three industries that have been discussed. If he is to solve his other problems in the Province, the economy and the growth in the economy in Northern Ireland must be tackled successfully.

It is significant that, despite the geographical differences between my hon. Friend the Member for Foyle (Mr. Hume) and the right hon. Member for Lagan Valley, they are at one on the need to maintain Shorts within the public sector and on the need to protect jobs. Perhaps that is the first sign of the agreement between party leaders that the Secretary of State has been trying to achieve during the past few years. Perhaps he should seize the first small fruit of consent and build upon it so that that agreement can be used to build agreement in other aspects of political and economic life in Northern Ireland.

The official Opposition, together with other Opposition parties, met representatives of the work force of Short Brothers who made absolutely clear their opposition to privatisation. They will fight the proposals to privatise the company and they feel that if the company is privatised, rather than providing the guarantees of job security, to which the Under-Secretary of State referred on previous

[Mr. Jim Marshall]

occasions, privatisation will be the thin end of the wedge and the Government will shed responsibility not only for the companies but for the economy of the Province, and closure and redundancy will inevitably result. They are strongly opposed to privatisation and certainly the Opposition have pledged their wholehearted support to them in their opposition to privatisation.

It would be churlish of me not to have due regard to the comparative improvement in the economy of Northern Ireland during the past 18 months or two years. As the Secretary of State and the Under-Secretary of State have told us on previous occasions, during 1987-88 unemployment fell, and it continues to fall. Congratulations are due to them for that. I also give due respect and credit to the enterprise schemes which are being operated in Northern Ireland and the encouragement which the Government continue to give to inward investment in the Province. We all agree that there is a desperate need not only to sustain existing jobs, but to attract new jobs into Northern Ireland. We welcome without hesitation those improvements.

As I have said on previous occasions, it is as well to remember that industrial productivity in Northern Ireland is still substantially below what it was in the early 1980s. The number of people unemployed is substantially higher than it was in 1978. We should remember that the number of new jobs created last year fell far below the reduction in unemployment. Thus, the fall in unemployment was produced not by job creation but by the creation of new aid schemes, migration from the Province and the fall in the number of school leavers. As I have said, it must be borne in mind that industrial production is static and is still at or below the level it was in 1981.

Industrial production in Northern Ireland has remained static, whereas in the rest of the United Kingdom it has grown by 12 per cent. since 1981. It is as well to remember that manufacturing in Northern Ireland is dominated by two giants—Short Brothers and Harland and Wolff. Of 90,000 manufacturing jobs, 11,000 are directly associated with Short Brothers and Harland and Wolff and perhaps a third—30,000 manufacturing jobs —are directly or indirectly related to those two giants. If they were threatened with closure, that would have a dramatic effect on unemployment in the Province. If, by some disaster, they closed, 20,000 or 30,000 jobs in Northern Ireland could be lost. Furthermore, subcontracting jobs in Great Britain would be at risk.

We would all agree that Harland and Wolff has made great strides in improving efficiency and productivity over the past few years, and that it has been innovative in using the latest computer-designed techniques for designing ships. The company can now compete, expecially in the high technology sector of shipbuilding, with any other in the world. Management and workers have worked together in a way that can serve as an example to any other company in the United Kingdom. Together they have improved productivity and agreed on a common goal for the company—to ensure its survival and to make it as competitive as possible. As a consequence they have managed to reduce losses per man—unfortunately, they are not profits per man—to one third of the United Kingdom shipbuilding average, and losses per man at the company are now comparable with those of any other shipbuilding yard in the world. These are great steps forward by Harland and Wolff.

A few months ago there was a great sense of anticipation that the company, having made sacrifices and lost jobs in recent years, would achieve continuity into the early 1990s with the advent of Ravi Tikkoo. It was anticipated that the yard could be kept going and that jobs in it could be held at around 3,000. We all thought that if Mr. Tikkoo's concept of the Ultimate Dream was viable and the vessel could be built at Harland and Wolff, it should be.

Some questions must be answered. First, can Harland and Wolff build the ship? The company says that it can. Secondly, can there be an agreement on its price? Again, it appears that Harland and Wolff and Mr. Tikkoo can agree on that. So those two questions have been answered by the company, but the next two must be answered by the Government—we desperately want these answers. Can Mr. Tikkoo's company be assured that normal export credit guarantees will be available in this case? We need a yes or no answer to that, not prevarication. Next, if a contract were signed, would it receive support under the sixth directive of the EEC? Again, that needs answering with a yes or no, not with prevarication.

Instead of providing direct answers, the Government have tried to concentrate on the ownership of the yard. We now face the charade of the potential customer, Ravi Tikkoo, turning into a potential buyer, purely because the Government see this as an opportunity of ridding themselves of a loss-making shipyard. The Government should stop playing this game and answer the two questions I have asked.

I have other questions for the Secretary of State about the Ultimate Dream order. Why are discussions about the Ultimate Dream order and about the sale of the yard now so inextricably linked? What is the current state of those discussions? When will the Government come clean about them, and about their results?

Short Brothers has been the main topic of this debate. As we all know, a "For Sale" notice has just been slapped on it, which is not too surprising in the light of the Government's privatisation proposals for the rest of the United Kingdom, or of the track record of the new chairman of Short Brothers, Mr. Rodney Lund. He has the unique distinction in the aerospace industry of knowing nothing about it. That seems unfair to Short Brothers, as most aerospace companies throughout the world like to have people in charge, and in charge of their negotiations, who have vision and who know something about the industry over which they exercise control.

Short Brothers, which is in the forefront of the aerospace industry, now has a chairman who knows little about it. What he does have is a track record of privatisation. We are driven inescapably to the conclusion that he has been appointed for his skills in that direction and for his familiarity with the City. Privatisation and the possible break-up of the yard seems to have been in the forefront of the minds of the people who appointed this gentleman to his present position——

Mr. Kevin McNamara (Kingston upon Hull, North): Yard? We are talking about Short Brothers now.

Mr. Marshall: I apologise if I gave the impression that I was referring to Harland and Wolff. The chairman and

managing director of Harland and Wolff have our confidence. I wish we could say the same of the higher management of Short Brothers.

We have noted the Minister's repeated assertion that, if the company is privatised, the Government want it to remain as a whole. In our view, which is shared by the shop stewards, that position is untenable. If the company is privatised as a whole, we are convinced that the buyer will be interested in only one part of it—the missiles section. The future of the other two sections—aircraft and aero-structures—would be insecure. If the company is sold, we should like a guarantee that the buyer will keep it as a whole and that jobs will be guaranteed for perhaps five or six years.

Ministers appear to have misunderstood what Harland and Wolff and Shorts symbolise to the people of Northern Ireland. They are regarded as symbols of the Government's continued commitment to the economy of the north of Ireland. Rightly or wrongly, the recently announced decisions to privatise the companies are regarded by a substantial number of people as the Government's intention to withdraw, perhaps not fully, from the economy of Northern Ireland and as a shot across the bows to show that the level of support given in the past cannot continue indefinitely.

The debate gives the Secretary of State an opportunity to nail those allegations as lies and to say that the Government will continue to support the economy of Northern Ireland and Harland and Wolff and Shorts. The best way of showing that determination and giving those guarantees is to do away with the nonsense of privatisation, accept that Harland and Wolff and Shorts should remain in the public sector and offer continued hope of prosperity to Belfast and Northern Ireland as a whole.

8.33 pm

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Tom King): The subject for the debate chosen by the right hon. Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneaux) is the economy of Northern Ireland, with particular reference to the future of Short Brothers and Harland and Wolff. The House will therefore understand if I begin by discussing the economy of Northern Ireland.

I have two rather contrary messages to deliver. First, I enormously welcome the debate. Thank goodness hon. Members representing Northern Ireland have expressed interest in economic issues. I congratulate the right hon. Member for Lagan Valley—there is no point in being churlish because it would be rather like a vicar berating the congregation for being too small—on his initiative in launching the debate.

I appreciate very much the comments by the hon. Member for Leicester, South (Mr. Marshall) and others. They correctly identified my presence as being not only symbolic but a sign of the close personal interest that I have taken—as has my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Gosport (Mr. Viggers)—in the economy of the Province. We were delighted to be joined by other hon. Members, who showed their interest in the subject.

Secondly, having made those tolerably friendly remarks, I have found this the most appallingly depressing debate. I do not think that I have ever listened to so many speeches with which I profoundly disagreed. In certain respects I resented them, and in others they were an insult to the skills, ability and industry of the people of Northern Ireland, who have shown their abilities to triumph over all the problems of the Province. They have not come pleading with begging bowls, saying, "We have not a hope of competing in world markets unless we receive special assistance and twice as much subsidy as anyone else."

Anyone who pays a visit to Northern Ireland will see its abilities and achievements. Its people do not moan about the disadvantages they face. They are succeeding and earning a worldwide reputation because of their hard work, determination and skill. I have the deepest admiration—it is often defined as the work ethnic that exists in many parts of the Province—for the inventiveness, scientific skills, education achievements and qualifications of many people in Northern Ireland, which is why its economy has recently moved forward in so many respects.

The economy in Northern Ireland has suffered from high unemployment. When I heard the hon. Member for Belfast, North (Mr. Walker) say that there was little sign of improvement, I thought that he was selling Northern Ireland short. I have recently received the review of the Trustee Savings bank for Northern Ireland. It is appropriate to quote from its document because it was in the public sector but is now in the private sector. I hope that its review will not immediately be regarded by hon. Members as discredited. It mentions the present position rather differently from the miserable language that we heard in the debate.

The review says that the steady growth of the United Kingdom economy—which has out-performed other European countries and, in many respects, the United States and Japan—has, although it has taken longer to arrive, had an impact on Northern Ireland. It further says:

"Evidence from the most recent CBI Business Surveys, however, indicates a degree of optimism."

It says that there is

"Considerable business confidence . . . Capacity utilisation remains good and there is little evidence of capacity constraints despite growing local, national export demand . . . Both CBI and PA Management surveys of investment intentions indicate that strong capital investment is taking place and is likely to continue over the coming year . . . The CBI report positive investment plans across manufacturing and service industries and PA attribute the healthy manufacturing investment outlook to buoyant demand, increased order books and the success of past capital investment."

Listening to hon. Members, I wondered whether they had recently visited the Province or whether they were aware of what is going on there.

Although the figures given by the hon. Member for Leicester, South were correct, I genuinely believe that the continuing falls in unemployment are being reflected in an increase in employment. After the debate, I shall show the hon. Gentleman an interesting graph in the Trustee Savings bank review, which tends to confirm the unemployment decline. In September 1986, unemployment reached 135,000. As a previous Secretary of State for Employment in England and Wales, I came to the Province determined to do my best to help employment in Northern Ireland. As we stand here now, unemployment is down to 115,000. That is last month's figure. It is confirmation not of a continuing decline but of the improvement that every hon. Member welcomes.

I see the hon. Member for Foyle (Mr. Hume) present. I am sure that he will accept that there is a spirit of greater

[Mr. Tom King]

confidence in what he would call Derry. There is greater confidence in the Province in future economic prospects and employment. In addressing the real problems, we should not sell the Province short. We should not underrate the real achievements of many people who in the past year have been recruiting, investing, scoring export successes and expanding their businesses. In that improvement lies one of the best hopes for the Province.

Mr. Kilfedder: I wish to make it clear that I resent the arrogant words of the Secretary of State, who queried whether Unionist Members—I assume he also included the hon. Member for Foyle (Mr. Hume)—ever visit the Province. We live there and are committed to it. My speech was restricted to the two giant industries—Short Brothers and Harland and Wolff. I referred to the fragile economy of Northern Ireland. Is the Secretary of State saying that the economy is not fragile? Did he meet the workers at Shorts? Did he speak to those workers, or did he speak only to the management? Apparently he thinks that he is speaking for everyone in Northern Ireland. We live there and meet the people every weekend when we go home. The Secretary of State should understand that people in Northern Ireland resent anyone who expects the Ulster people to shout "bwana" to the Secretary of State in his cantonment at Stormont castle.

Mr. King: The point I was making is that my perception and that of many visitors and customers in Northern Ireland is different from the presentation that the hon. Gentleman gave. To try to describe Northern Ireland as a Province without hope, prospects, skills or abilities——.

Mr. Kilfedder: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I did not say that the Province——

The Lord Commissioner to the Treasury (Mr. David Lightbown): That is not a point of order.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Order. It is for the Chair to decide whether it is a point of order.

Mr. Kilfedder: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I seek your protection, because the Secretary of State is saying that I said that Northern Ireland was a country without hope or skills. I did not say that, and I resent——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. This is a debating Chamber and that is not a matter for the Chair. The debate must continue.

Mr. King: I am grateful for your ruling, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The hon. Member for North Down (Mr. Kilfedder) may not have heard my opening remarks. He may have addressed his remarks solely to the two companies concerned, but I have made it clear—the right hon. Member for Lagan Valley knows this—that the topic for debate is the economy of Northern Ireland, with particular reference to those two companies. Therefore, I am addressing those issues.

The Northern Ireland economy faces challenges and starts from a more difficult position. However, it has achieved more and made more progress in the past year than it has in other recent years. That should be recognised. I say to the hon. Member for North Down that the two companies concerned can be sustained, not by Government subvention, but by orders, which may in certain circumstances require Government assistance.

There would be no order in Harland and Wolff after the present SWOPS order were it not for the fact that a Ministry of Defence order is about to be constructed. That order makes it possible for the yard to consider taking further orders. It is no great secret in the House that I did what I could to ensure that the order went, in fair and successful competition, to Harland and Wolff. There are a number of orders in Shorts now which are there because of the skills of the company, the quality of its products, the commitment of the Government and whatever part I could play in helping to support export orders. The hon. Member for Belfast, North said that Ministers have stood aloof from the problems and have not sought to support employment. He said that Ministers are strangers to Northern Ireland and have not made a commitment to it. The hon. Gentleman will have to stand by his own conscience and judgment in those remarks.

Having dealt with the comments about the general state of the economy, I want to turn to the central issue, which is the fear that has echoed round the Chamber. Hon. Members seem to equate privatisation with liquidation. The right hon. Member for Lagan Valley inadvertently, or perhaps deliberately, pleaded for a stay of execution. That is what many people in Northern Ireland think is about to happen.

Mr. Molyneaux: In a legal sense.

Mr. King: I understand that, but people are talking about the concept of privatisation as if it is the greatest threat that the companies have ever faced. I wonder what Mr. Harland and Mr. Wolff would have said as they embarked on their career. If somebody had said, "You should be part of a Government Department. You think that you can build ships, but you would be much better off if you had civil servants advising you at every step," I think I know what Mr. Harland and Mr. Wolff, who built a company with a name that echoes famously around the world, would have said to that suggestion.

Mr. Molyneaux: I do not resent the slap on the wrist that the Secretary of State administered earlier. However, I do not think that we were as guilty as he suggested. I agree that Mr. Harland and Mr. Wolff would have been horrified if they had been told that they could build ships and sell them only with a Government subsidy. At that time, their competitors were not benefiting from Government subsidies. That is the central problem.

With respect, I should like the Secretary of State to address his mind to the question that was put to him by myself and by my hon. Friend the Member for Antrim, East (Mr. Beggs). Can the Secretary of State point to an aircraft manufacturer anywhere in the world that is not being propped up by subsidies? The problem for the future is that if the two industries are privatised they will not be put out into a world where there will be fair competition. They will be meeting unfair competition. That is the central theme of our argument.

Mr. King: I took careful note of the direct question that the right hon. Gentleman asked, and I intend to answer it.

I wish to analyse the arguments that have been advanced in the debates as to why the idea of moving from

public to private ownership is bound to be disastrous for companies in Northern Ireland. One of the right hon. Gentleman's arguments was that the shipyard has a limited range of customers, unlike many of the industries that have been privatised in the service sector. Let us consider what happened with the Rolls-Royce aero engine company. It has a pretty limited range of customers—only people who manufacture or buy aircraft. That company was not in the service sector.

What about the Royal Ordnance factories? I had some personal experience of their privatisation, because there was one in my constituency. They had a limited range of customers, and there was a great fear whether, in private ownership, they could succeed outside the umbrella of the Ministry of Defence. There has since been a much more effective sales and marketing effort, and there is a much better prospect of long-term security of employment in that industry.

The most obvious illustration is British Shipbuilders. The right hon. Gentleman talked about the disadvantages of Harland and Wolff being geographically isolated. At that point, I said to my hon. Friend the Minister, "Can you think of any industry where it matters least if it is geographically isolated?" A shipyard would be the most obvious example. No one has ever told the Koreans that they are geographically isolated, yet they dominate the shipbuilding market and are considered fully competitive. No one seriously suggests that the future of the Govan shipyard would be secured by its continuing to be part of a loss-making nationalised industry that attracted orders at such a rate of public subsidy that, in the end, every order was a crisis and every month or year of survival was a bonus. Now owned by Kvaerner, a specialist company that has identified a market for its products, the prospect of long-term employment in the Govan yard is much better than it would have been in a general purpose nationalised industry.

The right hon. Gentleman said that we cannot keep companies in Northern Ireland unless they are publicly owned, and he cited the companies that have been there and left. I understand the problems that affected the synthetic fibre industry, such as the Courtaulds clothing plant and British Enkalon, but it is also worth remembering Du Pont. It is making its third consecutive investment in Northern Ireland in recent years. It is a successful company whose presence in Northern Ireland is based not on massive Government subsidy—certainly not on public ownership—but increasingly on the performance of the plant and the quality of the work force. It is a tribute to the skills of the engineering work force at Du Pont that when the company carries out chemical engineering work at its other plants in Europe, the engineers from Maydown are asked to do it.

In addition to public ownership, Shorts and Harland and Wolff have benefited from a substantial network of public finance of one sort or another. In shipbuilding, some finance comes through the intervention fund. The hon. Member for Leicester, South asked whether intervention fund assistance would still be available. We shall try to ensure that it is maintained, although it is discretionary. We recognise the need to make it possible for Harland and Wolff to compete against other yards within the terms of the European directive.

The right hon. Gentleman asked me to name any aircraft company that operated either without subsidy or without some involvement in defence. Shorts produces Tucano aircraft, and it has won the Starstreak missile order—the largest missile order ever placed by the Ministry of Defence—for a sum in excess of £200 million. The company is a valued and respected Ministry of Defence contractor, and its products command markets and continued support.

Against that background, I can see how Shorts will play its part. Other aerospace companies that have defence contracts—they may be development contracts, such as the one for the Starstreak missile—won those orders by virtue of their capabilities and their products in competition with others. I expect that to continue.

The fear that has been expressed in the debate has been a feature of other privatisations. I understand why, when the first companies were privatised, there were serious fears about the risks to employment, but, to use the hackneyed phrase, there is no need for us to look in the crystal ball when we can read the book. Very few Jaguar employees are saying, "Please let us return to the benefits of public ownership." Not too many people are saying, "I do not care for Associated Ports. I much preferred the British Transport Docks Board." Few of the employee shareholders of the National Freight Corporation say, "Bring back the good old days of British Road Services." Privatisation may be new to Northern Ireland, but it is not an English phenomenon. Privatisation has taken place in England, Scotland and Wales and the logical economic benefits have been felt everywhere.

I believe that our proposals must be accompanied by a consideration to secure employment, and that was the only part of the remarks made by the right hon. Member for North Down with which I agreed. We are concerned about that, as our record shows. It is essential that we achieve a good understanding of the intentions of anyone who might acquire the companies. We shall look very carefully at any proposals that come forward, not simply at the price or financial arrangements, but in the widest possible sense at the implications for the Northern Ireland economy.

I stand by the record that I spelt out at the beginning of my speech. I made my commitment on the steps of Stormont castle, when I made it clear that I would do all that I could to help the economic progress of the Province. I have explained that unemployment has fallen by 20,000 since its high point in September 1986. I intend to do all that I can to ensure that that fall continues.

I want to see maximum employment and the best possible prospects in Harland and Wolff and in Shorts. I passionately believe that through private ownership and by the private sector approach there is a better prospect of a brighter future than will ever come through a continuing and dead dependence on public support and subsidy, which tends only to enfeeble and enervate companies. The evidence of the improvements that can come from a private sector approach is all too apparent.

Both the companies are operating in the most difficult market conditions facing any product that is manufactured in the world at the moment. That is especially true of shipbuilding. The aircraft industry is also extremely difficult. If we cannot obtain orders, that will be a very serious problem. There can be no guarantee that orders will be obtained. The Government will do all that they can to support genuine efforts to sustain employment on a viable basis for both companies. I say that against a background in which Harland and Wolff has faced major problems. It has a proud name, but its future will determine whether there are to be jobs and orders. I note

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that the company has major assets. It has excellent facilities and very good equipment, as the hon. Member for Leicester, South said. It has had major capital investment to its advantage, and it has considerable skills.

We embark on the challenge with those assets to our advantage. I note also for those who are concerned about the recent financial progress of Shorts that it has excellent products, not least in its missiles. I believe that it holds what is known as the "Pride in Excellence" award, which was awarded yet again to the company by Boeing for the quality of its manufacturing for Boeing to the very highest standards. It has real achievements.

Both companies have assets, real achievements and potential. The challenge that we face is to see how most effectively they can make a valuable contribution to the economy of Northern Ireland. We believe that our proposals are the right way to proceed. They have brought great benefits to companies and employees in Great Britain. We want to see those benefits in the rest of the United Kingdom and applied in Northern Ireland as well.

Bophuthatswana

9.2 pm

Mr. Colin Shepherd (Hereford): I am sure that the House will be very grateful to my right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office for coming to the House to participate in this short debate on the Government's policy towards the republic of Bophuthatswana.

I do not profess to be an all-purpose expert on the affairs of South Africa. I became intrigued by the situation in Bophuthatswana as a consequence of considering southern Africa after my son went to work there. I became more and more intrigued the more I considered it. As my right hon. Friend the Minister will be aware, I took advantage of an invitation to visit the republic of Bophuthatswana at Easter. I thank my hosts for the thoroughness with which they took me and others in the party around and made it possible for me to talk to those on the meeting list, those in official agencies and Government Departments, and also people who were not on the list. I was pleased to be able to seize the opportunity to talk to the man in the street whenever I could. I am pleased to say that that was quite often. I was impressed by the general atmosphere of freedom, of life, and of the relaxed air and confidence of the people. In one respect that was amazing, because it was not very long after the wretched and disfiguring coup, which was without doubt a sore point with everyone that we came across.

Among the people to whom I spoke were university students, who were especially refreshing and interesting. Once we had broken down the initial reserve and had become relaxed in our conversations, time and time again the remark made by one student after another of all disciplines was that they felt free in Bophuthatswana. Unibo does not just have a catchment area of Mmabatho, but goes far wider. Part of its attraction is its mix, with freedom of expression, action and thought, and freedom from oppression. I report that as something that was told to me and which I have no reason to doubt.

All in all, I found a fascinating conundrum. I found a multiracial, free enterprise, Christian, open, gay—I hate the misuse of that word—and friendly society. It was one that all the world would want for the whole of southern Africa. The paradox of it is that they are pariahed and condemned for being a product of apartheid. I hope it goes without saying, but I hold no brief for apartheid—hence the paradox. On the one hand, I do not like what it does and, on the other, when I go to what it has done, I find the very thing that we are trying to create in southern Africa as a whole.

The easy way out for those who wish to resolve that dilemma is to condemn the republic of Bophuthatswana as a puppet state. They say that it is not in charge of its own defence. It has a treaty with South Africa, which it initiated and negotiated when it secured its independence in 1977. It was only right that that treaty should be invoked by South Africa as a consequence of the coup. I am delighted that it did so and restored the democratically elected Government.

As for the officers in its army, it may be that the force of 3,400 men has in it two non-Bophuthatswanans—a brigadier and a lieutenant colonel—but the remainder, including the commissioner and the major general, are Bophuthatswanan. It is said that the Civil Service is

administered by South Africans on secondment. However, the figures show that 246 South Africans have been seconded, out of a total of 28,140 Civil Service employees, which is not the biggest percentage that there ever was. People say that the South Africans are perhaps in key positions. I cannot agree with that, because when I looked through the list I found that the South Africans there have been seconded for training and instructional purposes. I cannot help but commend the sentiments of President Lucas Mangope, when he said "My objective, as soon as we have people trained, is to have Bophuthatswanan citizens in charge of the Civil Service, but I cannot do that until I have achieved the instruction." The conditions that are used to run down Bophuthatswana's image are perfectly natural in the transition towards the self-educated state that it wishes to be.

We even have the prison service slung at us. It is run by a secondee, but I like a country that is not too proud to go to outside sources for advice when it feels that there is expertise to be had there and it wishes to learn, on the clear understanding between instructor and learner what the eventual outcome will be.

The economy is used as evidence with which to run down the independence of Bophuthatswana. It is said that 20 per cent. of its budget is funded by South Africa by way of grants, which amount to 403 million rand out of a total of 1,745 million rand. If a country is developing and trying to better itself and has infrastructural and development needs but is not recognised and therefore cannot go to other sources of aid, the only place to which it can go is its sponsor from whom it achieved independence and say, "Please help."

Mr. Michael Colvin (Romsey and Waterside): This is an important point. Is there not also some inconsistency among front-line states? Bophuthatswana has no one to whom it can turn, but the front-line states are not slow to trade with South Africa. I dare say that their economies can also be said to be 20 per cent. dependent on the Republic of South Africa.

Mr. Shepherd: I went to South Africa with open eyes and, I hope, an open mind and no prejudice. I recognised that a substantial amount of trade was going on. I was about to say before my hon. Friend intervened that front-line states that gained their independence from Britain do not hesitate to come to us when development aid is required. That is perfectly natural.

I had considerable sympathy for the Economics Minister of Bophuthatswana, Mr. Kiekelame, when he gave evidence to the Foreign Affairs Select Committee in May 1987. He said that if his country was recognised by other countries he would have access to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank and would probably be able to avoid the mistakes that were made by Zambia. Such wisdom and the desire not to try to reinvent the wheel and not to make every mistake in the book is to be encouraged. It saddens me that the country's economics are used to bludgeon it into the ground. Who else is there to turn to but South Africa?

If we look for parallels, not far away, from South Africa's point of view, there are Swaziland and Lesotho, which were fortunate enough to be part of the British empire before being given their independence. They are geographically similar to Bophuthatswana in that they are islands in a sea of South Africa. They, too, have development problems. They have had greater difficulties with finance than does Bophuthatswana. It is not surprising that that country looks somewhat bewildered at the outside world, which refuses to recognise its plight.

I came to the conclusion that this is not an economic problem, but a political one. When I looked through the speech that my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary made to the Commonwealth Institute on 17 May, I saw that he reminded us of what Harold Macmillan said as Prime Minister in his famous "wind of change" speech. He declared the British Government's commitment to

> "a society which respects the rights of individuals, a society in which men are given the opportunity to grow to their full stature . . . a society in which individual merit alone is the criterion for a man's advancement, whether political or economic."

That rang a bell with me, because that is what I saw when I visited Bophuthatswana.

In so far as Bhophuthatswana has a right to be recognised on a wider basis than just South Africa, we have always placed great importance on the will of the people. So far as I can make out, the people want the present status of independence to continue. In 1987 the Select Committee asked hypothetical questions, such as if there were a whole different set of circumstances in South Africa, what would the case be, but as nobody has a crystal ball, or the least awareness of what the nature of the circumstances might be, it is perfectly reasonable for the country to say, "We like what we have and we want to stay as we are."

That was manifest by the election results of 1987. The two main political parties, the BDP and the PPP, secured 72 seats—the whole of the elected part of the Parliament. The BDP won 66 and the PPP six. The third party, which wanted independence on a different basis, secured no seats. The manifestation of the people is that they want the independence that they enjoy at present. They have reaffirmed that both by their vote and, paradoxically, by their non-vote. If they did not vote, it must be considered a vote for the status quo.

Mr. Andrew Hunter (Basingstoke): My hon. Friend may wish to reflect on the fact that the third political party, which was opposed to the present status of Bhophuthatswana, could not field a candidate in the Odi-Moretele district to the east of the country, where, arguably, support for the status quo is at its weakest.

Mr. Shepherd: That is a good point and worth taking into account.

We have said to our friends in the Falkland Islands and elsewhere, "If you wish to leave, you may go." It could easily be said, "We have nothing to do with southern Africa and the republic in the middle of South Africa, which is a creature of South Africa, so we have no view on this matter." We say that we have no view about whether parts of Armenia go to Azerbaijan, or whether the Kurds go to Pakistan, Iran or Iraq. I do not accept that, because the British people have a responsibility in this sector.

We set up the boundaries around the Union of South Africa. We took southern Bechuanaland into the Cape colony, despite the representations of the chiefs and elders in 1885 that we should not do so. Therefore, we who have set up the present circumstances cannot absolve ourselves from them. The people of what used to be southern Bechuanaland, who were given their lands by virtue of

[Mr. Shepherd]

British Acts of Parliament in 1913 and 1936, ask why they should be abandoned by the British. Moreover, it would be in Britain's interests to tap that enormous source of support in that part of southern Africa, for the benefit of both Britain and southern Africa.

That leads me to my last point. There is an interest for Britain in this argument. We all agree that the future of South Africa is highly uncertain, but in Bophuthatswana there is an oasis of potential stability, if it can be given outside recognition. There is an opportunity for industrial investment in a strategically located and friendly country, with implications for north-south trade within the African continent. If that opportunity is being spotted by countries such as Taiwan, we should be spotting it too and securing investment there.

It must be in Britain's interest to secure the sources of platinum that we require. We no longer have platinum refining capacity in this country. The old days when sub-refined platinum came to this country to be refined are gone. The new refining capacity to be opened soon in Bophuthatswana will give that country added value, but will leave us more vulnerable. It makes sense for us to secure our sources of supply in the future.

In seeking to raise this matter tonight I was reminded of the speech, "South Africa: No Easy Answers", that was made by my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary and the message that it gave. He said:

"there is another message common to both black and white in South Africa. Avoid intellectual or political straitjackets. Be ready to think the unthinkable."

I ask my right hon. Friend the Minister, as nicely as I can, to think the unthinkable. I was disappointed by the resolute stance that she took in May at Question Time, but I hope that if we set out the arguments again she will see them through fresh eyes and be induced to accept an invitation to visit southern Africa—not as Minister of State, with all the panoply of power—and to include in her visit the territory of Bophuthatswana. Perhaps she will encourage further contacts at an unofficial level so that a greater understanding can be achieved of the real contribution that that country can make.

9.23 pm

Mr. Andrew Hunter (Basingstoke): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Hereford (Mr. Shepherd)—with more than a degree of envy—on introducing the debate. Like him, I derive no particular pleasure from the opportunity. It is a sad fact that the Government, whom I staunchly support in every other respect—not least with regard to their policy towards South Africa—are deeply and profoundly mistaken in their interpretation of the situation in Bophuthatswana and in their policy towards that country.

Without doubt, this debate will not attract attention in the headlines of the national media tomorrow. It will, however, have a far wider audience. In time, reports of the debate will be read by the southern Batswana, the people of Bophuthatswana; and they will see the debate as another small landmark in their relentless and unceasing bid for justice. It is their argument—an argument that, with consideration of the evidence, I have come to accept—that the southern Batswana have been wronged by the policies of successive British Governments. That seems, alas, to be the case. British foreign policy seeks to deny the people of Bophuthatswana their past, to ridicule their present and to condemn their future. I shall elaborate briefly on those three points.

On 8 February, I tabled a written question asking the Foreign Secretary

"on what interpretation of the relationship between the territory of modern Bophuthatswana and the native reserves established for the Southern Botswana by British Governments is Her Majesty's Government's policy towards Bophuthatswana based."

I received the reply:

"Our policy is based on the fact that Bophuthatswana was created out of the Republic of South Africa, as a key element in the policy of separate development".—[*Official Report*, 8 February 1988; Vol. 127, c. *56*.]

It was not. That is a gross misinterpretation of the past. It is a rewriting of history which I and many of my hon. Friends will not accept. The territory which is now called Bophuthatswana is the historical and traditional territory of five Batswana tribes: the Barolong, the Bathlapiry, the Bathlaro, the Bakwena, and the Bafokeng. Those were the southern Batswana tribes which existed in that territory for nigh on 700 years. They were awarded independence in 1872 when, through the spokesman of the governor of Natal, the British Government said, "I order, adjudge and adjudicate that from henceforth this will be their territory." That future was very short. It lasted only a few years.

In 1885 the British Government divided the Batswana people. The north became the protectorate of Bechuanaland and in due course the independent republic of Bophuthatswana. Good luck to it. It is a magnificent country. The southern Batswana were, against their will, assigned to the Crown colony of the Cape. British Governments promised that that would not be the case, but it became the case. Then there was the rape and pillage of their land. The native reservations and native locations were established. The Land Act 1913 robbed from the southern Batswana even more of their land. It was marginally restored in 1936 and more greatly restored in the 1950s.

It simply is not the case that the southern Batswana, with their territory of Bophuthatswana, are the creation of apartheid. They existed hundreds of years before a Nationalist party was conceived and before the word "apartheid" was acknowledged. It is greatly to the discredit of any rational person to assume that this traditional and historic land of the southern Batswana was created in 1948, or whenever, by a Nationalist Government in South Africa.

Not only do we deny the past of the southern Batswana; we malign, either through ignorance or—I hope not—through malice, their present. I tabled a written question to the Foreign Secretary on 4 May 1988, asking

"if he will take steps to ensure that the British embassy in Pretoria obtains more accurate information about the situation in Bophuthatswana."

I received the reply:

"Her Majesty's embassy in South Africa already provides full and accurate information on all relevant aspects of the South African scene, including developments in Bophuthatswana."—[*Official Report*, 4 May 1988; Vol. 132, c. *465*.]

That was a most unfortunate reply. It came a fortnight after I and half a dozen of my hon. Friends had had the opportunity to speak to our embassy staff in Pretoria. Not only did they demonstrate their lack of knowledge; they specifically confessed it. More than that, they said they did not know why they should have any reason to talk about

Bophuthatswana. That led me to write a letter to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, in which I listed nine points—nine howlers of omission and commission. I readily accept the fact that the embassy staff in Pretoria are now looking closely at events in Bophuthatswana.

Last week my right hon. Friend the Member for Wallasey (Mrs. Chalker) addressed a meeting of the British Bophuthatswana all-party group and, in good faith —I have no quarrel whatsoever with her on that—she made a number of observations which compounded our worry. My right hon. Friend spoke—I believe that my hon. Friend the Member for Hereford referred to this—

Mr. Donald Anderson (Swansea, East): The hon. Gentleman and his hon. Friends are wont to refer to all-party groups on Bophuthatswana, Namibia and South Africa. Will he tell the House whether there are any Labour Members in the group to which he refers?

Mr. Hunter: To date, no Labour Member has chosen to apply for membership, although we have members from the Opposition Benches. It is a matter of great regret not least that the hon. Gentleman himself will not join our meetings, and I extend a warm invitation to him to do so on any future occasion.

Mr. Allan Rogers (Rhondda): Who pays for the trips?

Mr. Hunter: Ignorance and lack of information do not constitute a sound basis for foreign policy. I give just one illustration. My right hon. Friend the Minister of State referred to the police force of Bophuthatswana. She spoke in good faith, having been informed that the police force was under the control of South Africa. The police force has an establishment of 3,500 and is under the command of the magnificent General Seleke. I have not had the privilege of meeting a pleasanter man in any walk of life and a bigger, blacker Batswana I cannot imagine. The mind boggles at the proposition that he is a white South African—the disguise is certainly remarkable.

My central point is that British foreign policy towards Bophuthatswana is based on a lack of factual information. That cannot be a sound basis for any policy.

Mr. Terry Dicks (Hayes and Harlington): Does my hon. Friend agree that if Bophuthatswana had been Marxist and militant rather than Christian and good, overseas aid would have been pouring out of the Foreign Office to that country years ago?

Mr. Hunter: Once again, my hon. Friend not only anticipates my next point but makes it with greater clarity than I could have achieved. One can indeed speculate on the irony of the fact that Oliver Tambo and Lucas Mangope were contemporaries at the same school. Oliver Tambo chose the route to command an organisation which flirts with Marxism and murder. Lucas Mangope follows a road which seeks to implement democracy and capitalism, to encourage free enterprise and to enshrine human rights. I deeply regret that it was Oliver Tambo, and not Lucas Mangope, who had the opportunity to speak to the Foreign Office.

Mr. Alan Meale (Mansfield): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Hunter: I will give way in due course.

The third point, and perhaps the heart of the matter, is the relationship between the republic of South Africa and Bophuthatswana. As my hon. Friend the Member for Hereford said, we must dismiss irrelevance and double standards in argument. Dependence on South Africa by other southern African countries is regarded as a matter for regret and steps are taken to relieve it, but Bophuthatswana is rejected for it. As Lucas Mangope has said on more than one occasion, to a large extent the wealth of South Africa was built on the efforts, the labour and the land of his people, and he will bleed Pretoria for every last rand. I entirely endorse those sentiments.

What are the intentions of the republic of South Africa towards Bophuthatswana? It is my belief that there has been a subtle change in thinking on this score. About 18 or 20 months ago, when we last debated Bophuthatswana, my right hon. Friend the Minister of State rightly said that South Africa wished the world to give credence to its policy of grand apartheid. When the subject was raised again in May of this year, my right hon. Friend offered an alternative interpretation. It was that South Africa wished to retain control of Bophuthatswana. I concede that I find myself in agreement with her. I have talked many times and on many occasions to politicians, diplomats and civil servants of the Republic of South Africa. I have heard their protestations on international recognition for Bophuthatswana, but it is not my belief yet that the evidence substantiates that point of view. The thesis that I put to my right hon. Friend is simple. It is that international recognition of Bophuthatswana would arguably defeat rather than further the purposes of Pretoria.

I shall conclude with three observations. First, there is the essential truth and justice of the historical cause of the southern Batswana. Secondly, our foreign policy is founded on a lack of accurate information and analysis. Thirdly, ultimately something has started that will not be stopped. It invokes the wrath and ridicule of Labour Members; so let that be. The southern Botswana have their historical cause and case. They seek to regain their independence. As the years pass, they obtain more and more friends. The other day Vice-President and Foreign Minister Rathebe said, "It is a long, long walk for the southern Batswana. They will walk every mile of it." They will not walk alone.

9.37 pm

Mr. Tim Rathbone (Lewes): Bearing in mind some of the comments that have been made by Labour Members, I shall start by declaring an interest. I have had trips to South Africa that have been paid for by the South African Government. I have had trips to Bophuthatswana that have been paid for by the Bophuthatswanan Administration, probably with funding from the South African Government. I have had trips to Namibia that have been paid for by the interim Administration, probably helped also by the South African Government. I have been to other places in the world, and my trips have been paid for by the Governments of those other places.

I maintain that after these funded trips I can be my own self and have my own thoughts along with my own mind. I think that hon. Members on both sides of the House can maintain their independence in spite of trips of this sort. I do not think that I would have a point of view developed to the happiness of some of my hon. Friends and to the frustration of others if I had not made such trips.

Mr. James Pawsey (Rugby and Kenilworth): Will my hon. Friend give way on that point?

Mr. Rathbone: I hope that my hon. Friend will agree with me.

Mr. Pawsey I shall indeed agree with you. If I may, I shall help with your argument. The fact that you have visited such countries gives you a much——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Member must address the Chair.

Mr. Pawsey: I beg your pardon, Mr. Speaker.

My hon. Friend the Member for Lewes (Mr. Rathbone), because of his visits to other states, has a much better understanding of the systems that must exist in those countries. Therefore, he is better equipped to speak on these issues. That is one of the reasons why we are listening to him so intently.

Mr. Rathbone: I thank my hon. Friend.

Mr. Colvin: I am sure that my hon. Friend will agree that it is a pity that Opposition Members do not sometimes take up some of the invitations that are extended to them. If they were to do so, perhaps their understanding of the situation in southern Africa would be a great deal better than it is.

Mr. Rathbone: I shall try to move on from my background and that of other people to the subject of the debate. I should add, however, that I have friends in all the countries I have visited and in many others as well.

I fear that I must start by disagreeing in principle with what my honourable and very real Friend the Member for Basingstoke (Mr. Hunter) has just said in his analysis of the past, the present and the future. I believe that from Bophuthatswana, as from many parts of the world that used to be painted red in our atlases, we must ask a good deal of foregiveness for the past. We must protect as far as we can good sense in southern Africa against the overpowering forces that oppose it. We must work for the establishment of the values of freedom—and most particularly total emancipation in that part of that continent—that we hold so dear in our country, and in others in the developing world.

Having said all that, let me add that I consider it right of my hon. Friends to draw attention to some of the events, attitudes, values and habits in Bophuthatswana that are in stark contrast with those in the rest of the republic of South Africa. On the basis of one extremely short visit and one rather longer one, I believe that a real elimination of apartheid is taking place—electorally, socially, culturally and economically. It is marked by the economic vitality of many parts of Bophuthatswana, especially those that are quite near to Johannesburg. Bophuthatswana has a multiracial administration and press freedom, again in stark contrast with the rest of the republic. It was marked even then—and I am sure it is marked even more now—by the blocking of broadcasting by Bophuthatswana television and radio so that it could not reach the rest of South Africa.

But there is also the downside. There are real doubts about political freedom in Bophuthatswana—probably no more than in many other black African countries, but there is certainly a smell of suppression of opposition parties and opposition thought. I cannot say more, because it is difficult to be precise.

As has already been said by my hon. Friends the Members for Basingstoke and for Hereford (Mr. Shepherd), Bophuthatswana depends terrifically on the republic of South Africa, despite the camouflage of the quasi-arm's-length attitude of South Africa towards Bophuthatswana and the creation of a pseudo-diplomatic relationship. For example, there is the pretence that the airport in Bophuthatswana is solely for the encouragement of tourism, when it is umpteen times larger than would be necessary for that and is part of the South African Government's total defence programme against the front-line states.

Bophuthatswana also depends on the republic for police support—in intelligence if in nothing else, but I think that it must be in other respects as well. It depends on the republic for border policing, particularly along the border with Bophuthatswana. The republic accepts that this is a channel, a route for the ANC from the front-line states into South Africa, and is openly concerned. It makes no bones about it, so let us make no bones about it here.

Mr. John Watts (Slough): Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Rathbone: No. I shall progress, if I may. [HON. MEMBERS: "Give way".] Unfortunately, my hon. Friends who were so kind as to say that they would listen intently because of my depth of knowledge—*[Interruption.]*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. We often hear opinions in the House with which we disagree. We should listen to the hon. Member with respect.

Mr. Rathbone: I could not be more grateful, Mr. Speaker, for your arrival in the Chair and the respect that you show for a mere Back Bencher.

There is also dependence on South Africa, not just for trade—trade between South Africa and the front-line states has been mentioned—but for fundamental economic support and hard cash.

In addition, there is the Bophuthatswana Administration's attitude to the Swana who live elsewhere in the republic of South Africa. Are they part of Bophuthatswana? Are they part of the heritage, which has just been referred to? Are they not to be embraced in the collegiate total of this slowly emerging independent state? If it is an independent state, it should embrace them more than I understood to be the case when I visited Bophuthatswana not so very long ago.

Mr. Watts: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Rathbone: I shall proceed, if I may. I hope that my hon. Friend will forgive me. I am sure that he will catch your eye, Mr. Speaker, in order to make his own points.

There is also the question that has already been identified about what the republic of South Africa thinks is its relationship with Bophuthatswana. I honestly believe that it looks upon it as one of the homelands that one can see so clearly established. As soon as one drives across the so-called border between Bophuthatswana and the republic of South Africa one comes from arid poor farmland into extremely well-tilled, good farmland. One can see the invidious nature of South Africa's homelands policy, under which I fear Bophuthatswana still suffers.

Mr. John Carlisle (Luton, North): Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Rathbone: I shall proceed, if I may. I want to give all my hon. Friends more time than would be the case if I were to give way to everybody now.

Mr. Carlisle: Will my hon. Friend give way to me?

Mr. Rathbone: I shall not be tempted by my hon. Friend.

Mr. Carlisle *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. One at a time.

Mr. Rathbone: Never has there been on the Conservative Benches a greater mutual appreciation of the views of my hon. Friend and myself. I am sure that he will understand that I want to proceed.

Therefore, there are two fundamental approaches to Bophuthatswana. Is it an independent state? I do not believe that it is. I believe that the Administration in Bophuthatswana are trying to have it both ways. They are trying to seek international recognition and, at the same time, trying to draw considerable cultural, economic and social support from the republic of South Africa.

Secondly, is Bophuthatswana really trying to throw off the republic of South Africa's homelands policy? I do not think that it is. It is not ready to embrace all the people that it wants to, and should, embrace—the Swana people who live elsewhere in the republic of South Africa.

Mr. Watts: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Rathbone: No, I shall not give way.

However, I would urge one extra point upon my right hon. Friend the Minister of State for consideration. If we do not recognise Bophuthatswana as an independent state, we must be even-handed about that region of the republic of South Africa and treat it as part of the republic of South Africa. Indeed, my hon. Friend the Member for Basingstoke illustrated that well in the points that he made about the lack of knowledge about Bophuthatswana which he found in our embassy in the republic of South Africa.

I clearly remember an absolutely fascinating and excellent nursery teacher training school in Mafeking, where a woman was doing a most marvellous job teaching nursery teachers. She was not able to apply to our embassy for the overseas development grants which were available to similar schools within the republic of South Africa because Bophuthatswana was considered separate from the rest of South Africa. If we are to regard it as part of South Africa, as I believe we should, those people should be able to draw upon or at least to apply for the funds that we make available.

Mr. John Carlisle: My hon. Friend said that he wanted to be even-handed. I accept much of what he has said this evening in his description of the country of Bophuthatswana. Does he agree that his description of that country, and its dependence on South Africa, is mirrored by so many states in that region, as was outlined by my hon. Friends the Members for Hereford (Mr. Shepherd) and for Basingstoke (Mr. Hunter)? In those circumstances, in his anxiety to be even-handed, how can he say that Bophuthatswana should be treated differently from those other states?

Mr. Rathbone: I am sorry that I gave way, not because my hon. Friend did not make a point, but because I had covered that point earlier. I drew the difference between Bophuthatswana and the front-line states, to which my hon. Friend was probably referring, which of course have trading relationships across the border. Given the economic power that exists in the southern tip of Africa, it would be impossible for that to be otherwise. That is a pity, but in the area of Bophuthatswana it is not just a question of trade. It involves the magnificent and egalitarian factories which exist in the eastern island which make up Bophuthatswana and the underpinning by hard cash grants from the republic of South Africa. So it is not really a comparable point.

Mr. Hunter: My hon. Friend has spoken for nearly 20 minutes.

Mr. Rathbone: I have spoken for this time only because other hon. Members have intervened and I shall continue to make my points. It was churlish of my hon. Friend to say that.

The Foreign Office and the Minister should bear in mind whether recognition will further the all-important fight against apartheid and bring sense to the continuing senseless attitudes of the South African Government and lead them to embrace reform. I fear that movement towards recognition would not do anything to further reform in the republic of South Africa but might inhibit it. The Minister should be wary about espousing political action on the basis of protecting economic interests. It is not sufficient for this country to recognise the existence of another country purely on the basis that we have economic interests in that area.

Contrary to the inclinations of my hon. Friends the Members for Hereford and for Basingstoke, and I fear other hon. Friends, it is premature at best to start taking steps towards recognition of Bophuthatswana as an independent state. At worst, that could be interpreted as support for the South African homelands policy and the South African Government's policy of maintaining the core and essence of apartheid which we all loathe.

9.53 pm

Mr. George Gardiner (Reigate): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Lewes (Mr. Rathbone) on having the courage to go and look at Bophuthatswana for himself a couple of years ago and for acknowledging some of the merits of that country. It is sad that his visit there was so short. Had it not been, he might have reached rather different conclusions. Perhaps he will rectify that in future. Unfortunately, he probably prepared most of his speech before hearing the speech of our hon. Friend the Member for Basingstoke (Mr. Hunter), who answered many of his points before he made them.

I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Hereford (Mr. Shepherd) on securing the opportunity to debate this emerging subject. He spoke of a paradox, and so it is. If most of us were asked what we would regard as the ideal political accommodation in southern Africa, we should say that we wanted a country or state in which apartheid had been swept away, where there were full political rights for the different races and where black and whites worked together in a Government who exploited the free market economy for the benefit of their citizens. In Bophuthatswana we find a country that has won its independence and created a state in which all these features are present, but its people are treated as if they were pariahs in southern Africa.

[Mr. George Gardiner]

Foreign Office Ministers have described Bophuthatswana as a child of apartheid. That is a gross insult to the people who live there. Certainly their independence came about as a result of the black homelands policy of the South African Government of the day, but there was a convergence of interests. The policy of the white Government gave black Swanas the opportunities for which they had yearned since the days when a British Government drew an artificial line on the map in the last century and sold out those on one side of it to the Crown colony of the Cape. These people saw the homelands policy as at least a chance to regain their independence, and took it.

Ethnic groupings across Europe seized their chance when the first world war caused the destruction of the Austro-Hungarian empire. Those were, perhaps, more enlightened times than now, for then we gave those European nations our blessing, but there is no such luck now for the Swana people. The Foreign Office regards their country as a child of apartheid and it is therefore barred from recognition for ever.

People who go to Bophuthatswana, as several of my hon. Friends have done, and speak to its citizens do not find that they regard themselves as children of apartheid. They see themselves as running their own territory according to their wishes. I am puzzled about what my right hon. Friend the Minister would say if she met some leaders from that country—that is, after they had managed to get past the "no entry for the children of apartheid here" signs outside her office. What would she urge them to do? Would she urge them to renounce their independence and return to the jurisdiction of the South African Government, who as yet include no black members? Would she urge them to subject themselves to the Group Areas Act? Of course not. I have far more understanding of and sympathy with my right hon. Friend than to imagine that she would. But what could she say to them? The question illustrates the blind inhumanity of the Foreign Office position, which would be revealed in any such conversation.

Not many hon. Members would expect my right hon. Friend to recognise Bophuthatswana as independent. It is our historical duty to help other Western countries to recognise what the Swana people have achieved. If my right hon. Friend consults her European colleagues, she will find that Dr. Strauss had something to say about this matter not very long ago. Those of us who have visited Bophuthatswana and met politicians from Germany, France and Italy know that they are taking an interest in its development and, probably out of the corner of their eyes, considering commercial possibilities.

The debate has shown that the movements to recognise Bophuthatswana are under way and that it is well and truly on the political agenda here as well as in other European countries. I say to my right hon. Friend, in a spirit of friendliness, that, whatever old prejudices still lurk in the Foreign Office, the subject will not go away.

10 pm

Mr. Donald Anderson (Swansea, East): We are living in exciting times of movement in foreign affairs. Following the super-power summit in May, we have seen signs that the Iran-Iraq war is coming to an end, Vietnamese troops withdrawing from Kampuchea, Soviet troops withdrawing from Afghanistan and the possible extension of the anti-ballistic missiles treaty.

There has been movement all around the globe, yet in the debate, in parliamentary questions and in a number of Adjournment debates, Conservative Members have shown interest in six land-locked enclaves within the republic of South Africa. Somebody is bound to ask about that sense of priorities. What provides Conservative Members with such an obsessive interest in those six land-locked enclaves in South Africa?

Mr. Hunter: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Anderson: Not yet; let me get under way.

I accept the nice tones in which the hon. Member for Hereford (Mr. Shepherd) introduced the debate, and all Conservative Members are honourable gentlemen. They have been brought up well. They were probably taught at their mother's knee that if one receives gifts one must say "Thank you." This is their way of saying "Thank you." We know that there is a well-financed lobby——

Mr. Rathbone: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Anderson: I exclude the hon. Member for Lewes (Mr. Rathbone) from any lobby—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. I hope that I did not hear the word "hypocrite."

Mr. Anderson: It is a sad fact of political life that there is a well-financed lobby. I say, in all helpfulness, to Conservative Members who have spoken in the debate that their strong advocacy——

Mr. Hunter: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Is it in order for an hon. Member to suggest that Conservative Members have been bribed and that as a result their judgment has been influenced?

Mr. Speaker: I did not hear that allegation. It certainly would not be in order for such an allegation to be made.

Mr. Anderson: I said, in all charity, that Conservative Members, as honourable gentleman, must pay, in some form, for the rather pleasant trips that they have had. Their advocacy of Bophuthatswana would be immeasurably strengthened if, from time to time, even a word of criticism of the South African regime were to escape from their mouths. If, for example, any Conservative Member were to criticise the bloody incursions of South Africa into Botswana——

Mr. Hunter: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Anderson: No.

Their advocacy would be strengthened if there were one word of criticism of the detention without trial of many progressive black leaders in South Africa. The fact that there is no such criticism gives some indication of those who form part of the Bophuthatswana lobby.

There is a Bophuthatswana tendency in the House which must be of considerable embarrassment to the Minister of State. I am delighted that the hon. Member for Lewes sprang gallantly to her defence. If he had not, her back would have been exposed. The Minister was brave to go into the meeting of the so-called all-party Bophuthatswana group, which may have an Ulster Unionist Member but it certainly has no Labour Member on it. I confess that I feared for her safety at one stage.

However, we know that she can look after herself. The group was hoping to roast her, but the lady was not for burning.

There is what, in South African terms, would be called the Bitterendes or the Verkrampte tendency among Conservative Members.

Mr. Gardiner *rose*——

Mr. Anderson: At least on this issue the perception of Opposition Front Bench Members does not differ markedly from that of the Government.

We see the origin of Bophuthatswana as part of the Verwoerd strategy to create Bantustans. That is shown graphically on page 23 of the report by the Eminent Persons Group. I recommend that Conservative Members read that report—*[Interruption.]* I will not exchange insults with the star on the Conservative Benches, the hon. Member for Hayes and Harlington (Mr. Dicks).

The motive of the Bantustan policy was to deprive black South African citizens of their citizenship. In 1977 the Status of Bophuthatswana Act was passed and all residents were deprived of South African citizenship. How well founded is the claim to independence? On 7 July 1988, *The Weekly Mail* in South Africa pointed out that the number of personnel from South Africa seconded to key posts within the Bophuthatswana Administration was 299. It gave the amount of financial assistance to the four Bantustan so-called independent states. It said that the South African Government have guaranteed bank loans of 1·3 million rand to cover the budget deficits in the four independent homelands over the past two financial years. Pik Botha told the Parliament that the total estimated overdraft facilities taken by the four independent homelands was 1·081 billion rand.

Mr. Watts *rose*——

Mr. Anderson: There was clearly a substantial financial dependence. In terms of jobs, two thirds of the labour force commutes daily to South Africa and 56 per cent. of the gross domestic product derives from migrant workers. Militarily, we know the position of Brigadier Hennie Riekert, the former South African Defence Force officer. Politically South Africa is the only friend in the world of Bophuthatswana and it seeks, by bullying neighbouring states, to coerce them into accepting the independence of Bophuthatswana.

The examples that one can give are of the so-called BLS states—Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland—which, when they tried to renegotiate the South African customs union, were told by South Africa that, first, they had to accept the recognition of Bophuthatswana. With the trains to Botswana through Bophuthatswana, South Africa tried to insist on the acceptance of documentation that would have meant acceptance of the recognition of Bophuthatswana. On other occasions, Botswana has criticised the poaching of industries to the heavily subsidised part of Bophuthatswana.

The claim to independence is placed in question by the events surrounding the abortive coup in February this year. The *New Nation* of 11 February described the debate between the Foreign Minister, Pik Botha, and the finance ministries about whether South Africa should have intervened earlier to deal with the corruption of Mr. Mangope. It quoted Professor Keenan of Wits university, and said:

> "According to Keenan foreign affairs valued Mangope's strong links and good relations with right-wing elements in Germany and other West European countries. Mangope's value to foreign affairs is said to have outweighed any embarrassment that could have been caused to Pretoria by his involvement in alleged corruption."

Of course, Right-wing Ultra groups in West Germany and Britain form part of the lobby in favour of Bophuthatswana.

Mr. John Carlisle: Name them.

Mr. Anderson: Some of them have named themselves.

Mr. Mangope had just been re-elected before the abortive coup in February—in a democratic election with a poll of 0·6 per cent.——

Mr. Hunter: That is absolutely incorrect.

Mr. Anderson: *The Weekly Mail* of 12 February quoted President Botha, after the coup, as saying:

> "We are tonight back in full control"—

a very Pavlovian slip. He thought that he had better alter that, and he said:

> "The President of Bophuthatswana is in full control."

What would be the effect if Britain recognised those six enclaves in South Africa? First, it would be a mark of approval for South Africa in general, and its Bantustan policy in particular—too much for even our Prime Minister. Secondly, it would run counter to the views of all our allies in the Commonwealth and the European Community. Thirdly, it would be a giant step away from out declared aim of a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa, to which the Government are committed.

The Government realise that they are going against the tide and are in real danger of being even further isolated in the world as a result of their South African policy. I think not only of the recent decisions of Prime Minister Rocard, but of developments in the United States, which are causing considerable concern to the Government because of their clear message that the British Administration will be isolated. The Prime Minister is prepared to meet Mr. Buthelezi; she is not prepared too meet Mr. Tambo. That sends its own message.

The Opposition congratulate those sportsmen and musicians who reject the wages of "Sin City". We praise musicians such as Jim Keer of the group Simple Minds, and the group Dire Straits. We are pleased to note in *The Independent* today that Seve Ballesteros, the British Open golf champion, has said in terms that he will never visit Bophuthatswana to compete in the £1 million challenge golf cup in Sun City. It was won last year by Ian Woosnam, who I hope will see the error of his ways.

Finally, the Opposition stand by the members of the front-line states, especially Bostwana, which has refused to yield to the economic pressures forced on it by South Africa, which wants international recognition of that part of its territory for its own purposes as part of its greater apartheid policy.

10.14 pm

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mrs. Lynda Chalker): I have listened with interest to the debate initiated by my hon. Friend the Member for Hereford (Mr. Shepherd). Let me make no bones about it: we are very much aware of the deep interest that many hon. Members have in Bophuthatswana and the well-being of the people in Bophuthatswana whom, in all sincerity, they wish to help.

[Mrs. Lynda Chalker]

There is not sometimes so much dividing us on this issue as some of my hon. Friends would have made out tonight. However, there is undoubtedly one central question, as we have heard during the debate, which divides us. Some of my hon. Friends, including my hon. Friend the Member for Hereford, believe that the Government should recognise Bophuthatswana as an independent state. I listened very carefully to what my hon. Friends have said this evening. I hope that they will hear me out because I say this in all sincerity. I should like to see a way to change the position which is plainly seen by my hon. Friends to be unsatisfactory for the people of Bophuthatswana. However, I must recognise what lies in international law and realise what has happened through history.

History causes this Government to describe Bophuthatswana as having developed from the policy of grand apartheid initiated by Dr. Verwoerd. It was created as a key element in that policy of separate development. All the homelands in South Africa were born out of apartheid. By that they live together within their areas as if they were multiracial. However, that can be deceptive. Those who live in the homelands cannot live freely in the rest of South Africa. We must look at this very carefully and with sympathy for those who want to improve the lot of all people in South Africa, whether in the homelands or elsewhere in the republic.

This Government's policy is in line with that of the international community at large. Our policy is to oppose the design of a divided and separated South Africa. Only the South African Government think otherwise. South Africa is the only country in the world which recognises Bophuthatswana as an independent state.

I believe that there is something in the unanimity of the international community. That is a unanimity of attitude which has nothing to do with being blind to the facts or with not listening to the needs of the people. There is an anxiety about what would be imprinted for the future if Bophuthatswana were to be recognised internationally as independent. That unanimity is there for all to see.

I know that my hon. Friends who have spoken tonight are as fully opposed to apartheid in all its manifestations as they could be. The Government are fully opposed to all apartheid whether it be part of some master plan or practised—as it is regrettably still practised—in the republic of South Africa. We cannot recognise as an independent state a homeland that is part of that master plan. Bophuthatswana does not meet the criteria for recognition as an independent state that have been followed by successive British Governments. Those criteria are based on international law.

With others we have supported UN resolutions and statements, which deny recognition to Bophuthatswana. More than all that, and, more importantly, is my duty as a British Minister to examine what British interest would be served by identifying ourselves alone with the South African Government on this issue. Some hon. Members have argued that there are aspects of Bophuthatswana that are sufficient to make the case for recognition. Tonight some hon. Members have referred to visiting European politicians, who may have some sympathy with people in Bophuthatswana. None of the European Governments, whatever individual politicians may say or do—not the Government of Franz Josef Strauss nor the Government of France, before or since the recent election—recognises Bophuthatswana.

I hope that hon. Members will understand that Britain, especially, wants to help, but it would be wrong to lead international opinion in the direction of granting recognition, because it would put our view on a par with that of the republic of South Africa.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton (Macclesfield) *rose*——

Mr. John Carlisle *rose*——

Mrs. Chalker: I say quite clearly that, whatever the case that hon. Members believe can be made for the existence of a democratic, non-racialist society in Bophuthatswana, those are not the points that are central to the Government's reasoning for not recognising Bophuthatswana.

Mr. Winterton: I have listened carefully to my right hon. Friend and to the debate. As my right hon. Friend is aware, this is an area of southern Africa about which I am deeply concerned. Will she advise the House how the south Tswana people can achieve independence, because it was the United Kingdom which put them in what is the republic of South Africa today? It craved independence. It has started on that trail to independence. Does she not believe that a move towards greater recognition of its status would enable it to consolidate the areas of Bophuthatswana and therefore enable it more ably to become the sort of independent nation with integrity about which she is talking?

Mrs. Chalker: I recognise my hon. Friend's frustration. His question was also asked by my hon. Friend the Member for Reigate (Mr. Gardiner).

The point is that we must end apartheid throughout South Africa. It is in the ending of apartheid that the people, including those in the front-line states——

Mr. Dicks: It is about time we heard something about that.

Mrs. Chalker: This debate is on Bophuthatswana, and I shall stick to that.

I say to my hon. Friend the Member for Macclesfield (Mr. Winterton) that the recognition of the independent nature of the individual people in Bophuthatswana is a matter of international law. It is not about the individuals in that country for whom he and the rest of us feel very deeply. Many others in the republic of South Africa are in very much the same position intellectually, and wish to achieve the same, but they are not in Bophuthatswana. Therefore, we must achieve the ending of apartheid throughout the republic of South Africa. There will then be leadership from the very sort of people that my hon. Friends have been talking about in Bophuthatswana, many of whom are practising——

Mr. John Carlisle: Will my right hon. Friend give way?

Mrs. Chalker: I have very little time and I have a lot of questions to answer. If I give way, I shall not be able to answer all the questions.

I was saying that the Government's position on recognition is quite straightforward. We are executing a policy of non-recognition, but we know that that is not free of difficulty. Like others in the international community, we want to know as much as we possibly can

about what is happening in Bophuthatswana—and, lest I be accused of over-concentrating on the homeland, in the rest of the republic.

Some of my hon. Friends have said that we do not have the right sort of information, but whenever I have found information lacking, we have gone back to find it. I know that one or two of my hon. Friends were not happy, when they made a visit earlier this year, that they could not meet the ambassador. I agree that it was unfortunate, but he happened to be in Cape Town and they were in Pretoria. They met a new Minister who was in Pretoria. I can pass on to them an invitation from Her Majesty's ambassador in Pretoria that he will welcome the chance to discuss this and other issues with them when they visit South Africa again shortly. The ambassador and all his staff are under strict instructions to be fully in touch, and they are.

Mr. John Watts (Slough): Will my right hon. Friend give way?

Mrs. Chalker: They supply information all the time.

Mr. Watts: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mrs. Chalker: No. I must keep going; otherwise, I cannot get through all the points that have been made.

Mr. Watts: It is not true.

Mrs. Chalker: My hon. Friend accuses me of having told the House an untruth. I can assure him that I know what goes on between my Department and the ambassador in South Africa.

Mr. Watts: Will my right hon. Friend give way?

Mrs. Chalker: I should explain to my hon. Friend that, whatever impression he has formed, it is unfortunate because it is not correct.

Mr. Watts: Will my right hon. Friend give way?

Mrs. Chalker: No. I am sorry, but I shall continue with my speech.

Mr. Dicks: This is the Foreign Office view.

Mrs. Chalker: It is easy for my hon. Friends to advise that we should take actions which they think are simple and straightforward, but they would be open to misinterpretation. That is why we are careful and thorough about how we go about ensuring that we are as well informed as possible. We have taken steps to improve our knowledge. I remember a debate in the House in 1986, when I was asked about British Council money being available for people in Bophuthatswana. The question was a complete surprise to me. I went away and found out what was happening and corrected any error immediately. I shall always do that. It was not the Government's intention to mislead the House.

The information that we collect is obviously constrained by the contacts that we can have. I would not have thought that that was the cause of any surprise. The contacts that we have have to be circumscribed by non-recognition of Bophuthatswana as an independent state, but we aim as far as possible——

Mr. Dicks: The Government speak to terrorists in the ANC.

Mrs. Chalker: —to cover as wide a cross-section of people in Bophuthatswana as possible, because that enables us to assist disadvantaged black people in that homeland.

I have already told hon. Members who came to the meeting last week that if there are projects which should be undertaken, the people of Bophuthatswana are just as able to be helped through our projects as people in other parts of the Republic of South Africa.

Mr. Hunter *rose*——

Mrs. Chalker: We will continue to do that.

Mr. Hunter *rose*——

Mrs. Chalker: All suggestions for new projects suitable for assistance, whether inside or outside Bophuthatswana, which hon. Members put to me I shall pass to my hon. Friend the Minister for Overseas Development, who is listening to the debate. We shall examine them with care and, when we can help, we shall.

Mr. Hunter: I am most grateful to my right hon. Friend for giving way, as the debate is drawing to an end. I note the absence from her speech so far of any reference to the historical responsibility of the United Kingdom for the southern Batswana being incorporated into South Africa. Before the debate ends, will she make a passing reference to the fact that, as a result of British policy, the southern Batswana are now in South Africa?

Mrs. Chalker: Not all the southern Batswana are in Bophuthatswana. We covered this point in the 1986 debate and on other occasions. If we could solve this problem by turning back the pages of the history books, it would have happened long ago, but that cannot be done. It would be simple for my hon. Friend to say that he recognises the homeland of Bophuthatswana, but if he did, he would do so in the company of the republic of South Africa alone.

Another question put to me repeatedly has been whether we are prepared to help candidates from Bophuthatswana to take up scholarships. It does not seem widely known that they are eligible to apply for scholarships in exactly the same way as other applicants from the rest of South Africa. We shall continue to ensure that that happens.

History has taught us that what happens in other countries, even where once we had a clear writ, cannot be changed. We have to face the situation in South Africa as it is. The Government believe that Bophuthatswana and the other homelands will find their future in South Africa once apartheid has been abolished. It is the abolition of apartheid that must be the aim and main purpose of British policy.

Several of my hon. Friends referred to the speech given by my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary to the Royal Commonwealth Society. It detailed fully our overall policy towards South Africa. We want to see apartheid ended. We want to see it not merely reformed but abolished altogether, and soon. Our policy on Bophuthatswana cannot be isolated from our policy towards South Africa as a whole. [HON. MEMBERS: "Why not?"] It is part of South Africa, and we cannot legally recognise it as anything else.

South Africa as a country has enormous potential, as has Bophuthatswana within South Africa, but that is where it is. We wish to see it develop along with all the

[Mrs. Chalker]

other areas around the homelands. I know that hon. Members are anxious about this and that they will not give up, but the best help that we can give the people of Bophuthatswana is to encourage fundamental change throughout South Africa which will lead to a unified, non-racial and representative Government in South Africa, and that will also include all the people of Bophuthatswana. We want to see that country free of apartheid——

In accordance with MR. SPEAKER'S *Ruling—[Official Report, 31 January 1983;* Vol. 36, c. 19.]—*the debate was concluded.*

Yorkshire and Humberside (Economy)

10.33 pm

Mr. David Hinchliffe (Wakefield): I hope that Conservative Members will take as much interest in this debate on a region of this country as they did in the preceding lengthy discussion about an obscure and somewhat dubious country in southern Africa. But, as the Benches opposite have completely cleared, I doubt whether that will be the case. It amazes me to see their interest in a particularly dubious country and certainly their lack of interest in a most important region of their own country.

I am grateful for the opportunity to initiate this debate on the economy of Yorkshire and Humberside. It would have been remiss of the House to go through the first Session after a general election without having a detailed debate on one of this country's most important regions.

I am reminded of a cartoon that appeared on the front page of *The Guardian* the day after the general election. It depicted a ship, Great Britain, broken into two parts—the north and the south. It showed the passengers on the southern part of the broken ship telling Captain Thatcher, "Sod the others; let's keep going." To me, that cartoon encapsulates much of the Government's attitude to the north, and in particular to areas such as Yorkshire and Humberside.

I propose to draw attention to detailed evidence of very real regional differences that have been added to significantly by the present Government's policies. In particular, I shall consider the problems of Yorkshire and Humberside, and concentrate on my own home area of West Yorkshire and the Wakefield district, although I know that some of my hon. Friends will wish to comment on South Yorkshire and other parts of the Yorkshire and Humberside region. This Government have an appalling record of neglect of the north of England. They have effectively washed their hands of any real concern for the economy and future of the north of England, and of Yorkshire and Humberside in particular.

There has been much debate about whether there is such a thing as a north-south divide. Having spent a lot of time in the south of England since the general election, I know that there are major divisions in London and the south-east—between rich and poor, between the haves and the have-nots—and those divisions have been added to by the Government's policies.

I shall quote at some length from two academic reports that examined the issue of the north-south divide. A report, written by Gudgin and Schofield for the Northern Ireland Economic Research Centre in November 1987, says:

"it remains true that employment opportunities are on average much more restricted in the northern half of the UK . . . than in the southern half. Consequently the poverty associated with high unemployment is concentrated in these same regions."

The report goes on to say:

"Anticipated growth in national output is sufficient to allow expansion in all parts of the UK. This is not the case however for either employment or population. Large parts of the Industrial North and Periphery are expected to lose rather than gain jobs between now and the year 2000."

Again it states:

"What this amounts to is a strengthening of the North-South divide which has become increasingly evident since the end of the long postwar boom in the mid 1970s. The future contrast is likely to be between a booming southern half of the country and a slowly declining northern half."

All the evidence in that report and in others suggests that Government policy is adding to the divisions.

A more recent report by Champion and Green which emerged in January this year, entitled "Local Prosperity and the North-South Divide," says:

"The most striking result that emerges continually from this analysis is the great extent of the North-South divide. The Amalgamated Index scores reveal an even clearer cleavage on this dimension than did the index developed in the previous study."

That was in 1985.

"All the 35 highest-scoring places . . . have been found to lie on or south of a line between the Severn estuary and Lincolnshire".

The report continues:

"Over the rest of the country, the poor performance of the principal industrial concentrations remains evident".

In particular, the report refers to the sharp deterioration in the South Yorkshire area, to which some of my hon. Friends will refer later.

The report states:

"the main weight of the evidence points to the North-South divide as the primary dimension in variations in economic health across Britain at the level of the Local Labour Market Area and it also shows that, despite the above observations, the general trend in the 1980s has been a widening of this gap."

The report concludes:

"the problems of the major urban areas and smaller industrial and mining settlements in the north must be solved in situ, or else their regions will gradually wither away."

Mr. Barry Field (Isle of Wight) *rose*——

Mr. Hinchliffe: No, I will not give way. If the hon. Gentleman wishes to speak, he must catch Mr. Speaker's eye and make his own comments.

I have today obtained from the Library the official employment statistics for the Yorkshire and Humberside region. They show that since 1979 male employment in the region has fallen by 201,000, or nearly 17 per cent., and, while female employment has increased by 0·1 per cent., that has been due to increased part-time working. I shall refer later to the implications of that in terms of low pay.

Real figures relating to unemployment are no longer kept, but even the official figures, which have been adjusted downwards perhaps 20 times and which therefore do not tell the whole truth, show that, allowing for discontinuities and seasonal trends, unemployment in June 1988 was twice what it was in June 1979, when the Conservatives came to power. In April 1988, the latest month for which such figures are available, the proportion of those unemployed in the region for a year or longer, at 41·6 per cent. made it the fifth highest in the country. At 33·7 per cent., the proportion of the unemployed aged under 25 was also higher than the national average, being second only to Scotland.

The standard of living figures, measured by per capita GDP, show that Yorkshire and Humberside have consistently been below the United Kingdom national average for the last eight years. The level of investment in manufacturing per employee—a significant factor when considering the products of the region—has been significantly lower than elsewhere in Britain. In 1987 it was £1,284 compared with the national average of £1,500.

Low pay is an issue of vital concern to hon. Members who represent West Yorkshire constituencies. The

[Mr. Hinchliffe]

regional trend figures for 1988 show that, across the board, earnings in Yorkshire and Humberside were well below the national average. I shall quote from two objective and academic reports prepared by the West Yorkshire Low Pay Unit. Having examined the Council of Europe decency threshold for wages, the unit reported that the county had fallen to the bottom of the national pay league.

For example, it discovered that one third of the total full-time work force in the area was low-paid by the standards of that threshold. For part-timers the position was even more desperate, with over 80 per cent. falling into the low-paid category when assessed on an hourly rate. The unit reported that, since 1979, the proportion of the male work force in West Yorkshire receiving low wages had more than doubled, with just under one fifth of full-time adult male workers being low-paid.

For full-time women workers there has been little change in a far more serious problem, with just under 60 per cent. low paid in the West Yorkshire area. Since 1979, average wage levels in West Yorkshire have fallen relative to the British average and the region is now bottom of the pay league with the worst low-pay problem of all nine urban industrial regions in Britain.

In the last few days a case was brought to my attention of a young lady of 18 working as a care worker in a private home for aged persons in Huddersfield being paid a grand total of 50p per hour. That is a disgrace, but that is the reality of the enterprise culture generated by the Government.

In the light of cases like that, one must also consider the extent of illegal underpayment—an issue about which I am deeply concerned in West Yorkshire. Wages inspectorate visits to firms in Yorkshire and Humberside in 1987 found that 26·6 per cent. of workplaces were not paying the legal rate for the job. The total amount owed to workers, such as the young lady whom I mentioned, was £161,225 in that year alone. Yorkshire and Humberside also had the highest percentage wages debt of any region in the country, 42 per cent. of the debt being unpaid.

Interestingly, however, the total number of prosecutions fell significantly, from 16 in 1978 to nine in 1987—no doubt due to deliberate Government policy in support of a free market in wages. There has also been a deliberate attempt to undermine the role of the wages inspectorate region by region. In Yorkshire and Humberside the number of inspectors has been reduced from 14 in 1979 to just seven in 1987.

In my area of West Yorkshire there is particular concern about two industries—textiles and coal—and no doubt colleagues with greater knowledge will wish to add to my comments on those industries. Ten years ago the textile industry nationally employed 405,800 people. Since then, the figure has been reduced by 45 per cent. The Silberston report of 1984 highlighted the precarious future of the textile and clothing industries in the United Kingdom, suggesting that 50,000 jobs might be lost by 1990.

We know to our cost that many of those predictions have already come true. The National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers claimed that 90,000 jobs would be lost following renewal of the multi-fibre arrangement in 1986, and there has been a huge impact on job losses in West Yorkshire. Many Members present for this debate have experienced greater problems with this than I have in Wakefield, but it is clear that the establishment of a textile closure area in West Yorkshire has only partly slowed down and still constitutes a major problem.

In September last year a joint report was produced by the councils of Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield on the European regional development fund quota assistance scheme. The report states:

"the Non-Quota schemes . . . have not been sufficient to cope with the area's needs and potential for restructuring. The objectives of the ERDS Non-Quota measures relating to countering high levels of unemployment in textile and clothing zones, and improving the unfavourable physical environment . . . have not been fully achieved. The background continuing vulnerability of the economy and decaying infrastructure have shown that the schemes have been well-intentioned and effective at a micro-economic scale, but have failed at this stage to exploit opportunities to the full and to influence the development of the macro-economy."

Having had discussions with the managemets and unions of firms in my constituency, I am aware of the views of those in the textile industry of Government's policy. Only recently I met the management of Poppleton's in Horbury in my constituency, which left me with no doubt that it considers that the Government have made a disgraceful attack on the textile industry. It considers that the industry has been allowed to be swamped by dumped products and to go to the wall. That has been the case in West Yorkshire.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): Will my hon. Friend take into account the fact that the Government have failed to press the EEC Commission to stop the import of Turkish yarn into the United Kingdom, which has cost nearly 600 jobs in Bradford in the past five months? I am sure that it will cause jobs to be lost in other areas of the textile industry in West Yorkshire.

Mr. Hinchliffe: My hon. Friend is correct. That issue was referred to in the discussions that I had only a few weeks ago with the company that is now closed. It was concerned about the way in which the Government had handled the import of Turkish yarn.

I have spoken in this Chamber about the coal industry on several occasions. The industry is of direct concern to me in my constituency, as it is to other hon. Members who are in their places tonight. I shall draw attention to the problems faced by the Wakefield district as a result of the deliberate attack on and rundown of the industry in West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire and elsewhere. In 1981, in Wakefield district, there were 17,000 employed in mining in 18 pits. There are now 6,000 employed at five pits. Nearly 2,500 jobs have gone so far this year. The implications for individual families and communities must be obvious to all who are present tonight.

Often overlooked are the knock-on effects of job losses elsewhere in local industry, including service industries. Three major engineering companies in my constituency have been badly affected. There seems to be a lack of perception of the way in which pit closures have a knock-on effect in the engineering industry and the retail trade. Numerous small firms within my constituency provide services as subcontractors to engineering companies and the collieries themselves. We see also what happens to the retail trade within the service sector—this is what is called the local expenditure multiplier effect—when pits close. Even jobs in corner shops are part and parcel of the local economy, which should be taken into

account when pit closures take place. In my constituency, nearly 1,500 jobs have been lost in the service sector as a result of pit closures since 1979.

When the Government discuss the coal industry they refer constantly to the public cost of keeping open certain pits that they deem in some instances to be uneconomic. I never cease to marvel at the amount of public money that is used to keep miners unemployed. I shall refer to a report, published recently, which was produced by Kathy O'Donnell of Leeds university for the Wakefield district council. That report deals with the effects of pit closures in the Wakefield area in recent years.

Kathy O'Donnell examined the cost to the public since March 1985, the end of the miners' strike, of pit closures in the Wakefield district. She claims that it cost British Coal £65 million in redundancy payments. It cost Wakefield district council £5·5 million because of the reduction in rate income from collieries and increased demands for services from unemployed miners. It cost central Government £169 million in redundancy and benefit payments. It cost the EC £884,000 in contributions to redundancy schemes. A total of £241 million has been spent since March 1985 to keep people unemployed. That is economic nonsense. The money could have been invested in job creation rather than wasted on unemployment.

In my area, and elsewhere in West Yorkshire and Yorkshire and Humberside, there is deep concern about the coal industry's future under the present Government. Only this week the all-party Select Committee on Energy referred to the implications of electricity privatisation, mentioning the uneven treatment given to nuclear energy and coal:

"The problems of nuclear have been glossed over while there has been an emotional hostility towards the coal industry".

During the last financial year, British Coal sold 77 per cent. of its output to the electricity supply industry. The seriousness of the implications for coal are obvious to anyone. According to a report earlier this year by the Coalfield Communities Campaign, 73 per cent. of jobs in the coal industry depend directly on sales to the electricity supply industry. At national level, those sales account for 98,765 jobs. In North Yorkshire, which relates directly to the Wakefield district, where 87 per cent. of output goes to the CEGB for generation, such sales support about 12,500 jobs. In Wakefield metropolitan district alone, the figure is 5,266.

Two very dubious private Bills, now going through the House, are designed to increase capacity for the importing of coal from countries such as South Africa. No doubt Conservative Members will support that move. But what are the implications for West and South Yorkshire of allowing the CEGB to import 8 million tonnes of coal to the Trent and Yorkshire power stations? The Coalfield Communities Campaign estimates that if imports proceed at projected levels, 36 collieries will close, with a loss of 51,544 jobs. The Yorkshire coalfield would be virtually wiped out.

Mr. Kevin Barron (Rother Valley): Was not the EEC's refusal to fund the project on Humberside a direct recognition of the damage that it could do to other parts of the region?

Mr. Hinchliffe: My hon. Friend is quite correct. It is a disgrace that the Government have supported—as they clearly have—what was supposedly a private measure. We have noted that certain prominent members of the Government have been present to support those Bills.

I understand that I have been on my feet for rather a long time, so I shall draw my remarks to a rapid conclusion. As well as destroying industry in the Yorkshire and Humberside area, the Government have directly attacked the region's capacity to attract inward investment. An example is the scrapping in 1982 of the industrial development certificate system, which directly prevented the movement of firms from south to north to generate jobs in areas such as Yorkshire and Humberside.

In my own area, Wakefield district, assisted area status was removed in 1982. Urban development grants, which were previously used to generate employment, have been taken away. The Government have hammered local authorities' capacity to assist the generation of industry at local level.

The fortunes of the coal and textile industries in Yorkshire—especially in West Yorkshire—and Humberside are ample evidence of an economic strategy based on unbridled market forces. Large parts of those regions have been written off by a philosophy that believes that it makes more sense to pay people not to work rather than to invest and create the conditions for job generation.

Last month the Association of Yorkshire and Humberside Chambers of Commerce published a report on the "Yorkshire and Humberside Eurolink", which makes interesting reading. That report states:

"Our conclusion is that, left to themselves, market forces are unlikely to generate more than a patchy response to the region's infrastructure needs. In the course of our discussions, the region's Chambers have identified a number of priorities in terms of infrastructure."

That report discusses in detail the need for public investment in air transport, in the road network, in the railways, in water mains, sewers, factory premises and sites. Those are areas that the Government should address and it is their own supporters, the business men, who are trying to get that message across.

The people of Wakefield, Yorkshire and Humberside, want to work, and it would make economic sense for the Government to enable them to do so.

11.2 pm

Mr. Irvine Patnick (Sheffield, Hallam): I should be understating the case if I said that I differ from the hon. Member for Wakefield (Mr. Hinchliffe). The picture of Yorkshire and Humberside that he has painted is peculiar to his perceptions and not an accurate representation of the area.

The economy of Yorkshire and Humberside is dependent upon several factors, including the availability and quality of the labour force. I assure the House that, on both counts, the regions' scores are excellent. The economy also depends upon industry investing, creating employment and making profit on its investment—the hon. Member for Wakefield may consider profit a rude word. The region and its people must have self-confidence and generate confidence in outsiders. To succeed, the region must be able to offer factory sites, housing and land, which must be affordable. The region must have good communications by road, rail, sea and air. It must have a decent environment and welcome visitors. I submit to the House that the Yorkshire and Humberside region possesses all those qualities.

[Mr. Irvine Patnick]

Bryan Gould, writing about the inner cities in volume two of the magazine *Agenda*——

Mr. Austin Mitchell (Great Grimsby): The hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould),

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Order. I believe that the hon. Member for Sheffield, Hallam (Mr. Patnick) realises his mistake.

Mr. Patnick: I meant no insult to the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) but I must tell that hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) that there is nothing in the magazine to say that he is a Member of Parliament. The magazine just has his picture and his name.

In that magazine the hon. Gentleman states:

"In both Birmingham and Sheffield Labour councils have teamed up with local business and the voluntary sector to produce exciting redevelopment schemes. Independent and experienced consultants have commended the plans. Each interested group stands to gain from a go ahead and so the real beneficiaries will be the local community as a whole who will see balanced developments comprising housing and economic activity, community facilities and new entertainment and transport links—so much better than the unbalanced developments that have given vast soulless commercial centres that close down at six or large housing estates with nothing for young people to do."

Yorkshire and Humberside needs good communications. In a previous debate I referred to that region's links with Manchester airport, which is one of the main outlets for people from that region who wish to visit Europe and America.

The Government have provided the Stockbridge bypass, which runs through the constituency of the hon. Member for Barnsley, West and Penistone (Mr. McKay), and is used by my constituents. A new motorway is not on the cards, but a new link between the M1 and the M62 is under active consideration.

During my discussions with my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary for Transport he said that he was prepared to contact the Peak national park, Derbyshire county council and Sheffield metropolitan district council to ascertain whether improvements could be made to black spots on Snake pass, the A57 and the Woodhead route. Obviously there is need to open up that area and improve Manchester airport. It is a gateway airport that provides a service to people in Yorkshire and Humberside, who can avoid the problems of having to travel south to Heathrow and Gatwick via the M1 roadworks and the overcrowded M25.

A wider range of intercontinental services out of Manchester would be highly desirable to the business communities of Sheffield, Yorkshire and Humberside. The Minister said that Manchester airport was an important factor when considering the road network between Sheffield and Manchester. Northwest Airlines wishes to serve Boston from Manchester, and American Airlines and Pan-American wish to start New York services. The northern travelling community and those who visit the Yorkshire and Humberside area need those new services.

In his consideration of the north-south divide, the hon. Member for Wakefield missed an article further on in *Agenda*, which was not written by a Member of Parliament and which states:

"Looking south across the river from the Armstrong Centre the Metro Centre, symbol of the North East's recent resurgence, shines out like a beacon. The largest out-of-town shopping development in Europe, it features miles of bright shopping malls that attract the shoppers by the coachload from all over the country. The Metro Centre represents a total investment of some £200 million".

The article states that the developer

"also hopes to get the go-ahead for a £50 million Metro Centre style complex in Middlesbrough"

on a 100-acre site. I do not consider that an example of the north-south divide.

Mr. Harry Barnes (Derbyshire, North-East): The hon. Gentleman does not seem to recognise the north-south divide. In my constituency, which is just below the hon. Gentleman's constituency, there is a division between the east and the west of that area, part of which is within the travel-to-work area of Sheffield. In Renishaw, where the pit is being closed, the unemployment rate was 18·6 per cent. in April and had risen by 2·3 per cent. since February. In Eckington south, unemployment is 17 per cent. and in Killamarsh it is 15·4 per cent. In the western part of my constituency unemployment is as low as 5 per cent. and falling in Gosforth Valley and in Dronfield. That reflects social division on a massive scale and shows that many of the problems mentioned by hon. Friend the Member for Wakefield (Mr. Hinchliffe) are endemic throughout south Yorkshire.

Mr. Patnick: As the hon. Member for Derbyshire, North-East (Mr. Barnes) managed to bring north-east Derbyshire into the debate on Northern Ireland, I suppose he can now move the east midlands a little further down the road into north Yorkshire and Humberside. *[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Rother Valley (Mr. Barron) usually speaks for the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Barron: I speak with no one's voice but my own. The hon. Gentleman complains about my hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire North-East (Mr. Barnes), yet he spends two or three minutes talking about the metro centre in Newcastle, which is considerably further from Humberside and Yorkshire than north-east Derbyshire is.

Mr. Patnick: I did not give the hon. Gentleman credit for being so quick. If he is a little more patient than usual, I shall explain why I used that example.

Unemployment in the constituency of the hon. Member for Rother Valley is 14·2 per cent.; in that of the hon. Member for Derbyshire, North-East, it is 11·6 per cent.; in that of the hon. Member for Halifax (Mrs. Mahon), 9·9 per cent.; and in that of the hon. Member for Wakefield, 11·3 per cent. I obtained those figures from the research note in the Library on unemployment in the constituencies.

Mrs. Alice Mahon (Halifax): Perhaps the hon. Gentleman would like to know what unemployment in Halifax is. In 12 months' time the KP Foods factory there will close with 1,000 job losses, and the Rowntree factory "might not" close in two years' time but if it does 2,500 jobs will be lost.

Mr. Patnick: Sheffield, Central has the fifth highest unemployment rate in the country—23·2 per cent. I know the facts and figures.

I have spoken before about British Rail trains. The east coast main line to Donacaster is a fantastic line. It will soon be electrified. Money has been spent on it. The

London to Leeds service is due to open in October this year. Sadly, the line that Sheffield is on, the midland main line, can only be described as atrocious.

When Sheffield had the huge steelworks, a vast number of employees had work. That work disappeared when the works closed down. Sheffield had its problems, and many people were unemployed. Small firms in Sheffield are now springing up, and a survey by the council—it is not of my political thinking—revealed that in the east end of Sheffield new firms were taking on employees, and council statistics show that unemployment in the Sheffield travel-to-work area is falling. *[Interruption.]* Do Opposition Members wish to intervene? If not, I shall continue.

The official number of unemployed people in Sheffield is coming down—by 3,247 in one year, with the total down by 14 per cent. Success and development create activity that is contagious. Confidence is being restored and employment opportunities are becoming available. The effect is not confined to one area. It is spreading like the ripples of a pebble thrown into a pond and benefiting people in other areas. Sheffield is not alone in that, but it is a classic case of a city that has picked itself up by the bootstraps and got on with the job of making itself great again.

On 21 April 1988, Mr. Winter, the director of land and planning, stated that the total value of schemes for development in Sheffield—I could not believe the figures but they are here for any hon. Member to see—was £1·3 billion. That will give us 30,000 permanent jobs and 10,000 temporary jobs in construction.

The hon. Member for Rother Valley wanted to know what my remarks had to do with Sheffield. There is a project called "Junction 34" in Sheffield. It is a proposed shopping complex with a large number of retail outlets. It will be built on derelict land at a cost of £230 million. Marks and Spencer has shown an interest in the site, as has Savacentre. Debenhams and Sears are interested, too. The site contains 100,000 sq ft of leisure facilities, quite apart from the shopping complex and, believe it or not, parking for 10,000 cars. Yet according to the hon. Member for Wakefield, despair, desolation and doom are imminent.

Mr. Barron: The hon. Gentleman is making great claims about that proposal. Many of the shops that opened in Rotherham town centre under the Rotherham enterprise zone scheme are now closed. It is hardly an area of massive growth.

Mr. Patnick: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for reminding me of that. The size of the Rotherham enterprise zone increased and increased. I remember that, when my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) was Secretary of State for the Environment, Sheffield was offered an enterprise zone, but it was prepared to accept it only on conditions. I do not know where the hon. Member for Rother Valley gets his facts, but the enterprise zone has had to be increased to accommodate the firms that want to move into the area.

An urban development corporation has been set up in Sheffield. We have received £50 million from the Government, a derelict land grant for Junction 34 and £10 million for facilities at the canal basin. Everything is coming together, and the confidence in the area should be recognised.

An article appeared on 20 July in the commercial and industrial property guide of *The Star* which said:

"Record year for regional investments is forecast. Rising business confidence in Sheffield could mean another record breaking year for investment in the Yorkshire and Humberside region."

In the article, Paul Gilmartin said:

"The record breaking trend looks set to continue. There is a marked increase in business confidence . . . the current year looks like breaking all records".

On the same page, another article said:

"Shops at heart of inner city renewal . . . Government guidelines and local authority policies on shopping are not making the most of the benefits that retailing can bring, says Stuart Robinson, of Hillier Parker Planning."

I refer the hon. Member for Wakefield to a most interesting article that appeared in the *Yorkshire Post* on 28 July. It says:

"Factory values surge as industry expands. A surge in the value of factories and warehouses during 1988 and a shortage of building to meet present demand is reported in West Yorkshire by the Leeds office of King and Co.

During the past 12 months, approximately 1,500,000 sq ft of new buildings have been constructed in the region for occupiers who include William Morrison, Northern Foods, Thorn EMI and Uniroyal."

I said earlier that firms such as Marks and Spencer will invest, not in areas that it thinks are declining but in areas that are improving. Such an area is Yorkshire and Humberside.

The article continues:

"There is a dire shortage of sites capable of development with buildings in excess of 40,000 sq ft"—

There are no prizes for guessing where that is—

"but at Wakefield 80 acres of mainly agricultural land is about to be brought into warehouse and industrial use. The land adjoins the Normanton and Whitwood Industrial Estates at Junction 31 of the M26, midway between the M1 and A1".

The list of firms that have moved into that area is quite unbelievable. The article says:

"More than 215 acres have already been developed at this location where occupiers include Panasonic UK, Associated Fresh Foods, Hewlett Packard, Argos Distributors, Linfood, Tibbett and Britten, Miller Mining, Nestle (UK), Burtons Gold Medal Biscuits, the Halifax Building Society and Sleepeezee."

Mr. Hinchliffe: The hon. Gentleman is making my case for me. Where there is the infrastructure—it is to the credit of the Labour-controlled local authority in Wakefield that those firms have come to the area—it is possible to attract inward investment. That is precisely the point that I made in my speech.

Mr. Patnick: I listened to the hon. Gentleman's speech and it contained nothing but gloom and despondency. Anybody would think that all we have in the region, apart from the hon. Member for Halifax, are KP nuts and coal mining. There is more to Yorkshire and Humberside than those two industries.

Mrs. Mahon: The hon. Gentleman mentioned Halifax and Marks and Spencer. Would he care to give his comments on Reliance Hosiery, which employs 600 people in Halifax? That company is deeply concerned now that interest rates are rising so high. When I visited the company I was told that it was worried. It supplies Marks and Spencer and is threatened with takeover. It really is doom and gloom in Halifax at present. If the hon. Gentleman would like to give me some good news about one of the factories, I should be happy to hear it.

Mr. Patnick: No doubt the hon. Lady can put her own case. I thought that she had something to say.

Mrs. Mahon: The hon. Gentleman will ensure that we do not have time to speak.

Mr. Patnick: I am sorry about that. I recollect that it was not so long ago that I sat in the Chamber trying to participate in a debate when the hon. Member for Normanton (Mr. O'Brien) was speaking. One would have thought that he had suddenly become deaf to those of us facing him, but that he had an ear in the back of his head and was able to hear his colleagues. At least I have given hon. Members a chance to intervene, even the Opposition Front-Bench spokesman. I have been more than generous. —*[Interruption.]* It is always good to hear the hon. Member for Great Grimsby, whether he is sitting, standing or keeping quiet.

On behalf of Yorkshire and Humberside I should like to argue for the Channel tunnel link—*[Interruption.]* Does the hon. Member for Halifax wish to speak?

Mrs. Mahon: I asked about Marks and Spencer.

Mr. Patnick: I shall sit down and allow the hon. Lady to speak, but she does not stand when I offer her the Floor.

The Channel tunnel link is needed for Yorkshire and Humberside.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: The hon. Gentleman must be joking.

Mr. Patnick: I did not think that the hon. Gentleman was a little Englander. I thought he accepted that the time left to the Civil Aviation Authority and airport officials was short. They cause so much inconvenience to people at Manchester, Luton and east midlands airports when they go on strike. When the tunnel is built there will be another way to reach the continent. Time is running out for those people who, every year around holiday time, inconvenience travellers, not just from my constituency, but from Yorkshire and Humberside.

The chairman of the Yorkshire and Humberside Confederation of British Industry said:

"The Government and BR need to commit themselves to a direct link".

Just so that the hon. Member for Great Grimsby knows how even-handed I am, I shall tell the House that the Trades Union Congress warns that the area will lose out further to the south unless it has such a link. Both sides of the great dichotomy—the CBI and the TUC—recognise that, but no doubt the Opposition Front-Bench spokesman, as ever, will know more about it.

In conclusion—everybody will be pleased to hear that —the economy in Yorkshire and Humberside is good and improving. We have all the ingredients that I have listed. It is time that residents appreciated that they have initiative, ability and talent and that the banner of Yorkshire and Humberside, together with initiatives, current and planned, should enable us to go forward. If we appreciate that, the confidence can become infectious. We must draw on the region's strengths—the availability of work and opportunity. Good news will travel. The upward climb of Yorkshire and Humberside will continue.

11.23 pm

Mr. Allen McKay (Barnsley, West and Penistone): It is refreshing to hear the hon. Member for Sheffield, Hallam (Mr. Patnick) praise Sheffield council, of which he used to be a member. It is one of the local authorities that has been laced by the Government on many occasions for the way it runs the city. It was laced irrespective of the fact that the auditor said that it was one of the best-run cities in the country and proved that the authority was right in the direction it was taking.

The hon. Member for Hallam referred to metro developments and to the amount of money that is being spend on Junction 34. It is true that developments are taking place—but they all seem to be shopping and leisure developments. What about manufacturing industry? Why should that not make progress as well? We should turn our minds to those questions during the debate.

It is all very well for other developments to take place, but they depend on people being able to spend money. They are all consumer-oriented. We do not have the manufacturing industry to make the money or the people in employment to earn it, so no one can spend it.

Up to a point I applaud some of the things that have happened because of enterprise zones. They have proved a point. However, only last week a young man asked why we in Barnsley could not have the same facilities as other areas or the same benefits to industry in the form of rents and rates and developments. By the time that he had finished talking, it was quite obvious that although the industry in which he worked in Dodworth had not been there very long, it was upping sticks and moving because it could get preferential rates and development rates in an enterprise zone not too far away. Developments in enterprise zones mean, by and large, that there have been fewer, a lack of, or a rundown in, developments elsewhere.

I agree that all is not doom and gloom in Yorkshire and Humberside, but I am concerned when I see the wealth and prosperity in the south and south-east, and the way in which that reflects on the area in general. In makes me ask why some of that prosperity is not coming north and why it is not in Yorkshire and Humberside. We are one of the most beautiful areas in England environmentally——

Mr. Barry Field: Can the hon. Gentleman tell me why, according to the House of Commons Library statistics to which my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Hallam (Mr. Patnick) referred, the Isle of Wight has an unemployment rate of 11·3 per cent. and why in the recent wages survey we were the third lowest and only just behind Northern Ireland? We should like to see some of the prosperity of Yorkshire come south, to the Isle of Wight.

Mr. McKay: I can add to that, because the area that I am talking about is not the third lowest; it is the second. I am referring to the area in which I live and for which I am developing my argument—*[Interruption.]* Oh yes, we have a male unemployment rate of 27 per cent. Hon. Members can study that fact as much as they want. I am referring to Government figures, which can be found in censuses and in the employment figures. If the hon. Member for Hallam waits and lets me develop my argument, he will see what I am talking about. He is jumping in when he should not not do so. I think that he now realises that he made a mistake in jumping in then. I hope that he will realise that more as I continue.

I am asking why that wealth, prosperity and employment do not come north. I accept that, although there is a north-south divide, parts of the south are probably less prosperous than some parts of the north. Parts of the north are not too badly off, thank you very

much, but, by and large—and that is what we are talking about—it is easier to get work in the south than it is in the north. Manufacturing and other industries are moving to the south and to the south-east, not to the north. That is what we must put our minds to.

Instead of considering only unemployment, we should look also at those in employment because those statistics are probably a better reflection than the unemployment figures. When one considers the figures for those in employment in Great Britain and compares them with the figures for Yorkshire and Humberside, one can see what quite clearly is happening. In agriculture, forestry and fisheries, the figures are almost equal. In Great Britain there has been a drop of 18·9 per cent. and in Yorkshire and Humberside the figure is 18·8 per cent.

For energy and water supplies there has been a drop of 28·7 per cent. in Great Britain as a whole, but a drop of 35·2 per cent. in Yorkshire and Humberside. In manufacturing, there has been a drop of 16·6 per cent. in Great Britain against a drop of 22·4 per cent. in Yorkshire and Humberside. For construction, the figures are 9·8 per cent. and 6·6 per cent. respectively. Only in the service industries has there been a regeneration of employment. In Great Britain there has been an increase of 9·1 per cent. and in Yorkshire and Humberside 12 per cent.

The manufacturing side of Yorkshire and Humberside has disappeared. The steelworks, collieries and engineering plants have gone. Over the period during which the figures that I have quoted were calculated, investment in the United Kingdom as a whole was 30 per cent. In Yorkshire and Humberside it dropped to 22 per cent. That clearly shows that investment is not coming to the area.

A survey was taken which covered Great Britain and in particular focused on Yorkshire and Humberside, south Yorkshire and my constituency. It found that, of all the areas in Britain, Yorkshire and Humberside was the worst. It futher found that in Yorkshire and Humberside, south Yorkshire was the worst. It showed that there is a difference in the rates of unemployment in south Yorkshire and in Yorkshire and Humberside.

Last year, the unemployment rate on Humberside was 14·1 per cent. In north Yorkshire it was only 9·1 per cent. Therefore, as I said earlier, some parts are worse than others. In south Yorkshire, the rate was 17 per cent. and in west Yorkshire it was 11·9 per cent. In some of the areas in my constituency, there is a male unemployment rate of 27 per cent. The rate varies throughout my constituency and is 18 per cent. in parts and as low as 6 per cent. which is fairly normal for the area.

I know that other hon. Members want to speak, so I will be brief. I want to consider the difference between the south-east and Yorkshire and Humberside in the annual average unemployment rates. It is easy to see the changes that have taken place since 1979. They are not so drastic in the south-east, but they are drastic in Yorkshire and Humberside. It is also clear from the figures that when some parts of the country are coming out of the recession fairly quickly, the Yorkshire and Humberside area is coming out of it sluggishly and slowly. It needs pump-priming.

I believe that certain things should happen. Major local authorities have investment companies which, by and large, have been very successful in bringing limited prosperity to their areas. However, the Government have issued a consultation paper on local government investment in companies which clearly shows that they are looking at this area. It would be wrong of the Government to do what the document suggests. The investment companies represent part of local government that is a success. If central Government see success in local government, they want to take it away.

The Government must look again at dereliction grants. My hon. Friend the Member for Wentworth (Mr. Hardy) raised that point in a parliamentary question. Dereliction grants are working the wrong way in Yorkshire and Humberside. Unless those grants are used to clear dereliction for environmental reasons as well as for the hard reasons, Yorkshire and Humberside will be hit.

The Channel tunnel must have through trains to the north. It looks as if all the infrastructure for the Channel tunnel is going to the south. We are talking about fast links between the Channel tunnel and London. We need a fast link between the tunnel and the north. We want marshalling yards and customs sheds in Yorkshire and Humberside,

The infrastructure in Yorkshire and Humberside badly needs replacing; that includes the water mains, sewers and roads. The airports, Leeds and Bradford, Humberside and Manchester—many people from Yorkshire and Humberside use Manchester airport—need regional money for expansion. There is also the cross-Pennine motorway. I am sure that the Secretary of State for Transport will receive a lot of letters from members of the Green party, who will accuse him of ripping up the countryside.

Those are just a few of the matters, and it is a pity that we do not have another hour and a half in which to develop the arguments further.

11.35 pm

Mr. Gary Waller (Keighley): I felt impelled to take part briefly in this debate, because I did not recognise the picture presented by the hon. Member for Wakefield (Mr. Hinchliffe). I believe that during the past few years, we have seen great improvements in the infrastructure and the prospects for industry and for jobs in the Yorkshire and Humberside region.

The textile industry bears little relation to the one which the hon. Gentleman gave the impression of knowing. The decline in jobs has been going on for far longer than the past nine years. I am sure he will recognise that there has been a decline in employment in the clothing and textile industry for many years. It was caused not so much by the actions of any Government—Labour or Conservative—as by changes in technology and in the need to compete with many other countries.

During recent years, that decline has levelled out, largely due to the efforts of the textile industry itself—by improved design, by better marketing and by commitment by management and work force alike to make the industry compete effectively. That has taken place during the past few years, and has enabled the industry to offer more jobs. It is certainly true that many companies have had to reduce their work force, but, if they had resisted the urge to modernise, I am quite convinced that the number of jobs in the industry today would be much smaller.

The Yorkshire and Humberside area has a great reservoir of skills—it is a superb environment, as hon. Members have said—and in the next few months it will benefit from a great new asset—the electrification of the east coast main line. The message that should go forth

[Mr. Gary Waller]

from this debate is not that Yorkshire and Humberside is an area in decline, but that it is looking to people in industry and enterprise throughout Britain and, indeed, abroad, who recognise its assets, to come to the region.

I am sorry that the hon. Member for Wakefield spoke as he did, and that other Opposition Members share his view. People listen to what is said in the House and will hear the impression given of our region. If they feel that the area is declining, they are far less likely to put their money and their resources into it. If the message goes out that not only is the area not in decline, but that there are pockets that are expanding fast—that that impetus can spread and the region can and will expand rapidly given the will—we shall be halfway to success. That is the message that I want to go out tonight, and I am afraid that it is a very different message from that which we hear so often in the House and outside from Opposition Members.

11.39 pm

Mr. Kevin Barron (Rother Valley): I would like to comment briefly on the somewhat myopic view of some Conservative Members about Yorkshire and Humberside. I remind hon. Members that there are good things in Yorkshire and Humberside and good things in my constituency. However, unemployment throughout the region on the adjusted figures for May 1988 was 10·1 per cent., which is more than 237,000 people out of work.

There are other casualties of the past eight years. There are 25,000 people on community programme schemes in Yorkshire and Humberside, and some 88 per cent. of them are on part-time schemes. That hardly represents a healthy income going into a household, especially if it is the only one. More than 14,000 people are on the enterprise allowance scheme, and more than 42,000 are on youth training schemes.

Mr. Patnick *rose*——

Mr. Barron: No, I shall not give way. I know that the hon. Gentleman gave way to me, but I do not have much time.

The success rate of YTS in the Rotherham area is below 30 per cent. in terms of young people coming off schemes and going into full-time work. It is no use trying to gloss over these figures. They are not just statistics. They are people, many of whom live in households in what is deemed to be poverty. We must debate these issues to let those people know that we have not forgotten them, although we are talking about growth in the region.

I was interested to hear the hon. Member for Keighley (Mr. Waller) invite people to come to the region. The Minister is aware that Opposition Members have been instrumental in bringing it to his attention. Between 1978-79 and 1986-87, regional development grant to Yorkshire and Humberside was cut by 50 per cent. Earlier this year, it was abolished, and it is now to be awarded selectively. I am worried that people who did not come in great numbers before may not come at all now because of that reduction. I hope that the Minister will comment on that.

Wearing my hat as the chairman of the Yorkshire group of Labour Members, I would like to tell the Minister that we have met many people from the region during the past 12 months. We have met people from the British Road Federation who are worried about the Sheffield-Manchester link and routes in the Aire valley, and are anxious that the A1-M1 link should go ahead as speedily as possible now that it has received some commitment from the Government.

People are also worried about infrastructure such as railways. They are anxious that, since it looks as though we shall have the Channel tunnel, we should not lose out. We must ensure that, at least in one part of the region, we have an inland port, a Customs clearance depot or a major area where freight can be put on trains to be taken directly under the Channel, so that we can participate in some of the expenditure that will be made.

Has anything been done in relation to the correspondence that the Minister had with the Yorkshire and Humberside development association about larger factory units? If we have made any headway, the Minister will know that the size of factory units is just as important as their number. We want to ensure that the right type of units are being built in the region to help us attack poverty and unemployment there as soon as practicable.

11.43 pm

Mr. Austin Mitchell (Great Grimsby): We are tonight talking about the most beautiful, the best and certainly the biggest part of the country. We are talking about God's own county. It is extraordinary that the Minister has had the insensitivity to wear the red rose of Lancashire in his lapel. That shows either extraordinary insensitivity or a declaration of support for the trans-Pennine group, which is dedicated to the development of both sides of the Pennines.

The area, of which we on this side of the House are so proud because so many of us come from it, has been badly hit by the Government. Contrary to what the hon. Member for Sheffield, Hallam (Mr. Patnick) said—he placed his hopes on shopping centres in a speech that was more of a working men's club comedy routine that should have had a "com sec" rather than a Deputy Speaker in charge of it—our destiny lies in industry. It lies in making things and selling them to the world.

Yorkshire and Humberside is the industrial heart of Great Britain. It generates the power, produces the coal, the steel and the textiles, and does the fishing. That is where our destiny lies, and it is the part of the economy which has been so grievously hit by the Government, particularly by the economic policies that they pursued from 1979 to 1983. In that period the Government closed one fifth of our manufacturing capacity and lost nearly one third of our manufacturing jobs. As my hon. Friend the Member for Halifax (Mr. Hinchliffe) pointed out, that process of closures continues. The Government have inflicted damage on Yorkshire and Humberside from which we will take years to recover and for which the Government will never be forgiven.

The region is the first to suffer and the last to recover. Even now unemployment in Humberside is 12 per cent., which is 3 per cent. over the British average. In Grimsby it is 12 per cent. on the Government's figures and 17 per cent. on the real figures. In Grimsby, male unemployment is 15·7 per cent. Grimsby is not a development area and it is difficult to see why it has been robbed of the urban programme status which it had.

The whole area desperately needs new development and new jobs, yet the Government have only handicapped our

efforts to pull ourselves up by our bootstraps. They have erected obstacles. We have to compete against the superior power of the Scottish Development Agency to attract industry. We have to face the fact that when local government in Sheffield and Grimsby tries to encourage development, the Government hamstring it, imposes financial penalties on it and stops its efforts. We have no speculative factory development in Grimsby. The Government will not build, English Estates has not, and Grimsby council is not allowed to build because of the screws on its capital expenditure programme. The control of local government spending, which will get stronger, inhibits local authority efforts to provide facilities in which industry can develop.

We see from the capital expenditure consultation programme that the Government are foreshadowing further cuts in local government spending, and from the local government business paper that they are thinking of curtailing the current range of economic incentives that local authorities can provide. It is ludicrous to destroy industry as the Government have done, particularly in our area—that destruction has had particularly severe effects in the manufacturing heart of Britain—and not allow local authorities to rebuild those sectors.

Now we face another threat. The country is characterised by a Government from, for and by the south-east at the expense of areas such as Yorkshire and Humberside. As the prosperity in the south-east trickles down to our region—the hon. Member for Keighley (Mr. Waller) is correct to say that there are symptoms of a revival—we are belatedly getting the tail end of that improvement. Just as that is washing north, house prices are beginning to improve, unemployment is falling and development is beginning, the Government are stopping the process because of overheating in the south-east.

If there is overheating, it is certainly restricted to that part where house prices are reaching record levels and where there are skill shortages. Northerners are being lured down the M1 and the rail system to work in the south-east and go home at the weekends. That is where there is congestion. We in the north have none of those pressures. We need the development and the overspill, yet the north will be punished for the sins of the south-east.

The real problem is one of imbalance between areas. We need to spread development fairly and evenly, and to use the social capital and skills of the population. Tragically, this is the end of the golden weather for the Government. We are now beginning a massive deflation because of the size of the deficit in overseas and manufactured trade which the Government have allowed to develop because of their over-valuation of sterling.

That massive deflation—the increase in interest rates and the curtailment of economic activity because of overheating in the south-east—will penalise Yorkshire and Humberside quite disproportionately. It will mean one of two things. We may have an economic policy involving a high exchange rate maintained by high interest rates. In other words, we shall be paying the foreigner high interest rates to bring his money to this country to close a gap that we cannot now close by manufacturing exports. Such a policy would inflict further severe damage on manufacturing industry and therefore disproportionate damage on Yorkshire and Humberside.

If that policy does not work, foreigners will see the real state of health of the economy—that is how weak it is—and we shall have a sterling crisis by the end of the year, which will mean astronomical interest rates to defend the pound. Either way, in the interests of protecting the financial economy, which is concentrated in the south-east of England, the north will suffer disproportionately and Yorkshire and Humberside and the manufacturing industry that is so important to us will be severely hit. That is a prospect that we look forward to with dread in Yorkshire and Humberside, and it could only come from a Government who do not know the area and who do not know the real world of manufacturing.

As I said, Yorkshire and Humberside has suffered disproportionately. A Labour Government will reconstruct the manufacturing industry in the manufacturing heart of this country. That will benefit our area, just as it has suffered under this Government. As part of that process of redevelopment, we shall give Yorkshire and Humberside the power to control and manage its own destiny. We shall do so through regional government. We shall give the regions the power to manage their own economies. We shall do so through regional development agencies on the pattern of the Scottish Development Agency, and by giving back the regional incentives that the Government have taken away to allow those areas to attract back the industry that has been lost.

We are proud of our area. We are proud of being Yorkshiremen and Humbersiders. We once led the country. We were once at the industrial heart of this country and we shall be again. Our message to the Government, who have done so much damage to industry, put in a dialect that the Minister will not understand, is "Gi'up, gi'ower and gerrout."

11.52 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Industry (Mr. Robert Atkins): I make no apology for wearing the red rose of Lancashire in the context of a debate on matters relating to Yorkshire and Humberside. It must gall the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) and his hon. Friends to realise that I am a northern Member and a northern Minister; my constituency is even further north than that of the hon. Member for Great Grimsby. It is a fallacy that my hon. Friends and I do not appreciate the problems of Yorkshire.

I am delighted that my hon. Friends the Members for Sheffield, Hallam (Mr. Patnick) and for Keighley (Mr. Waller) have been able to participate. I know that others among my hon. Friends are interested in the debate, particularly my hon. Friend the Member for Skipton and Ripon (Mr. Curry), who I guess is waiting for the debate on the Settle-Carlisle railway, and my hon. Friend the Member for Darlington (Mr. Fallon), who has recently joined us on the Front Bench and who is to be the Yorkshire Whip. I know how much my hon. Friends disagree with the hon. Member for Great Grimsby.

I congratulate the hon. Member for Wakefield (Mr. Hinchliffe) on introducing this debate. It has been fascinating to hear both sides of the story. The Yorkshire and Humberside region makes an important contribution to the national economy, accounting for about 8 per cent. of gross domestic product. GDP per person in 1984 was a little over £4,000—about 12 per cent. below the national average.

The area has a mixed economy, which has made parts of the region vulnerable to cyclical trends in traditional

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industries. Nevertheless, there have been positive developments—to which some of my hon. Friends have referred. Areas of recent growth include the petrochemical industry on Humberside. Humberside has also seen growth in the frozen food sector. There has been considerable growth in financial and professional services centred on Leeds. Indeed, the importance of Leeds as a regional centre for such services has been growing steadily.

The House may find it interesting if I quote from a recent study by the CBI investigating industry in the area. I shall touch on just some of the headings to which the CBI report refers. Referring to demand and output in the Yorkshire and Humberside region, the CBI report says:

"The general level of order intake is better than earlier this year. The home market is particularly buoyant . . . The area bounded by Leeds, Harrogate and York is being referred to by the building industry as 'the golden triangle.'"

Indeed, I was in Doncaster only last week when the Labour leader there referred to Doncaster as "boom town".

The report goes on:

"So far as steel is concerned, production remains at a high level . . . Coal—the super pits are producing good levels . . . Mechanical engineering—order books are better . . . Electrical and electronic engineering—very busy . . . Civil engineering—plenty of work about . . . House building in the private sector is having a very good period, with demand outstripping supply in many areas . . . Chemicals—this sector remains busy."

Much attention has been paid to the subject of clothing. The report says:

"Companies are very busy . . . Textiles generally—working at high capacity levels . . . Telecom—performing at above planned levels, reflecting the increased affluence of the region . . . Rail services are well used, with InterCity being particularly busy . . . Confidence remains high. Ambitious investment plans for machinery and buildings will be followed through."

Surely that tells a different tale from the one that Opposition Members have been asking us to believe. What I have listed are the facts as presented by the CBI, an organisation which has been talking to people in the manufacturing and service industries. I appreciate that there are some difficulties and problems—inevitably there will be—but that is what the CBI is saying.

Those facts are borne out by the Yorkshire and Humberside Regional Economic Unit, the report of which has been quoted by other hon. Members, as they should do because the unit has at heart the interests of the region. It reports:

"The investment outlook is encouraging, with many companies planning significant expansion projects covering both buildings and capital equipment."

English Estates reports a 20 per cent. increase in factory sales and lettings in south Yorkshire, with increasing demands throughout the region. Unemployment is falling; it was 10·6 per cent. at the beginning of the year and was 10·1 per cent. in May. The fact that Opposition Members have referred to a shortage of factory space—a matter of which I am aware—reveals success in this region, as in others. Had the hon. Member for Great Grimsby been speaking from the Opposition Front Bench some years ago, he would no doubt have been complaining bitterly about empty factories. Now that we have the factories full and there is a shortage, we face a different problem. But it is a problem of success.

While I agree that there are difficulties, investment in and the achievements of the area are particularly good. In tourism, for example, Bradford now has a tourism development action plan and has been successful in developing and marketing its tourism assets. One need only consider the city's historical, literary and industrial heritage, its proximity to beautiful countryside and attractions such as the national museum of film, photography and television, to appreciate the potential of a place such as Bradford.

Sheffield, which my hon. Friend the Member for Hallam represents in part, is shortly to host the world student games, which will be the largest event of its type in the United Kingdom to date. All in all, one can tell a number of success stories.

I come to the problems of Wakefield. It is inevitable that when one decides to accord assistance to some areas rather than others there will be those who feel hard done by. That is particularly the case when, as has happened in the Wakefield area, there have been major closures in a particular industry over a relatively short period. There is little doubt that the loss of 11,000 jobs in the Wakefield area has had a major impact.

It is possible that Wakefield might be eligible for assistance from the European regional development fund, which is currently being restructured. Details of the eligibility of particular areas remain to be settled, and it is too early to predict the outcome, but I assure the hon. Gentleman that we will keep the interests of Wakefield closely in mind during the negotiations. In the meantime, Wakefield will continue to receive aid from the European Coal and Steel Community and to benefit from its priority status under the European social fund.

Wakefield has sought to make a case to have the status of the area reviewed. To avoid raising false hopes, I should say at the outset that it remains our intention, as stated in the White Paper, to keep the present map in place for the lifetime of this Parliament. The map was fixed at the end of 1984 after exhaustive discussions and representations. There are very good reasons for doing that. In setting up assisted areas, the primary intention is to influence private sector investment decisions, which have to be taken with a view to the medium to long term. To change the shape of the map too frequently would weaken the extent to which investment decisions can be influenced and thus undermine the purpose of the policy.

I accept that particular problems are being experienced in the Wakefield area, especially in the Castleford and Pontefract travel-to-work areas where many of the coal closures have taken place. It may be small consolation now, but when the time comes to review the map the case for changing the status of the Wakefield area will be taken into account particularly strongly. In the meantime, I know that officials of my Department and of other Departments in the region are in touch with officers in Wakefield to see what can be done for the area within current constraints. The hon. Member for Wakefield may be aware that I also met a delegation representing the enormous Conservative group on the council about these matters, so I am fully aware of the problems. I assure the hon. Gentleman that within the limits that I have specified we shall do what we can to understand and face the problems in the Wakefield area.

The Yorkshire and Humberside region has good long-term economic prospects. Its assets include specialised sites suitable for industry requiring access to deep

water, modern ports and good access to continental markets—factors that will be of increasing importance in 1992, with all the changes that will follow from that. The region so eloquently described by my hon. Friend the Member for Hallam has a work force with a great deal to offer in a wide variety of areas.

Like my hon. Friends, I am grateful for the opportunity to discuss what has been going on in the Yorkshire and Humberside area, but the Opposition must be careful not to talk down an area which in their own comments they recognise as an attractive and beautiful region both physically and geographically as well as in industrial and other ways. They must recognise that the strengths of the area have to be sold, rather than the weaknesses. If they continue to work as hard in that regard as those of my hon. Friends who so ably represent constituencies throughout the region, I am convinced that the strength that is so important to the region and to the country will continue in the future.

It is said that English cricket suffers when Yorkshire cricket is down. The sooner Yorkshire cricket reaches the standard that we have come to expect, the stronger will be the future of English cricket. I caution the whole House about the importance of this subject in the foreseeable future.

Rail privatisation

12.2 am

Mr. Keith Mans (Wyre): Before setting out my proposals for further private investment in the railway system in this country, I congratulate the Minister of State, my hon. Friend the Member for Enfield, Southgate (Mr. Portillo), on his new appointment. His predecessor did much to improve efficiency within British Rail and encouraged private investment by his many activities. I hope that in winding up today's debate my hon. Friend will be able to give us encouragement and assurance that that process will continue and expand.

One of the Government's major successes has been the removal of many inefficient monopolies from the public sector to the private sector, where state subsidies have ceased and vast improvements in business efficiency have have taken place. They have provided choice where none existed before and have steadily turned themselves into consumer-led rather than producer-led organisations. Moreover, their investment policies have not been hamstrung by the public sector borrowing requirement. All this applies even to British Telecom, with competition provided by Mercury.

One of the last great monopolies left in the public sector is the railway system—still producer-led and still relatively inefficient. I hope to show that, by the provision of more private capital and by the introduction of consumer-oriented management techniques from the private sector, British Rail will be transformed in the coming few years. I know that some of my hon. Friends wish to contribute to the debate and accordingly I shall be brief. I know that they have ideas that should be presented to the House.

We should build on what we have achieved already in privatising certain parts of the British Rail network. Equally, we should build on the experience of other industries that have recently been privatised. Within the rail network, catering at stations is often operated by private concerns. We have sold off the railway hotel chain and Sealink. The engineering section will soon be sold off. All these sell-offs have provided more money for British Rail to invest in infrastructure. It should be remembered that 80 per cent. of the rolling stock, apart from the trains that operate between pitheads and power stations, are already in private hands, amounting to 16,000 trucks. The privatisation that has taken place is already showing returns. An increased amount of freight is being carried by the railways on private trucks. An additional move has been taken by Foster Yeoman, which has bought its own locomotives.

The other experience on which we should base our plans is that of other recently privatised industries. I think especially of the airlines and the airport authorities. We can probably learn something from the soon-to-be-privatised electricity industry and the recently privatised bus companies.

I shall use a comparison between British Rail and British Airways to show what I feel may be the future for the rail network. A few years ago, both industries were nationalised, both were making losses, both were producer-led, both lacked investment and both were overmanned; most important of all, both were insensitive to the market and to the consumer. The change in British Airways since it was privatised has been dramatic. It is now the most profitable airline in the world and is showing

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a clean pair of heels to its European competitors, many of which are still in the public sector and still state-subsidised, and almost all of which are making losses. Unfortunately, British Rail is still in the public sector, and is still suffering from the ills that I have mentioned.

It is worth mentioning the role played in the airways and the air transportation system by the British Airports Authority—again, a recently privatised concern. It runs our airports, together with many other concerns. It runs the terminal and approach facilities that aircraft need when they land and take off. It is interesting that different airlines and airliners use the same airways. At the same time, the airlines see no need to own the airports at their points of departure and destination. Equally, they see no need to operate any of the air traffic control equipment.

It is on that experience that I base my proposal for a privatised rail network. First, we should build upon our experience, especially in the freight operations of British Rail. We should encourage private companies to own and operate passenger trains on the present rail network. We already have one example. The Orient express is owned by a private company and the rails that it runs on are leased for a period from British Rail. As the process develops, we should aim for all the rolling stock on British Rail to be owned by private companies.

Mr. Ian Taylor (Esher): Does my hon. Friend not accept that the problem with the Orient express is that, although it leases the track, it has to accept British Rail workers, and that that has hampered its freedom to negotiate?

Mr. Mans: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. Any future proposals would involve train crews and operators being employed not by British Rail but by the newly created companies.

If we ensure that new investment in the railways is provided by the private sector, capital will be released in the initial stages of privatisation for British rail to invest in the infrastructure—in the signalling equipment and in the track itself. The structure of British Rail would allow that to happen relatively easily, because money obtained from sale or leasing of track goes not to the Treasury but to the British Rail board. The advantage of such a procedure is that it is the only way to provide true competition, simply because consumers would be given a choice between companies' trains operating on the same line.

Mr. Robert Hughes (Aberdeen, North): Like LMS and LNER.

Mr. Mans: I am not certain of the relevance of that comment.

Mr. Hughes: The relevance of the comment is that for decades LMS and LNER had a nice cosy arrangement not to compete with each other.

Mr. Mans: I do not think that that would happen in the case of the newly privatised British Rail network. I am much more inclined to think that the same situation would develop on the railways as followed the introduction of competition between British Airways and British Midland on the Glasgow-Heathrow route. If the hon. Gentleman had travelled on that service both before and after the introduction of competition, he would understand its relevance to British Rail today. His rather anachronistic historical parallel has no bearing on the present circumstances.

My proposals would create true competition and a better service. Some inspired entrepreneur might actually suggest providing trains that guaranteed seats for the passengers. The airlines have guaranteed seats for years. They will even put on an extra aircraft at Heathrow to fly passengers to Glasgow, Manchester or Edinburgh if the first is full. That is precisely the sort of consumer service that we want to introduce on trains.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): Like a jumbo jet.

Mr. Mans: Not necessarily. We could make do with a high-speed train.

Mr. Cryer: The hon. Gentleman is speaking on the basis of ignorance. Does he not realise that if he were to put on a train from, say, London to Glasgow, the passenger capacity would be equivalent to that of a jumbo jet? There would be capacity for about 400 passengers to transport perhaps two or three.

Mr. Mans: That is exactly the point that I am making. As part of its campaign, British Airways will put on an extra aircraft for three people. That shows that Opposition Members do not understand the importance of consumer choice. They do not really want the consumer to be able to sit down on a train; they would prefer him to stand. I can understand that, because I know the background to their arguments.

We are left, then, with a rail network composed of the track and the stations. Our first move should be to sell off the stations. My hon. Friend the Member for Stroud (Mr. Knapman) produced an eminently sensible 10-minute Bill only a few days ago. I know that he wants to catch your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I hope that he will manage to do so, because I know that he has more to say on the subject.

As part of the sell-off of the stations, there must be a statutory obligation upon the new, private station companies to maintain the track and the signalling equipment in the vicinity of the station. The British Airports Authority has a similar statutory obligation to maintain all the runway aids, the radar and the other equipment which are needed by aircraft to land and take off. Therefore, the precedent exists, and experience has shown that BAA, as part of the private sector, offers a better service than that of old.

Once the stations have been sold off, we shall effectively have reduced British Rail to a national track authority. At that stage I believe that it would be advisable to make British Rail a public limited company. Ultimately, it would be responsible for the integrity of the network and for improvements, and it would derive its revenue from the train and station companies.

With the positive generation of cash at the start of the nationalisation process, present subsidies, which top nearly £7 million a year, could be rapidly reduced. In future, I believe that a partnership will develop between the individual train companies, local authorities and others to provide services in the rural areas. The recently privatised bus companies have already demonstrated the success of such partnerships.

There is a crying need for a railway link between Heathrow and Paddington and for a link between

Manchester airport and the line that already runs to the north-west. We should also make provision for private companies to build and operate trains on those new lines. The national track authority would have a statutory obligation to connect those links with the main network.

It is now 150 years since our Victorian forebears drove the industrial revolution onwards and outwards on the back of a brand new railway network. Their entrepreneurial spirit and engineering feats are still an inspiration to us. We must re-create that spirit and release the rail network from the present stranglehold of the state monopoly which it has suffered for far too long. Let us encourage private capital, combined with individual initiative and business skill, to help to create a second golden age for our railway network.

12.17 am

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): I apologise for my hesitation in getting up, but I thought that you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, called "Bob Dunn". I was looking round the Chamber for the recently sacked member of the Government.

I give you notice, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I wish to withdraw my subject for debate, which is No. 12 on the list.

I listened to the speech of the hon. Member for Wyre (Mr. Mans) with increasing horror. He denigrated British Rail, which provides an excellent service, many times. Of course there are breakdowns, and of course trains are overcrowded, but if the Government provided more money for new trains and for track maintenance and signalling, none of that would happen. British Rail receives a smaller state subsidy than any other rail network in the Western world.

Mr. Conal Gregory (York) *rose*——

Mr. Cryer: I shall give way later, when I have developed my argument.

British Rail receives a subsidy to operate the provincial services, but the subsidy for the InterCity services is to be phased out. As a result, the high-speed trains are being driven into the ground. Those trains receive minimal maintenance because BR wants to keep the HSTs running in order to meet the strict financial limits that are placed upon it by the Government. The trains are often seedy and overcrowded, which is a direct result of the Government's financing limits.

Mr. Gregory: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Cryer: No, I shall not give way at the moment. I shall make my speech without the hon. Member for York (Mr. Gregory) getting up and down like a jack-in-the-box. He must contain himself——

Mr. Ian Taylor: My hon. Friend wants to give the hon. Gentleman some facts.

Mr. Cryer: The hon. Member for York does not know many facts. If the hon. Member for Esher (Mr. Taylor) interrupts, my speech will get longer and longer and other hon. Members who wish to speak will not be able to do so.

As Tory Members find it funny to laugh at public bodies, I remind them that when they talked about selling off British Rail Engineering workshops, unless he was lying to the House, the Minister said that he thought the standard of work was extremely high and that the workshops had an excellent record of producing railway wagons and equipment for British Rail, but the hon. Member for Wyre seemed to suggest that British Rail had no virtues and was producing no new ideas or technology.

The high-speed trains are a demonstration of public innovation and high technology in railway operation. That technology, introduced under public ownership, has been sold to many railways in other countries throughout the world. It was an outrageous act by the Government—one of many—when they closed the workshops or forced them to be sold off.

My hon. Friend the Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hughes) was right to say that we have the experience of past years as a guide. Competition does not work. It results either in some companies going out of business and the winners taking all, or in comfortable cartel arrangements in which the notion of competition is simply and quietly pushed to one side.

In 1922, a Conservative Government compulsorily amalgamated a number of independent railway companies to form four railway companies which operated all but a handful of services throughout the United Kingdom, with the exception of Northern Ireland, where the arrangements were linked to two of the major companies operating there. Even on the basis of the experience of Conservative Governments, the idea of competing railways under private ownership simply does not work.

Mr. Roger Knapman (Stroud): In fact there were not just four railway companies at the time of nationalisation. The then Minister of Transport, Mr. Barnes, said:

"On the assumption that the Bill receives Royal Assent in this Session . . . there will be transferred to public ownership some 60 railway undertakings".—[*Official Report*, 5 May 1947; Vol. 437, c. 36.]

Mr. Cryer: There was a handful—just 56. In terms of mileage, it was a tiny amount. The Stephens light railway was developed by Colonel Stephens in the 1920s, the Kent and East Sussex light railway operated about a dozen miles of grotty track, with equally grotty carriages and locomotives. In terms of mileage, locomotives and rolling stock a handful of railways were still privately owned, but they were largely irrelevant, and none of them operated into any main line stations in any major cities throughout the United Kingdom. Most of them were not even passenger railways. They were mostly freight branches serving junctions where the freight was transferred, and included a number of narrow-gauge railways which, of course, did not even operate to the standard gauge of 4ft 8½in.

I return to my original statement, that the great majority of railways, track and locomotives were taken over into the four major railway companies.

Mr. Gregory: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for giving way. The point that I wished to interject at an earlier stage in his argument was that he tried to contend that the railways were not efficient because the Government were starving them of funds. The hon. Gentleman should do his homework before making such outrageous allegations. The British Railways Board has not gone up to its external financing limit for a number of years. The Government made the facilities available, but they were not taken up because there were no opportunities for investment.

Mr. Cryer: The chairman of British Rail, a Tory Government appointee and no doubt sympathiser, made

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that decision against the wishes of the staff of British Rail. If the hon. Gentleman enjoyed their confidence he would know that they are faced with shortages of maintenance facilities, equipment and materials——

Mr. Gregory: That is not what the hon. Gentleman said before.

Mr. Cryer: It is precisely what I said. Because of Government policy, British Rail is short of money. The hon. Gentleman must know that, although the HSTs provide an excellent service, they are scheduled for mileages beyond their capability unless they receive more maintenance, because there are not enough high-speed train units. British Rail and the Government will not invest jointly in more units, which would relieve the problem of breakdowns on the main passenger services.

I want to mention a proposed privatisation by the Government. The new Minister of State has not yet been to the Settle–Carlisle railway, although he will doubtless visit it to keep himself up to date. The Government have proposed that the section of railway from Settle junction to Carlisle should be sold off because British Rail has proposed its closure. Some time ago British Rail decided to run the line down and failed to provide adequate moisture protection for the viaduct at Ribblehead. That is an example of how a lack of adequate finance for our national rail network has led to stringent economies, which inevitably have their effect over time. Then decisions must be made on whether to spend large sums on structures such as the Ribblehead viaduct or to close them down.

British Rail proposed closure. That is wrong, and the Government should tell British Rail so. They should tell British Rail to keep the line open and exploit it to its full potential. If British Rail receives that instruction, I have no doubt that its chairman will take up the challenge, allocate more funds to the line and appoint more people to market it. It is quite capable of doing that. British Rail has promoted several lines in Scotland for tourism and made a success of it. It could do the job in this case in conjunction with the Friends of Settle-Carlisle Railway Association, who are keen to work co-operatively with British Rail, but who recognise the great difficulties involved in a private organisation taking over this 72-mile double track main-line system.

The railway has already improved from carrying 90,000 passengers in 1983-84 to carrying more than 300,000 a year now. British Rail says that the maximum potential has been reached, but that is clearly not true. There are relatively few trains on the line now, and with more services there could be a much greater increase in passenger usage.

Closure would mean increased hardship. The Minister asked the transport users' consultative committee to examine the possibility of finding greater evidence of hardship. Since the last hearings of the TUCC, new services have been introduced. I understand from a ministerial reply that it is up to the TUCC to decide how it will assess that evidence and whether it will take written objections or hold hearings. So far, it has decided against hearings. That is wrong. I urge the Yorkshire and North-West TUCC to hold public hearings so that people can explain the greater hardship that would be suffered.

More time is required, in any event—the Minister has said that the committee must report by November. That is not enough time—if the Minister has decided that the line must be sold off by April 1989—to allow any private organisation to take over its operations and continue the expansion, in theory, of passenger traffic. I hope that the Minister will be prepared to allow more time to overcome any hardship and to consider the proposals that are put forward. I do not think that private ownership is a tenable alternative.

Mr. Waller: The hon. Gentleman said that British Rail does not believe that the number of passengers who use the line can be increased. The hon. Gentleman and I are anxious that the line should continue in use—we are both vice-presidents of the Friends of Settle-Carlisle Association—and, like the hon. Gentleman, I am strongly opposed to closure. Does the hon. Gentleman think that the line's long-term prospects might be enhanced if it were run by a body more strongly committed than British Rail to its future and to increasing traffic? Would it not be improved by the input of private capital and by its being run by a consortium of local authorities and passenger transport executives?

Mr. Cryer: Local authorities have offered in excess of £500,000 for the restoration of the Ribblehead viaduct. As the hon. Gentleman knows, they contribute to a diesel-multiple unit service and to a linking bus service between Garsdale and Hawes. That is a good basis for an integrated system, but I should like the line to continue operating for an experimental period of at least two years, linked to the Friends of Settle-Carlisle Railway Association, to see whether the type of promotion that the Minister mentioned with regard to the North Yorkshire Moors railway and the Severn Valley railway could be used by the Friends of Settle-Carlisle Railway Association. The revenue that it would yield would be allocated to that line, which would require British Rail to budget on a much narrower basis for the Settle to Carlisle section.

That possibility should be considered, because many thousands of people have a particular affection for the line. They use it to travel to work, photograph it and use it for pleasure because it is a magnificent railway set in beautiful scenery.

The notion of trying to sell off the line is a dead duck. I therefore think that the enthusiasm, dedication and energy of bodies such as the Friends of Settle-Carlisle Railway Association—all its members are volunteers and contribute because of their affection for the line—should be used to support the line, which is unlikely to meet all its capital and revenue costs over a long period. The time scale for any alternative is too short. I am pleased that the hon. Member for Skipton and Ripon (Mr. Curry) is nodding in agreement.

The hon. Member for Esher mentioned a friend of his who was talking about facts. I was the founder of the Keighley and Worth Valley railway preservation society. I was its chairman for the first 10 years and negotiated its purchase from British Rail. That agreement formed the basis for the purchase of the Severn Valley railway and the North Yorkshire Moors railway. I have carried out every job on a steam and diesel-operated light railway. I have fired and driven locomotives, including the largest class of locomotives such as 2-10-0 and Evening Star, as well as

small tank locomotives. I have maintained the boilers, the track, the platforms and the stations. Therefore, I know what I am talking about from hard graft and experience.

I have experienced the difficulties of raising money to buy a railway and finance it. I know that operating steam locomotives is a difficult business and that the amateur organisations do it with great skill, dedication and professionalism. When I say "amateur organisations", that is not a term of denigration. The Severn valley, the Worth valley and North Yorkshire Moors railways are operated to full professional standards. Railways cannot be operated to any other standard, or there would be the danger of accidents.

Having said that, to run steam locomotives over a 140-mile round trip is rather different from running them over a 10-mile branch such as the Keighley and Worth Valley railway. The Minister's predecessor suggested at a press conference that private owners of the Settle-Carlisle railway could borrow a few locomotivives from the Worth Valley railway. The Worth Valley railway, with dozens of dedicated volunteers working through the winter, has great difficulty getting four or five steam locomotives ready for the summer each year. That is for a 10-mile branch, let alone for a 140-mile branch.

The purchasers of the railway would have 21 viaducts, 14 tunnels and 325 bridges, all of which have to be maintained to a safe standard by the operators of the railway. It is impossible for a private preservation society to do that.

The Minister's predecessors suggested that in order to encourage private ownership there should be some sort of dowry. On 16 May the Minister said:

"British Rail would undertake to lift, remove and pay for continuously welded rail surplus to the private owner's operating requirements. That could amount to up to £850,000."—*[Official Report,* 16 May 1988; Vol. 133, c. 678-79.]

Today I asked the Minister

"what information he has as to what mileage of rail on the Settle to Carlisle section of British Rail is continuously welded flat bottomed rail, as to its current value and as to what would be the replacement cost of flat bottomed or bull-head track of equivalent weight; and if he will make a statement."

The answer from the Minister was:

"This information is not available."

The Minister claimed that replacing continously welded flat bottomed rail would provide £850,000. That would not be much good if the new owners had to pay out £850,000 to replace the rail being taken out. We do not know from the Minister how much rail is involved anyway. I merely use that to demonstrate the impracticability of the Minister's suggestion to sell the Settle-Carlisle line to private owners.

There is the question of access. Settle is several miles north of Hellifield. Are the private owners to be given running rights over British Rail? The safety standards of the railway inspectorate would have to be observed. Would the trains run under the wires regularly at Carlisle? Would they go to Kingmoor shed, which has recently been closed, for maintenance facilities? The railway inspectorate will require adequate maintenance and inspection facilities for the locomotives and carriages used on the railway.

What about revenue for diversions? Diversions for the fiscal year ended 30 March 1988 amounted to 320 trains. Would British Rail be allowed to divert over the track? That is unknown and cannot be subject to negotiation. Any potential purchaser has to know what the difficulties are and how they will be solved before embarking on such a vast enterprise.

The Government seem to think that a light railway order operation under the Light Railways Act 1912 at a maximum speed of 25 mph is a potential alternative, because they have not said that that should be ruled out. I should rule it out because travelling at 25 mph for a 140-mile round trip does not seem the most exciting way of spending several days out with the family—that is the amount of time that it would take.

All those points remain unanswered, and in my view they are insoluble. There is no millionaire on the horizon —the Minister's predecessor called him "Mr. Big"—who will spend several million pounds in affection for the Settle-Carlisle railway, to privatise it to the Government's satisfaction. In any case, if the Government are to privatise any part of the railways, the Settle-Carlisle railway is the one that makes the least sense. If one were talking about the Victoria-Gatwick service, that would at least have some shred of logic and credibility, but the Settle-Carlisle line has no potential in that regard.

The hon. Member for Wyre, who initiated the debate, talked about the potential of private ownership. Private ownership would go for sections such as Victoria-Heathrow. It would not be interested in maintaining the Settle-Carlisle line—or other such routes which run through rural areas—with its 135 bridges, the maintenance of Ribblehead viaduct, and Blea Moor tunnel, which is nearly two miles long. Private ownership would not be prepared to take that on. It would shut lines and stations, sack staff and concentrate on the most lucrative and profitable areas.

Unless the provincial sector receives the £450 million subsidy that is currently paid for its services, that whole sector will go by the board. Why should only the south-east sector, which is subsidised by British Rail, get a subsidy, but not a rural line in Yorkshire, which gives access to the Yorkshire dales?

It is important that British Rail should have all possible sources of revenue—from stations, franchising and catering—from wherever it can get the money to help it cover the costs of the rural, relatively more lightly used branch and main-line services, which will inevitably cost money in maintenance because of the heavy costs that we have inherited from our Victorian ancestors.

I stress to the Minister that the future of the Settle-Carlisle line should be as part of British Rail, which should provide the through services with help from such dedicated bands of volunteers as the Friends of Settle-Carlisle Railway Association. I hope that that will be the future of the Settle-Carlisle line, and not the bleak future of closure, which will bring dismay and horror and which, if that is what happens, will be regarded as an act of unparalleled corporate vandalism by the Government.

12.42 am

Mr. David Curry (Skipton and Rippon): I too wish to address my remarks primarily to the future of the Settle-Carlisle railway which runs the length of my constituency; I too am a vice-president of the Friends of the Settle-Carlisle Railway Association to which my hon. Friend the Member for Keighley (Mr. Waller) and the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) have referred. I reflect not only my own concerns and those of

[Mr. David Curry]

Opposition Members, but especially those of my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Ribble Valley (Mr. Waddington), whose constituency is also affected by the line, and those of my hon. Friends the Members for Pendle (Mr. Lee) and for Keighley (Mr. Waller), who spoke in the previous debate.

It is particularly appropriate, and indeed necessary, to raise this issue tonight because the brochure which is going out to people who have expressed an interest in purchasing the line is being sent out this week and may even be in the post tonight. It is intended that there will be a seminar in early September for those who respond to that brochure —the prospective purchasers—and the timetable demands that outline bids should be in by the end of September, with a decision due in November. Almost all that time falls when the House is in recess, so it is important that we should have our say tonight, because the period when we return will be crowded.

That brochure will detail the package of support which has already been pledged. It is important to highlight what is already on the table. There is £1 million from English Heritage for the Ribblehead viaduct. The Training Commission is offering support for projects which are based on the Jarvis recommendations. The English and Cumbrian tourist boards are planning to support tourist projects—for example, accommodation and visitor centres adjacent to the line. The Development Commission for Rural England has pledged up to £100,000 for Ribblehead. The Countryside Commission has pledged £100,000 to match capital invested in tourist projects and commercial concerns like Scottish and Newcastle Breweries, Grand Metropolitan and construction companies have also pledged support to a purchaser.

Those pledges are heavily tourist-oriented. They offer the chance that a private operator can do what British Rail cannot—as it is debarred from acting in this way—and combine rail and road traffic and offer packages that involve part rail and part road transport. That would open up a new market for tourism in the Yorkshire Dales.

Privatisation can succeed, but it needs more flexibility and promotion by the Government. To that end, there are several ways in which the Government can materially improve the prospects of the successful privatisation of the line.

First, I have learned from British Rail that it will be unable to give any figures about the anticipated revenue or level of passengers on the line. British Rail compiles its figures for another purpose, and it has been advised by its legal advisers that it may not give estimates of the level of passengers or revenue. It may not even refer to estimates by other bodies such as Cumbria county council.

It will be a bizarre prospectus if it cannot tell a prospector what he is going to purchase. There will be a blind man's buff in the prospectus. I urge the Minister to investigate that problem. I recognise that British Rail considers that to be a genuine problem, but I want the Minister to investigate to ensure that the information will enable a proper commercial decision to be made.

The hon. Member for Bradford, South referred to the November deadline. I want the Minister to give a clear undertaking that if serious negotiations are in train, given the very short time that any operator will have to prepare a bid from September when he receives the detailed information—which will be very weighty, as it will include a long list of all the assets associated with the line—and assemble his capital, he will not apply the guillotine at that deadline. I want the Minister to undertake to proceed with his negotiations if that happens.

I pay tribute to the efforts made by the Minister's predecessor on behalf of the line. His predecessor said that if British Rail were authorised to cease operations, it would have four months to do so. That is not long enough. We need at least six months. I urge the Minister to make that concession now, as the brochures are sent out, so that purchasers have a proper idea of what is in store for them.

Local authorities have offered help under conditions. Any purchaser who takes on the line will have to accept the capital structures on the basis of "make do and mend". He will face the prospect of annual costs outstripping annual revenues. It would be more helpful if local authorities felt able to revert to an offer of an annual grant towards the operating costs of the line. I appreciate that they already do that in certain aspects. It would help if they upped that figure and in return demanded certain social services such as winter services and services at the beginning and end of the day.

I welcome British Rail's assurance that the private operator can have the option of running his trains over British Rail track to Carlisle into Hellifield and, if he wishes, to run trains to Blackburn via Clitheroe. Will the Minister raise that point with the local authorities, so that they may restructure their support?

Local needs are important. We must not get the idea that we are talking exclusively about a tourist operation. The local needs in that part of the world, with its severe winters and its high proportion of elderly people, must not be overlooked. With increased revenue from tourist operations—the £10·50 day return from Leeds to Carlisle is a very cheap option at the moment—plus some bridging finance for the operating costs, we are in sight of closing the gap between operating costs and revenue, which would enable the line to continue.

This is a very sensitive and political issue. The Minister must appreciate that the Settle-Carlisle line is seen as the symbol of a history of a culture and a character. It is very difficult for me to explain to my constituents why it is right that taxpayers should be asked to pay £5 million to restore the Albert memorial, but it is not right to pay a fraction of that to restore the Ribblehead viaduct. Take those two together, and the Ribblehead viaduct is overwhelmingly the more important monument to our nation's history and has the greater promise for the nation's future.

I support privatisation. I do not seek pure subsidy, but I demand a real commitment to ensure that the venture succeeds. I hope that the Minister will ride the line. Indeed, he must ride the line before he makes his decision, so that he not merely feels its history, but sees its opportunities.

A few days ago on the back page of *The Times* there was a splendid photograph of Mallard hauling a steam train across the Ribblehead viaduct. That symbolises what is at stake—it is not just a dramatic photograph, but a symbol of what there is to save and to build on. I look forward to hearing the Minister's response to those points.

12.50 am

Mr. Roger Knapman (Stroud): As the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) has insisted upon duplicating his Adjournment debate speech of 26 May, some of us must take the Beeching axe to our own remarks.

It may interest hon. Members to know that, back at the time of privatisation, London, Midland and Scottish and London and North-Eastern Region were respectively the second and third biggest companies in the world. The Labour Minister of Transport at that time—1947—said:

"Passengers who travel on our railways have not today the comfort, either in matters of refreshment or of travel, which they ought to have".

He finished with a ringing appeal:

"Give this Labour Government five years of power in . . . transport services and the people of this country will see more progress than would be made in 500 years of Tory rule".

Tell that to long-suffering commuters on Network SouthEast, or those trying to get their teeth through a British Rail sandwich.

If, like me, one cannot make a decent speech oneself, by far the next best thing is to hijack one that is 47 years old and resurrect it from that forgotten age. The person replying to that debate was no less than Major Sir David Maxwell Fyfe. His speech is just as topical now as it was then. I feel that I must mention two or three points that he made, having spent some four hours in the Library.

Major Sir David Maxwell Fyfe said:

"I ask those who interrupt me to look at the father and mother of the Bill, the T.U.C. document, in which it will be found that these low costs are stressed"—

he was referring to the low costs, because of the short distances between manufacturing places and the ports—

"but we shall not have them under a monopoly which will be cumbrous and top-heavy, whose structural defects are as manifest as its powers are unlimited."

He went on:

"The right hon. Gentleman has given us one reason for this integration, with regard to railway services, and that was the difficulty of doing capital works on the railways."

That was just after the war.

"He knows as everyone knows that the railway companies had their plans ready for renewals, replacements and new works, and to take his own example, he knows it was planned and that everything was prepared to rebuild Euston Station, which is one of the examples he chose in this matter."—[*Official Report*, 16 December 1946; Vol. 431, c. 1637-8.]

So the will for new works was there after the war—of that make no mistake.

Even more telling—I believe that the word "integration" will be much used in debates as we soon move towards railway privatisation—are the words of Sir Cyril Hurcombe, the Director-General of the Ministry of Transport, who was in charge of the railway system during the war:

"detailed allocation of traffic has not been practicable, nor, indeed, has it been easy to find any fixed principles on which to allocate at all. It must be confessed that wartime allocation of traffic has not been based on principles or methods likely to be applicable to ordinary conditions, so there will be much talk of integration but I suspect rather fewer people who know what integration means".

I will not carry on after that short point, but in 1947 there were relatively few Conservative Members in this place—about the same miserable number as there are Opposition Members now. However, during that time we had the support of the Liberal party. The hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) talks of the Liberal Bench, but the Liberals followed us through the Lobby time after time in that debate.

My hon. Friend the Minister can look forward to a nice easy ride, if I can put it that way, because we can look forward to certain help from the "SaLaD" party, which I presume to be the Liberal party's successor, when privatisation comes about. I hope that that will be soon.

12.55 am

Mr. David Shaw (Dover): There have been many successful examples of privatisation under this Government. British Telecom is often labelled as one which has not been too successful, but any of us who tried to get telephones 12 or even four years ago knows that the service has been improving steadily. Under Labour, I found the delay excessive and unreasonable. Now, not only is there hardly any delay, but one has a choice of telephone. The consumer is at long last starting to rule the telephone industry and the introduction of Mercury will ensure that that continues.

The Government must not relax with British Rail privatisation. It would be very easy to say that it is too difficult, that it has been in the public sector too long and that it is an old industry. The Government should not go soft. They should face up to the fact that BR is an opportunity to provide the consumer with a better service.

BR's service has undoubtedly improved in some areas, but the current service is no more than adequate. Nothing really exciting exists in BR for passengers or for employees, who are denied the opportunity of profit-sharing and of share option schemes. Management is not paid as decent management would be, so one is tempted to say that it cannot be running a decent business and getting decent pay for it.

Mr. Robert Hughes (Aberdeen, North): How much does the hon. Gentleman get paid?

Mr. Shaw: Not as much as some BR managers.

This is not a decent business that provides a decent service. The businesses that depend on BR do not get the same reaction from the staff and management of BR as they would expect in their own businesses. BR has not been exciting for the taxpayer, who has been the investor for the past 40 years or so, as there has been no trace of a dividend.

Stations in my constituency are not tidy, carriages are out of date, catering facilities are hardly ever available and timekeeping does not accord with what BR tells us in its accounts. It is not very good, especially on Fridays. The only good news is my local village station, which has nice courteous staff and where newspapers are for sale. The station is also relatively well kept.

We are tempted to ask what can be done with private finance. I believe that it could offer new opportunities for BR and the travelling public. Much finance could be available if there were good investment returns for the private investor. Stations could be converted into retail shops, public houses or guest houses, and many of them could become tourist attractions.

As for the rolling stock, there are opportunities for business men's carriages where they can work as they travel. There could be office cubicles with telephones and fax and telex machines. There could be tourism carriages with glass tops in which people could tour around the country. There could be catering carriages with much better catering facilities.

[Mr. Shaw]

Many property opportunities could be taken advantage of at the major termini. Hotels, offices, shops and business premises could be expanded on BR sites. Docklands and Canary wharf is the largest private sector development in the world at the moment, but it is small compared with the potential for King's Cross, which could be an £8 billion development. There are many opportunities for new investment in track. Even new lines could be contemplated if private sector finance and privatisation were introduced.

British Rail should be run to provide a good, efficient service for passengers together with a profit for the investors, and it should be a good place to work for the employees, who could do well from privatisation. My colleagues and I call on the Government to publish a Green Paper on privatisation and to introduce private finance as soon as possible.

12.59 am

Mr. Conal Gregory (York): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Wyre (Mr. Mans) on securing a place in the ballot and choosing this subject, and I am delighted to welcome my hon. Friend the Minister of State to the Front Bench for the first time on transport.

British Rail's corporate plan for 1988 published last week is a thin documentm, certainly unlikely to pass a GCSE in transport and rarely addressing the real issues. It is vital that the railways are put under the spotlight. There are exciting projects—for example, the east-coast mainline electrification, the construction of the Stansted airport rail link, the electrification of the Portsmouth-Southampton line and the provision of international rail services which will come about through the opening of the Channel tunnel in 1993.

Although we hear that British Rail is becoming more customer-orientated—Jimmy Savile used to proclaim that it was "getting there"—the facts speak substantially to the contrary. Can one imagine any other company with rationale advertising its failure by taking advertisements —full-page and London Underground ones—showing the black and red dots of their failure? I cannot imagine any other company doing that. Clearly the railways are operator-led rather than customer-orientated, although they moved from an £83 million loss to a £291 million surplus last year.

The time has come for the Government to ask British Rail for its denationalisation strategy. It is long overdue. It may propose privatising region by region, and on my recent visit to Scotland that was welcomed. It may privatise sector by sector, or, most probably, split the track and maintenance from the operators. I favour the latter. The former runs along CAA lines and the latter would be like customer-oriented companies.

What would denationalisation bring? First, it would bring employee participation, which would be beloved by Labour Members, if they were present, but I see many empty Benches. I look forward to British Rail Engineering Limited being awarded to a company or consortium which allows staff at all levels to participate. Even York's hard Left council paid for a private consultant's report last year which concluded that the best future for the engineering company was—surprise, surprise—in private hands. How right it was, and how silent the Socialist councillors have been since. It makes sense for a heavy engineering firm to be able to take on all appropriate work at competitive prices that would include major coach and defence contracts, using skills which are rarely fully utilised.

Secondly, denationalisation would bring frequency of service. If anyone wishes to go to a theatre or cinema in London or to have a meal at a reasonable time, he will fail to get back to York that evening, because the last published time of departure is 10 pm. I could give examples for many other provincial cities.

Thirdly, at present it is impossible to buy any magazine or newspaper on any train in the United Kingdom. I cannot understand why that is, or why there is that stranglehold monopoly. No doubt the hon. Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hughes) has noticed that he cannot enjoy the pleasure of purchasing *Labour Weekly* on the train.

Furthermore, denationalisation would bring catering en route for the customer. Why is it that frequently no facilities are available for the first 20 minutes or last 30 minutes of a journey? Lunch stops at 12 noon on a train from the north when it reaches Newark. It is time for vending machines on every InterCity and provincial train. It is right that there should be a seat for every customer. Frequently, standard class ticket holders have no seat and British Rail has no answer for that.

My hon. Friend the Member for Wyre referred to the privatisation of railway stations. We need open stations. At present, staff at London termini such as King's Cross simply obstruct passengers and make the carrying of luggage extremely difficult by restricting space. They have even tried to stop me boarding the right train. There is no need for those staff to be there; they could be put to productive use. Similarly, we need to develop passenger services at stations. Why do we not have banking facilities at every station, and why do not all stations do what the Essex stations do and provide one with the opportunity to service one's car?

A visit to the Utrecht headquarters of Dutch Railways showed me the proper use of real estate. There, 250 to 280 retail points exist. The property board of British Rail may say, "We haven't got the space." The answer is to push the railway lines at Paddington and Waterloo further out, so as to put that real estate—the most valuable in Britain —to use.

One should not expect to find trolleys at these important destinations. If hon. Members went to King's Cross tonight they would find trolleys not on the platforms for use by passengers, but at the exit point, where no doubt there would be 200 or more. One will not find services advertised as one would at Heathrow or Gatwick. One will find no facilities whatever. Even the common rail ticket does not refer to any other service or product that is available.

The customer should come first, not the railways or the operator. I look forward to a commitment by the Government to put the user first and to ask British Rail, as a matter of urgency, not for completely inadequate corporate plans but for its solid denationalisation proposals.

1.6 am

Mr. Quentin Davies (Stamford and Spalding): It is no exaggeration to say that the railways in this country have been something of a disaster on wheels throughout this century. I thoroughly agree with the hon. Member for

Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer), the only Opposition Member who has spoken, who implied that the problems went back to a time long before privatisation. Of course they do; they go back to the beginning of the century and are associated with three interlinked factors.

The first was the growth of monopolistic or oligopolistic practices and attitudes of mind on the part of the companies. The second was the extensive and intensive degree of trade unionisation from which the industry suffered from the beginning of the century. The third was creeping Government interference. Nationalisation was promoted as a solution to the problems of the railways, but it made all three aspects distinctly worse.

If I had had time after discovering that you had chosen this very timely subject for debate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would have done some research with a view to presenting to the House in terms of constant 1988 prices the sum of the operating deficits incurred by British Railways and British Rail since nationalisation and the new investment poured in from public funds. Presented in constant 1988 prices, those figures would have been very revealing. I am sorry that I cannot present those figures tonight, although I fear that I can think of few more depressing avenues of industrial research.

This unfortunate state of affairs is the result of three factors that were completely predictable. A monopoly will generate monopoly costs; they always do. Those costs are insidious, though incalculable, and they would not exist if there was competitive pressure on the firm. At the same time, a monopoly will not seize the opportunities that a competitive firm would seize, so incremental revenues that might have been generated will not be generated.

The second problem is that a monopoly will develop a very producer-oriented culture. We see that in the terrible structure of restrictive practices, closed shops and compulsory overmanning from which British Rail has always suffered. We also know it anecdotally every time we take the train. Whenever I go to Lincolnshire, I have to queue for about 10 minutes to buy a ticket, and I have to queue to get on to the platform. Ours is the only railway system in the world that makes one queue to get on to the platform. If one wants to get a sandwich or a drink, one has to queue at the bar, which is not normally opened until 10 minutes or so after the train has left the station or when the staff happen to feel like it. That is real producer orientation for you.

The next problem with a nationalised monopoly is that it will always suffer from insidious political interference such as artificial limits being imposed on its borrowing powers.

Nationalisation has made the railways hopelessly unattractive economically. It is impossible to produce a prospectus for major parts of the railway system and have any hope of floating them off. On the other hand, this can be a vicious circle. Nationalisation having destroyed the railways as an attractive investment proposition, we may never be able to get out of nationalisation so as to make the activity prosperous, attractive and viable again. The only way to square the circle is to look for niches which enable us to carve into that monopoly and introduce elements of privatisation.

That is why I welcome the ideas we have heard tonight —for example to privatise small regional railways or to allow private companies to run trains on publicly owned track. We must go forward in the interests of the customers of the railways and the economy as a whole, and not least in the interests of the poor taxpayer who has borne this burden over the years. We must seize every opportunity to reverse the fatal tendency towards monopoly from which the railway system has suffered through the decades of this century.

1.11 am

Mrs. Teresa Gorman (Billericay): I love trains and, like all hon. Members, I want to see the railways improved. I hope that before the Minister achieves that objective by privatising the whole system, he will preserve a few samples of British Rail, such as the plastic cup that bends in the middle and spills boiling hot liquid all over one, the curly sandwich, the dirty old carriage complete with split seat on which one would prefer not to put one's clean clothes, and the timetable.

Sometimes trains run to time, but often on the lines into and out of my constituency they run up to an hour and a half late. My secretary goes home every evening on the train to Southend. On leaving my office at 5.30—if she is lucky—she makes her way to Fenchurch Street station, from where she arrives at her home in Southend sometimes as late as 9 o'clock, a journey which technically should take an hour.

Delays occur because the driver will not go the whole distance, as his scheduled time is up, or he started late, or somebody was not available to operate the signals, or perhaps for no reason at all. So the train is shunted into a siding and after perhaps an hour the passengers are offered a coach ride to complete their journey. The result is that my secretary and her husband do not have their dinner until late.

What I have described is the reality for many commuters. There are four major railway stations in my constituency and almost every household is affected because they have in their families commuters working in London. They are lucky to get to work on time and even luckier to arrive home at a reasonable hour. My description of travelling on these lines is a typical occurrence for commuters who use Liverpool Street and Fenchurch Street stations.

What is more, the rolling stock used on those lines is dreadful old stuff. Whenever I travel in these trains, I feel I need a wash and brush-up on arriving at the terminal, so dusty and dirty are the seats and carriage walls.

This debate is about how we might use private investment to improve the railway system, and already we could allow private operators to run services over BR lines. We could thereby slot in many more trains. Ample people exist to do this. Reference has been made to the Orient express operation. Those concerned with that operate on other lines, too. There are other companies, including Tiphook plc and Foster Yeoman plc, which are able and willing to do this work.

The present dirty old carriages could be improved. Allied Lyons plc recently paid about half the cost of refurbishing coaches on the Waterloo-City line in return for having the company's logo on the outside of the coaches, as is done with the red buses. There is no reason why that type of action should not be taken immediately, even before we get new rolling stock.

My hon. Friend the Minister will be aware that there is a surplus of drivers, so there is no reason for trains to stop in the middle of nowhere because there is no driver. Far more are trained than we need, and young qualified drivers

[Mrs. Teresa Gorman]

often wait years for promotion, which is on the basis of age. Sometimes they have to wait until they are 50 and have only 15 years left. If some of them became private contract drivers with licences, they could come in and take over trains when other drivers reach the end of their schedule. We could also have self-employed porters. In America they do a deal with the passenger on the cost of carrying the luggage and are happy to work on a self-employed basis. Computer technology could do much to improve timetabling.

The platform at Billericay has holes so big that people trip and have serious accidents. We could privatise the maintenance of stations as well as the track. And while we are waiting around for the trains, why should we not have shopping facilities? Every train station could be a mini-concourse of the kind found at Heathrow and Gatwick airports, where people can buy all kinds of bits and pieces. There are so many ways in which the private sector could inject capital straight away and improve the lot of those who travel on those lines.

Finally, I wish to put in a little word for myself. I often travel by rail. As I have said, I enjoy it. I often travel first class, especially if the person inviting me is prepared to pay for the ticket. First-class travel is expensive. It can cost more to visit Hazel Grove than Paris or Barcelona if one pays the full fare of £85, and what does one get for it? There is no reclining seat, no decent selection of food, no in-service magazines, newspapers, muzak or video, or any of the other services provided by British Airways for the same price. I hope that, without the need for primary legislation, my hon. Friend the Minister will think of my poor commuters going up and down those two lines and do what he can straight away to bring in private enterprise and make their lives happier.

1.17 am

Mr. Robert Hughes (Aberdeen, North): I am glad that the hon. Member for Wyre (Mr. Mans) has raised the subject of rail privatisation, as it needs to be properly debated. The Government have been far too reticent about their plans. On Tuesday, the Secretary of State chided the Labour party for not having a transport policy. As he said that he had read every word of our policy review, I give the right hon. Gentleman 100 per cent. for diligence but zero for comprehension as he clearly did not understand a word of what he read. Our policy, which I believe is well supported by most people, is that the railways, like all forms of transport and all service industries, exist to provide for the customer and the user, whether individual or corporate and whether in terms of the economy, regional development or whatever. The main purpose is to provide a service.

The problem is that we are getting privatisation by stealth, which is distorting the whole transport market. As soon as there is the slightest possibility of money being made, private capital is brought in to siphon off the gravy. As a result, morale within British Rail is debilitated. How can one expect initiative from British Rail when it is told that it will be left with the dross and that the only way to survive is to sell off anything that is any good, and constantly retrench?

Comparisons have been made with British Airways and the British Airports Authority. The only excuse for privatisation of the BAA was that it would be able to go out and build hotels, car parks and shops. The hon. Member for Keighley (Mr. Waller), who has such an interest in the Settle-Carlisle line, said that the problem was that British Rail was prevented from doing certain things. That is what needs to be cured. It is not a matter of privatisation but of allowing British Rail to use its initiative and expand. It was forced to sell off its hotels, but it ought to be able to go back into that sector and provide a service if it wishes. In our view, this is the way forward.

The paucity of the Government's policy is amply illustrated by their decision for the Settle-Carlisle line. Everyone knows and accepts that the line should be kept open. Everyone says so. The Secretary of State for Transport accepts that it should be kept open. Even the Secretary of State for the Environment accepts that it should be kept open. The only trouble is that the Cabinet decided that the Secretary of State for Transport should lose, that the Secretary of State for the Environment should be the winner, and that there should be a private enterprise solution.

The so-called dowry—the subsidy for the private section solution—is to be provided by the public sector. I have seen the letter of the Secretary of State for the Environment in which he states that the Government should provide the money to keep the line open, but adds that the last thing that they should so is make it available to British Rail. That is dogma gone mad. The sooner that the Secretary of State and the Minister of State realise that, the better. I hope that they will fight for British Rail and for the passenger.

The deregulation of bus services and the privatisation of the National Bus Company, for example, brought a poorer service for those who are on the periphery. We know—*[Interruption.]* I can understand that at this time of night Conservative Members are unwilling to face reality. The trouble is that they take their dogma and their blinkers through the daylight as well. The problem is that we are dealing——

Mr. Cryer: Conservative Members do not want to know.

Mr. Hughes: I ask my hon. Friend not to heckle. That goes for Conservative Members as well. I am trying to finish my speech.

Instead of endeavouring to provide a service for the public and the nation, the Government are concerned about service for the moneylender. That is the only thing that matters to them. It is that attitude that is destroying the transport system. The Channel tunnel and the concept of spreading benefits throughout the country and not only to Kent, which for some reason does not want it, or to London, where there are problems, will fail because the Government will not accept that the railways are part of the transport system. They will not give priority to service and they will not make available the necessary investment. They will not allow British Rail to use initiative. For all these reasons, British Rail is failing. The new Minister of State can make his mark in the Department if he casts aside all the dogma and past practice and considers seriously developing the railways.

1.23 am

The Minister for Public Transport (Mr. Michael Portillo): The hon. Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hughes) paid tribute to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport for his diligence in reading the Labour party's policy on these matters. In the 72 hours that I have held my present office it has not been my highest priority to mug up on Labour party policy. I have not been encouraged to do so by the statement that the market has been distorted by private capital. That is such an extraordinary statement that I am not tempted to read on.

I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Wyre (Mr. Mans) on initiating the debate. Two things have become evident to me. First, it is impossible to ignore the spontaneous eruption of opinion on the Government Benches in favour of further privatisation. The full Benches behind me, even in the middle of the night, testify to how strongly that opinion is felt. Secondly, it will be impossible for me to ignore the Settle-Carlisle railway, which will be a major concern of mine in the months to come.

I must disappoint my hon. Friends by saying that I have no major announcement to make, such as the preparation of a Green Paper. That will be a disappointment to my hon. Friends the Members for Dover (Mr. Shaw) and for York (Mr. Gregory), as well as to my hon. Friend the Member for Billericay (Mrs. Gorman), who showed us tonight her clean clothes and her entrepreneurial inventiveness. I congratulate her on that.

We listened to the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer), who said that the railways were short of finance because of Government policy. No investment proposal since 1983 has been rejected by the Government. If there were a shortage of finance because of Government constraints, surely that would be an argument for privatisation. I found the hon. Gentleman's argument puzzling.

My hon. Friend the Member for Stroud (Mr. Knapman) quoted a speech that was 41 years old. I have to say that it had a fresher feel to it than the speech by the hon. Member for Bradford, South. My hon. Friend the Member for Skipton and Ripon (Mr. Curry) was very concerned about the Settle-Carlisle railway, as indeed was the hon. Member for Bradford, South. I recognise the serious concerns about that, and I look forward to applying my mind to the problems that confront us.

I shall take into account some of the points that my hon. Friend has made, and when I meet the local authorities, as I shall before long, I shall mention what he has said. I shall consider carefully his comments about the lack of available information. I am also happy to concede to him that as the timetable change in any case occurs in mid-May 1989, it seems reasonable that if closure is decided on it should not occur until then. That extends the period in which we can seek a private sector solution, although in my view it is still right for the new evidence on hardship to come forward under the timetable so that we can reach final decisions with a fair degree of urgency.

I very much agreed with the general defence of privatisation policies produced by my hon. Friend the Member for Wyre. Successive Governments have attempted to grapple with the poor performance of nationalised industries through increasingly stringent control frameworks. The cumulative effect has been to create a set of external stimuli which, in the absence of real competitive forces, try to provide pressure similar to that normally provided by market mechanisms. The intention behind the Government's privatisation and competition policy is to replace the surrogate market with the real market.

Privatisation is intended to benefit customers, employees and the economy as a whole. The customers benefit from greater efficiency, which then results in lower prices, wider choice and better service. For employees, privatisation means working in a company with clear objectives, the means to achieve them and rewards for success. The economy benefits through higher returns on capital in the privatised industries, which can no longer pre-empt resources from elsewhere in the economy but must compete for funds in the open market.

Let me say in parenthesis that no better defence of the Government's privatisation programme has ever been made than that made by my right hon. Friend, now the Secretary of State for Social Security, back in 1983. It still remains a remarkable statement about our objectives.

I am proud to join the Department of Transport, which has a most impressive privatisation record. Let me say to my hon. Friend the Member for Stamford and Spalding (Mr. Davies) that there are many examples of the vicious circle being broken in the past. The Department has privatised the National Freight Consortium, Associated British Ports, British Airways and the British Airports Authority, and has a major privatisation programme for the subsidiaries of the National Bus Company. That leaves three industries in the Department of Transport—the Civil Aviation Authority, which I believe is in a category of its own, London Regional Transport, and British Rail.

I stress that we have no plans to privatise British Rail at present, and we are constantly reviewing our long-term options. None is ruled out, as has been made clear successively by my right hon. Friend and my predecessor, my hon. Friend the Member for Hampshire, North-West (Sir D. Mitchell), to whom such a generous tribute has been paid not only tonight but during our debate the other day.

Many issues need further study. We need to examine regulation in monopolies and arrangements for subsidy of loss-making services. In the meantime, as so many of my hon. Friends have said, the priority is to improve British Rail's service to the customer and to increase efficiency. Good progress is being made, with dependence on grant being reduced, productivity increased and substantial investment being made to improve the quality of service.

The objectives set out and agreed between my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport—now Secretary of State for Social Security—and the British Railways Board call for a series of vigorous measures to broaden the participation of the private sector in providing services to the railway, and for British Rail to establish specific programmes to that end. Private sector involvement has been increasing over the past few years, and I am very pleased with that. It is now quite extensive, with British Rail spending some £1·3 billion annually with private companies, out of a total expenditure of £3·3 billion.

Private caterers compete with Travellers Fare at eight major stations and private companies operate alone at 90 other stations. The private sector also provides prepared food for on-train catering and about 20 private on-train

[Mr. Michael Portillo]

trolley services are now operating. Total private sector involvement in property development is running at about £1 billion.

My hon. Friends will be familiar with earlier sell-offs, which include Sealink, British Transport Hotels, Hovercraft, British Transport Advertising and Doncaster wagon works. That policy will continue, and the House will be aware that British Rail will be issuing a BREL information package shortly to a number of prospective purchasers. Today, the executive directors of BREL made an announcement about their plans for a management and employee buy-out, in which they would be supported by ASEA Brown-Boveri and Trafalgar House. Naturally we welcome all serious expressions of interest in bidding for BREL, although it is too soon to say who the successful purchaser will be. Our approval will be needed for the eventual sale and we shall take all relevant factors into account.

With our agreement, BR is preparing to invite offers for Travellers Fare. That will give the new owners greater freedom to develop the business and should be good for the customer and good for the railway. I thought that there was a certain obsessiveness with food and catering in some of my hon. Friends' remarks. Therefore, I know that they will be interested in that information. British Rail will be ready to invite bids in September and it hopes to complete the sale before the end of this financial year.

The reason why we are able to discuss BR privatisation is that it has made progress under firm Government guidelines and with taxpayer investment. Two other things, however, were necessary—first, the determination of Ministers since 1979 to move industries into the private sector and to stimulate competition; and, secondly, the presence of opinion formers who created the climate in which such enlightened changes could be made. Such opinion formers have been with us tonight on the Benches behind me. I congratulate all my hon. Friends who have made their voices loudly heard.

Overseas Aid and Development

1.31 am

Mr. Tom Clarke (Monklands, West): Notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, I welcome the presence of the Minister for Overseas Development and my hon. Friend the Member for Eccles (Miss Lestor). It is important to have this debate, especially in the light of some of the replies that the Minister has given my hon. Friend the Member for Eccles and other hon. Members recently.

It is appropriate to discuss, in as much detail as time will allow, what the figures, statistics and all the rest that the Minister has offered mean in terms of the problems of poverty in the Third world and the Government's response to them.

I do not know how many letters the Minister has received since he took over the Department, but I suspect that the one that will be foremost in his mind will be the one that began, "Dear Chris". It was an open letter published in the *Sunday Telegraph* on the Sunday after the Minister's appointment, and it was from his predecessor, the right hon. Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison). I am sure that the Minister will not be surprised if I remind him that, in that open letter, his right hon. Friend had some interesting things to say. In the quietness of the hour we can reflect on what the right hon. Gentleman said and compare it with the Minister's record in office. His right hon. Friend then advised:

"Nor will you be plagued with adjournment debates"

Therefore, it is right that we should be having this one.

His right hon. Friend also said:

"The *Guardian* over-stated it when they said that you seem 'to have been sadly despatched to the saltmines of overseas aid'."

In one of the most acute exercises in open government, the right hon. Gentleman said:

"I've no doubt Geoffrey will fight the battle well. I only hope that the Prime Minister, having put you there, will be sympathetic. She has many qualities, but I can't say that over-enthusiasm for the aid programme is one of them."

He continued:

"I couldn't help thinking, as we had our amiable farewell chat last Wednesday, that it was about the first time that I had ever had a conversation with her about what I'd been up to at the ODA."

The other day, the Minister assured the House that he had had a person-to-person confrontation with the Prime Minister. Perhaps tonight we shall hear how much she said, how much he said and whether the discussion influenced Government policy.

The most telling sentence in that letter, to which I want to address myself tonight, stated:

"We simply don't have a large enough programme by international standards."

I put it to the Minister, who is highly regarded in all parts of the House—I hope I do not damage his prospects by saying that—that we have seen no improvement in that regard since he took over this crucial responsibility.

The debate is vital and absolutely necessary because of the Government's quite appalling record on overseas aid. We have a moral responsibility to aid less developed countries. As a country, we benefit from that aid through world growth and economic interdependence. That was what the Brandt report was about. The House will not forget that one of the biggest lobbies ever at the Palace of Westminster was when more than 10,000 people urged

upon the House the necessity to accept the principles of the Brandt report. One gets the impression that the Government hardly know that it exists.

The United Nations target figure, the internationally agreed target, is that developed countries should aim to contribute 0·7 per cent. of their GNP to less developed countries as official development assistance. In all candour, the Government's approach is an absolute disgrace and I hope that the Minister will clarify the Government's position.

The United Nations set a target not of real percentage increase, but of a fixed proportion of GNP, as my hon. Friend the Member for Eccles has consistently reminded the Minister. The principle is that, as western economies and western incomes grow, simultaneously, so will our commitment to development and overseas aid. The GNP of the United Kingdom increased by 2¼ per cent. last year, but that was hardly reflected in our aid budget; hence, our proportion fell. Countries that accept the United Nations target figure of 0·7 per cent.—indeed, countries that accept the principle of paying a fixed proportion of GNP—are saying that we should tie the health of the Third world to our wealth.

The target figure of 0·7 per cent. is, to some extent, our income tax due to the Third world. A strange parallel can be drawn between the Government's approach to aid and United Kingdom taxation. They have made it easier for richer people to feel that they have no responsibility to the poor by cutting the proportion of individual incomes used to fund services. Similarly, we, as a rich nation, have cut the proportion of our national income, our GNP, used to fund world development.

The lack of logic in the Government's approach can be seen by using a tax analogy. If a person's income increases, we expect him to pay a fixed proportion in tax. We do not tell him to pay slightly more tax than last year to keep pace with inflation. We do not write to the tax inspector to say that our income increased by 2¼ per cent. last year so we will pay 5 per cent. more in tax. That is nonsense. If we accept that domestically, why should we take this approach to the Third world? Just as income tax is the money that members of the community pay to meet their responsibilities to the community, overseas aid is the money that members of the international community pay to meet their responsibilities to it. So the Government's record is a scandal and their excuses, which we hear every third week on Mondays, for 10 minutes in the House, are tawdry.

Let us hear no more of real terms increases; let us hear when we shall increase the proportion of our GNP that goes to the Third world. That proportion has fallen by 45 per cent. since 1979. On 20 June, my hon. Friend the Member for Eccles asked:

"as the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer repeatedly stand at the Dispatch Box and say how well off the country is, could we not expect more of that wealth to go to the Third world? Instead, the amount is declining at a time when the countries that we visited are in desperate need." —[*Official Report*, 20 June 1988; Vol. 135, c. 830.]

Our record as a member of the international community is appalling. That is nowhere more evident than in the United Nations. In a 1987 league table of OECD contributors to UNICEF, the United Nations children's fund, the United Kingdom came second from bottom. Our per capita contribution of 34 cents compared with Sweden's $9·41. So to say that net aid is growing in real terms is not to give the whole picture. Small increases now are still not making up for the real-terms losses the Government have caused over the past eight years. And the Government's published expenditure plans to 1991 still leave real net aid from the United Kingdom 12 per cent. below that of 1979. That is the first answer to the Government's pathetic excuses.

The second, more important reason why the Government's opinions do not ring true is that real-terms increases do not really matter. They are much less significant than measurements of the proportion of GNP, given that in 1979 this country was well on the way to reaching the 0·7 per cent. target. The figure then was an internationally respectable 0·51 per cent. of GNP. Much of the credit for that is due to Judith Hart, who did so much at the Department when it still meant something in terms of Government policy——

The Minister for Overseas Development (Mr. Chris Patten): Tell that to the right hon. Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Healey).

Mr. Clarke: If my right hon. Friend were here he would have every reason to be proud of his record in this area —much more so than the present Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Minister should tell that to his right hon. Friend.

Mr. Patten: There is one important difference between the former Chancellor and my right hon. Friend, the present one. My right hon. Friend can go to the IMF and help it to lend money to other countries. The right hon. Member for Leeds, East went to it to borrow money.

Mr. Clarke: I look forward to an economic debate. I would be stretching the point, as the Minister tried to, if I were to argue about borrowing. I have many constituents who have been forced to borrow and borrow by this Government, so the Chancellor is not in a position to lecture Labour Members.

I remind the Minister that overseas development is his responsibility. Under his stewardship, the amount of aid given has fallen and continues to do so. The 1987 figures show that the proportion of the United Kingdom's GNP given to aid is only 0·28 per cent. The proportion of GNP given has fallen by 45 per cent. Of the 17 members of the OECD's development assistance committee, that fall is by far the largest. Those countries have Chancellors, or their equivalents, who would not dream of trying to justify the unjustifiable to their Parliaments. I hope that the Minister will not attempt to do so.

That fall should be contrasted with a 300 per cent. increase in the proportion of GNP by Italy, a 138 per cent. increase by Finland and a 43 per cent. increase by Sweden. Other increases have been given by countries such as Denmark, Norway, Japan, Holland and even the United States of America. No wonder the Minister attempted to distract us by trying to introduce issues that are not relevent to his brief.

The United Kingdom is now 14th out of the 17 countries in the OECD league table. In 1979, when my right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Healey) and Judith Hart shared responsibility for these matters, we were seventh and set to climb higher. Under this Government, who have a wretched record, we always look as though we will drop lower in the table.

[Mr. Clarke]

In a reply to a written question asked by me, the Minister stated that the Government had set no target for reaching the 0·7 per cent. figure. He said that it

"depends on developments in the economy and other claims on resources."—[*Official Report*, 27 April 1988; Vol. 132 c. 168.]

Since the Government's record has been not one of gradually moving to the 0·7 per cent. but one of decline, perhaps the Minister will say when the United Kingdom will reach 0·2, 0·1 or even 0 per cent. People used to believe that 0·4 or 0·3 per cent. were magic barriers below which the United Kingdom would never fall. The Government have proved that such naive optimism was quite unfounded.

The Government's stock excuse is that our aid budget is growing in real terms. That is an interesting defence, and no doubt we will hear it again tonight.

Mr. Chris Patten: The hon. Gentleman said that he thought it more important to concentrate on increasing the proportion of GNP given to aid than increasing the aid programme in real terms. I cannot believe that he thinks that. Would he like to reconsider his remarks and say whether he believes that what matters above all is the proportion of GNP and that having a sufficiently strong economy to increase aid in real terms is not of any consequence whatever?

Mr. Clarke: Constant prices are important, which is why the Minister seldom, if ever, refers to them. If the Government have changed their minds about the proportion of GNP given and the United Nations' target, they have a responsibility to tell us. They have not yet done so, but the debate will give them the opportunity.

A modest increase in real terms this year looks generous on paper, but we should remember that in constant 1986-87 prices United Kingdom net aid fell from £1,395 million in 1978-79 to £1,198 million in 1987-88. That is a decrease in real terms—in cash terms—of about 14 per cent. in the contributions made before the Government took office. How the Minister can justify any of those figures is beyond me. The debate will give him an opportunity to do so.

The United Kingdom's record is just as bad in other United Nations agencies. We followed the United States of America and pulled out of UNESCO, cutting ourselves adrift from the process of reform currently transforming that organisation. We stand 24th in a table of 24 OECD members in contributions to UNESCO. We are joint bottom with the United States. We are 16th out of 24 in per capita contributions to the World Health Organisation. Our pathetic and miserable 21 cents per head per year is half that of Switzerland, which is in first place. Presumably the Minister is proud of that record. I notice that he is not so keen to intervene on that point, although I am happy to give way.

Mr. Chris Patten: Would the hon. Gentleman care to give us the figures for where we stand in volume terms in our contributions to the WHO? I am sure that he has the figures and is knowledgeable on that point.

Mr. Clarke: I shall give the Minister figures in the same way as he gave me figures. There were times when he was somewhat coy in response to the open questions he has put to me and which I have put to him.

We are 17th out of 24 in per capita contributions to the Food and Agriculture Organisation, and we contribute only 3 per cent. of the per capita figure given by Denmark, which is again in first place. I wonder whether that figure pleases the Minister and whether he regards that as progress.

If we are to continue to follow every move of United States foreign policy like timid and obedient poodles, we should also bear in mind that in league tables for the World Health Organisation, the Food and Agriculture Organisation, UNESCO and UNICEF, in no case does the United States contribute more. Perhaps the Government are racing the United States to the bottom of the heap.

The Government's response to aid is selective in the extreme. In the case of Nicaragua, in 1986 we gave less than $5,000 in bilateral aid for technical co-operation, while Italy gave over $7 million. In 1987 we could still find only £47,000 for technical co-operation, co-financed with British voluntary groups. That is a pittance when compared to the scale of suffering caused by the Contra terrorist war paid for by the United States. Our contribution to Nicaragua, in contrast to our contribution to Costa Rica and even Honduras, is far from generous. We are giving less than we gave to the Somoza regime, which left its people impoverished. The Government's attitude to poverty and health care in Nicaragua is somewhat inconsistent with their attitude elsewhere.

The Minister should be aware—it is unusual for a Minister to ask me questions on statistics, but I am always willing to help when I can—that we are second from bottom of the league table in our OECD contributions to Nicaragua. That is what I was told in his parliamentary answer to me.

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): Before my hon. Friend leaves the subject of Nicaragua, is he aware that the Government have made no discernible move to assist Nicaragua in the difficulties it faces in borrowing money on the international money markets because it is given such a low credit rating? Is my hon. Friend aware that the British Government have taken part in giving it that low credit rating, despite its excellent record in the repayment of debt?

Mr. Clarke: Since the Minister became excited about borrowing a few moments ago, if he catches your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he may respond to that important point.

On Kampuchea, I asked the Minister a few days ago whether he planned to organise an international relief effort. He said that the Government were considering what response, if any, they will be making to the Food and Agriculture Organisation's appeal for food aid for Kampuchea. I hope that the Minister will take this opportunity to let us know whether the Government will respond to the FAO appeal; how much food they will give; how much our contribution will be in comparison to those of our OECD colleagues and friends, and whether the Government will stop food aid going to representatives of the discredited Khmer Rouge.

On Mozambique, I am sure that the House will accept that that area currently experiences dire poverty. It has one of the highest levels of infant mortality in the world—123 per thousand in 1985. Much of that relates specifically to the policy of destabilisation by South Africa which has contributed to civil war. Therefore, as the Minister speaks

on behalf of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, I must ask him what steps the Government are taking to prevent South Africa's destabilisation of the Mozambique Government.

I turn briefly to Europe and its role in development. Lorenzo Natali, the European Community's Development Commissioner, has made proposals to allow European Community involvement in microeconomic planning in the African, Caribbean and Pacific states. Those proposals are the basis for the EEC negotiations on the 4th Lomé convention, to cover the period after 1990. It would be interesting to hear the Minister's views on Europe's role in development planning and what opinion, if any, the Government have on Mr. Natali's detailed proposals. Among other things, those proposals would allow more co-ordination between the European development fund, the World Bank and the IMF on the ACP adjustment.

It would be impossible to take part in an important debate of this kind without referring, as I am sure hon. Members and especially my hon. Friends will wish to do, to famine in Africa. The House has had the benefit of what I feel was an excellent report by the Select Committee called "Famine in the Horn of Africa". Difficult though the Minister has made it for me to do so, I should like to say that the Government's response was constructive. What they said should be welcomed. The report rightly identifies one of the major causes of famine as not only the drought but civil war and conflict.

We are especially worried about Eritrea and Tigré. Therefore, we would welcome any urgent action that the Government feel free to take to find a solution to a problem which the House will accept is extremely difficult. However, if the Government decide to increase our contribution to Ethiopia, Chad, Sudan and sub-Saharan Africa, they would have outstanding support. The Minister must know that 76 per cent. of people in an opinion poll said that we should give the same or more, as against 18 per cent. who said that we should give less.

People are concerned that when funding is made available, whether on a voluntary basis or by Government, we should concentrate on measures to deal with drought, on irrigation and on agriculture, and not always on prestigious projects such as dams, airports and power stations. People accept that industrial development and agriculture are extremely important, which is why they take great exception to some of the food surpluses in the EEC and the failure to distribute adequately to those in need. People accept that the quality of aid is important. Therefore, we ask how much of our aid to Africa is going to agriculture, health care, industrial development and social needs. We urge the need for monitoring in those respects.

The absence of the political will to deal with the structural causes of poverty by Governments of North and South is all to obvious. The number of hungry people has roughly doubled over the past 12 years. The House must face the reality that 500 million people—one eighth of humanity—are suffering from chronic malnutrition tonight.

There is also the population problem.

Mr. Corbyn: While one welcomes aid that gets through to help the poorest people in the poorest parts of the world, does my hon. Friend share my concern that some policies, particularly those adopted by the World Bank in its advice to poor countries in receipt of loans it organises, force on those countries economic models that often involve cuts in public expenditure which make the living conditions of people dependent on public services, health, education or housing worse because those countries are pursuing some economic Valhalla similar to that pursued by the present Government? Does he believe that the Government should consider their role in multinational agencies such as the World Bank as well as my hon. Friend's obvious and quite correct concern about the lack of spending on overseas aid in general?

Mr. Clarke: Again my hon. Friend makes a very solid point. I hope that he will be fortunate enough to catch your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I will try to provide that opportunity by drawing my remarks to a close.

There is clearly great concern about the debt crisis, interest rates and commodity prices. Those problems are very important for developing countries that are struggling to assert themselves and release their peoples from poverty. That is the challenge to the House, to the Minister and to the Government's international policy. Developing countries have to face that challenge daily.

I believe that the great mass of the British people in every part of the United Kingdom feel that we could and should be making a tangible contribution to the solution of those problems. However, they bitterly regret the fact that, at a time when overseas aid is declining to very low levels, we still find opportunities to export arms and military equipment. Perhaps we should take a sober look at precisely what we are doing. Those priorities and the policies that the Government have pursued so far do not reflect the approach of the British people, which is not only generous, but takes into account the potential for development by the peoples of developing countries. If the Government ignore that potential, the needs of others and world poverty, they do so at their peril.

2.3 am

Miss Joan Lestor (Eccles): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) on getting this item on to the political agenda tonight. As he said, this subject does not command a great deal of time in the House. We have little time for it at Question Time and few opportunities to make speeches on it. I am indebted to my hon. Friend for the detail in his speech and for his dedication to the subject over the 12 months that I have been involved in it as Labour Front-Bench spokesperson.

I think that the Minister and I share a deep concern for the problems of two countries that we have visited recently, namely, Mozambique and Ethiopia. Within the limits set on him by the Budget, the Minister has done much to increase the amount of assistance and aid to the very sad and war-torn country of Mozambique, which is being destabilised and is suffering as a result of South African aggression. I believe that he has tried, within the limits, to meet some of the needs and requests that have been made.

We are left with the situation to which my hon. Friend the Member for Monklands, West referred. When the target was set by the United Nations at 0·7 per cent. of GNP, it was accepted and agreed that the industrialised countries would move towards that target. Our share will decrease and whether aid goes up in real terms will be irrelevant, because the gap between the rich and poor nations will become wider. We become richer, but we do not share our riches with the developing world.

[Miss Joan Lestor]

The United Nations picked a percentage of GNP—which happened to be 0·7 per cent.—to meet that real difficulty. As my hon. Friend said, when the Labour party left office in 1979 we had reached a figure of 0·52 per cent. of GNP. Now, as the Minister said, as a proportion of GNP the budget is 0·28 per cent. He may say that during the past year or two in real terms there has been some increase here or there, but that is not true in all cases—and we are slipping away from the target. It is legitimate to ask the Minister whether the Government are still aiming at that target. If they are, why is it that we are slipping so much behind that target, when the Government are constantly telling us that we are improving our economic position every day and that the country is better off now than it has been for many years?

The gross public expenditure on aid is down from 1·2 per cent. to 0·90 per cent. That figure shows that, although the Minister may talk about the figures in real terms, we are giving a smaller part of a larger cake. If GNP is increasing, as we are told it is, we are giving less to the developing world.

We can take as an example the bilateral aid given to the member states of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference. Gross bilateral aid to those countries has fallen to 64 per cent. of its 1979 level in real terms. We are now giving much more in bilateral aid in real terms to Mozambique. I have gladly acknowledged that. However, in real terms, aid to the other countries involved with the Development Co-ordination Conference, such as Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia, is decreasing, and their needs are great, too.

When the front-line states were formed as a result of the military, economic and social destabilisation by the racist regime of South Africa, it was acknowledged that, although many of those countries were, or could be, rich in some natural resources, and perhaps under normal circumstances would be able to develop, the circumstances prevailing were not normal. In addition to the problems of economic debt and the national hazards of drought and floods, the military war of South Africa has taken its toll, especially against Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Angola, and the economies of all the front-line states have suffered from South Africa's policies of apartheid and destabilisation. I know that the Minister, when he was in Mozambique recently, saw examples of that, and we have already exchanged views on this across the Chamber, so I shall not repeat them.

Women and children in front-line states have been the innocent victims of this aggression. In 1986 UNICEF estimated that 140,000 children under five years of age were killed as a result of the war in Angola and Mozambique. That leaves out of account the hundreds of children who have died as a result of famine, drought and other causes. Because of the dislocation of population in the region, 500,000 people are now threatened with starvation, and 8·5 million have lost their homes.

South Africa continues to block food and emergency relief supplies and, as a result, some 200,000 people died between 1983 and 1985. Women and children are particularly vulnerable and daily suffer the most horrendous atrocities committed by MNR bandits and South African forces. It is hard to believe what is happening until one listens to the people saying what has happened to them and sees the villages that have been destroyed and the children who have been mutilated.

The Minister has done a great deal to assist Mozambique within the confines of his budget, but the fact remains that unless the Government are prepared to take on South Africa and the sanctions and investment issue, we are simply bandaging the results of South African aggression.

The result of the wars and the migration of male labour to the South African mines is that many women have been left to maintain essential services. They face additional problems for, despite the rains in Mozambique, there has been a shortage of labour. There have been other complications, as South Africa has suddenly decided that it will employ fewer Mozambicans in the mines, thus again destabilising an economy that has relied heavily on people in some areas being employed in the mines. With the destruction left by the bandits, the result is horrific.

When the South African Development Co-ordination Conference was formed in 1980, it was a positive attempt by front-line states, including Lesotho, Malawi and Swaziland, to break their dependence on South Africa and to promote and plan the economic development of the region. That is why I find it so distressing that those countries are suffering a decline in real terms in the aid available to them. Their needs and suffering are no less than those of Mozambique.

My hon. Friend the Member for Monklands, West has said much of what I intended to say, and I am grateful to him for quoting answers to some of the questions that I have asked and some of my comments. I shall not delay the House by repeating what he said. Of course I am pleased that the Government have tried to deal with some of the debt problem by continuing the Labour Government's policy of converting loans into grants. I was pleased when, a few weeks ago, the Prime Minister finally acknowledged from the Dispatch Box that that was a Labour Government initiative implemented by Judith Hart.

The debt crisis hits at the standard of living of a large number of people throughout the world. UNICEF reckons that income per head fell by 9 per cent. in Latin America in the five years between 1980 and 1985 in 17 out of the 23 countries there. There is rising malnutrition in Chile, Uruguay and Brazil. There are problems with the EEC's common agricultural policy for sugar from the Caribbean, and the over-production of beef in Europe is having an effect on the Botswana economy.

I know that the Minister will talk about the increased money that he has given certain countries during the past few months, but when Italy can increase its aid budget by 300 per cent. as a proportion of gross national product, whereas ours has declined by 45 per cent. as a proportion of GNP, there is something sadly wrong. The Government cannot have it both ways.

In 1983 the Prime Minister answered a world development movement questionnaire that was sent to parliamentary candidates. I remember filling it in, and I am sure that others do. The questionnaire asked many questions but, when asked whether the Government would move towards the United Nations target of 0·7 per cent. of GNP given in aid, the Prime Minister told one of her constituents in her own fair hand:

"We will move towards the UN Target of 0·7 per cent. of GNP when economic circumstances permit."

If the country is doing as well as we are told it is, why do economic circumstances not permit us to increase our aid budget as a proportion of GNP?

2.14 am

The Minister for Overseas Development (Mr. Chris Patten): I am delighted to have the opportunity to discuss this matter which has been so thoughtfully provided by the hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) on a Friday morning just before the holidays. I am only sorry that the Opposition do not choose to use one of their Supply days for an aid debate because then we could have an even fuller House to listen to our discussions. I shall not allow myself, whatever the hour of the morning, to become waspish and think, let alone speak, the suggestion that perhaps the Opposition might have as much difficulty getting their Members to attend such a debate as they have on other issues. I would not for a moment wish to say anything like that from the Dispatch Box. This is a welcome opportunity to talk about aid.

Whatever arguments there may be about the size of our aid programme—and I shall come to that with relish—there can be no argument about its quality. Certainly there is none outside Britain or in some of the multilateral institutions to which the hon. Gentleman referred and to which we make substantial cash contributions year after year. I shall be pleased to let the hon. Gentleman know about them at some time because plainly he is not as well acquainted with them as one might like. Our aid programme is widely recognised internationally for its quality and effectiveness.

Our aid is concentrated on the poorest countries. That is more the case than with Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development donors generally. In 1987, 81 per cent. of our bilateral aid went to countries with an income per head of less than $800—that is, International Development Association eligible countries. The major recipients include India and Bangladesh in Asia and Ghana, Kenya and Tanzania in Africa. The Commonwealth continues to provide an extremely important dimension to our overall aid programme.

The grant element of British aid in 1987 was 99·8 per cent. All our aid to the poorest countries is provided in the form of grants. Britain has led the way in forgiving past aid loans. In recent years we have played a leading role internationally in helping to develop new policies towards and solutions to the problems facing developing countries. Our views have carried weight because of our success in managing our economy. It is inconceivable—this is a point I raised in an intervention earlier—that we should be listened to in the same way if the International Monetary Fund were having to manage the British economy again. Our views have also carried weight because we are recognised as a serious donor, willing to reshape our programmes to meet new circumstances and to find additional resources for key initiatives, such as the debt initiative of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the IMF's structural adjustment facility. We have been, and will continue to be, a firm supporter of structural adjustment and economic policy reform.

I am not suggesting that we or the international financial institutions have all the answers, but I am sure that in too many countries, particularly in Africa, too many past policies have failed too many people. In particular, they have failed too many very poor people. That is why we have reshaped our long-term development assistance to Africa and backed our words with cash.

We are providing substantial balance of payments support for countries able to agree adjustment programmes with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. In the last finacial year we spent more than £90 million in bilateral programme aid. Last December, we pledged a further £250 million of bilateral programme aid for co-financing with the World Bank over the next three years to assist the poorest and most indebted countries of sub-Saharan Africa.

As I said in a widely unreported speech in Washington recently, structural adjustment is not a short course of curative medicine. I am sure that my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health would agree that, like all good preventive medicine, it has to become a way of life. That underlines the need both to find ways of protecting the vulnerable groups most immediately affected by adjustment programmes—often in the urban areas—and of improving the access of the poorest groups in society to health and education services through the process of structural adjustment. In Ghana, which has the longest track record of policy reform and which since 1983 has achieved an annual average growth of 5 per cent., we are associated with efforts to do both those things. I was pleased to have the opportunity of discussing them this week with the Prime Minister, Mr. Obeng.

We are as sensitive as anyone to the growing awareness of the need to take proper account of both the social and the environmental impact of our aid. The hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) has spoken in our past debates on the environmental impact of development. The Government's response to the Brundtland report "Our Common Future" was published on 22 July. It underlines what we are doing about aid and the environment. We have introduced specific measures to strengthen our internal procedures ensuring that the environmental impact of our aid programme is given the weight that it deserves in evaluation, appraisal and so on. We have made arrangements for tapping outside expertise on environmental issues. We are funding specific work such as the Nepal study of the interrelationship between environmental degradation and macroeconomic policies.

Last week I approved over £14 million for a third slum improvement project in India—this time in Indore. I have seen for myself the first of those projects in Hyderabad, and an extremely successful project it is.

Mr. Tom Clarke: Now that the Minister has regained his composure, may I thank him for the interesting information that he is giving the House, notwithstanding the fact that most of it was already available to us in the excellent handouts that come from the Department? Before he concludes his speech, will he tell the House whether the Government still intend to aim at the United Nations figure of 0·7 per cent. of GNP?

Mr. Patten: I assure the hon. Gentleman that I intend to deal with that point. As he laboured the issue, it would be discourteous of me not to give it the attention that it deserves, to do so with relish and to point out to him some of the intellectual shortcomings of his argument.

Mr. Corbyn: Before the Minister leaves the subject of the environment, will he tell us how successful he has been in persuading the World Bank in particular to ensure that

[Mr. Corbyn]

aid programmes or development programmes that it helps to finance are much more environmentally conscious than previous ones? I have in mind the environmental disasters that have happened in a large part of Brazil as a result of mining projects partly financed by the World Bank and the catastrophic consequences for the rest of the world unless something is done to prevent the destruction of the tropical rain forest there.

Mr. Patten: I do not think that it is going too far to suggest that a number of the environmental NGOs would concede that we have done as much as, or more than, any other bilateral donor in ensuring that these environmental issues are on the agenda for the World Bank in a more prominent place than they have been before. One of our most useful actions was to bring together the World Bank and a number of the environmental NGOs in a conference last year during which issues such as those to which the hon. Gentleman referred were discussed in what the press release might have described as a free and frank way.

These are immensely important issues, but it is important to recognise that some of those who criticise the World Bank on environmental grounds do not want any development to take place. They do not want the World Bank and international donors to spend more in developing countries. They believe that the people in those countries have a divine right to go on living in primitive conditions until the crack of doom. That is an easier proposition to advance if one lives in a comfortable suburb in Europe or North America than in dreadful conditions in a developing country.

The argument is not about growth or no growth. It is about growth that is environmentally, economically and socially sustainable, and the World Bank is acutely conscious of that, as we all should be because each year we are still desertifying an area of the planet the size of Nova Scotia and deforesting an area the size of Yugoslavia.

As I said, I was able to see for myself the slum improvement project in Hyderabad. We have just announced our third project—the second was in Vizag—at Indore, and there are good examples of how one can make aid work to assist some of the most disadvantaged groups in society and at the same time make a positive impact on the environment. The project represents an integrated approach to improving the quality of life of about 80,000 slum dwellers, enhancing employment opportunities and giving children better education and health.

Running an effective aid programme requires not only right policies but much dedicated work around the world in the careful preparation of individual projects and programmes. The ODA is acknowledged to be one of the most professional of the bilateral aid agencies and, through our five development divisions and our posts abroad, we maintain an effective presence in the field. I have had the opportunity of seeing many of our aid officials in action and I congratulate them on what they achieve. I am sure that other hon. Members who have seen our aid programme in action, whatever their arguments about the size of it, will endorse that remark.

The hon. Member for Monklands, West referred to Nicaragua and said it was an especially deserving case which needed more generous support from us. Nicaragua is not one of the poorest developing countries. There are over 60 developing countries with lower incomes per head, and as per capita figures are of such concern to the hon. Gentleman I trust that that one will be of equal concern to him.

It is true that we do not give purely bilateral aid to Nicaragua on the scale of the earlier Labour Administration. British aid to that country peaked in 1977 when Somosa was in power there. I do not know whether there were political reasons for that or whether it was entirely coincidental. But the contributions that that Labour Administration made to the Somosa regime were, I am sure, greatly appreciated.

Mr. Tom Clarke: Tory Members who have just arrived should know that I referred to that in my speech, as well as to the regrettable decline under the Tory Government. As the Minister is talking about per capita figures, how does he justify the comparison between Nicaragua and Costa Rica?

Mr. Patten: The figures for Costa Rica and certain other central American countries include contributions that we make to regional institutions in those countries. In our total bilateral and multilateral contributions we pick up 20 per cent. of the substantial aid that Nicaragua receives from the European Community, which totalled £6·2 million in 1986.

Mr. David Ashby (Leicestershire, North-West): How does this country's aid to Nicaragua compare with that of Italy and Germany?

Mr. Patten: Speaking off the cuff, both Germany and Italy give a lot more bilateral aid to Nicaragua. Apart from the money that we put through the joint funding scheme for NGOs, our major contribution is the multilateral contribution through the European Community. I am usually pressed by the Opposition to ensure that our aid programme achieves the maximum poverty alleviation and that money is spent as much as possible in the poorest countries. Whatever the politics of the matter, the fact that there are 60 countries poorer than Nicaragua does not seem entirely irrelevant to the argument.

Mr. Corbyn: Before the Minister leaves the subject, will he come clean and admit that there are clear political reasons why the British Tory Government will not give aid to Nicaragua at the level that it needs and deserves because they do not like the process of reform, development and poverty removal that the Sandinista Government are doing their best to carry out? Will the Minister reconsider the position and provide the aid so desperately needed in Nicaragua, where many of the problems have been caused by the war and not for any other reasons?

Mr. Patten: It is perhaps even more relevant to wonder whether there were political reasons for the more substantial aid to Nicaragua in the past. I am content to rest my argument entirely on developmental grounds and to leave discussion of the political aspects to my right hon. and hon. Friends who are responsible for those matters.

Mr. Tom Clarke: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Patten: I will give way to the hon. Gentleman at every conceivable opportunity.

Mr. Clarke: I am always willing to rescue the Minister from the embarrassment thrust upon him by his own

alleged supporters. As Italy and Germany have a far better record than ours in terms of aid to Nicaragua, does the Minister believe that they were affected by the factors which he claims influenced the Labour Government?

Mr. Patten: I could troop through the House all those countries considerably poorer than Nicaragua where we have substantially larger aid programmes than Germany or Italy. For historical and other reasons, different countries' aid programmes have different profiles. For instance, 75 per cent. of our aid goes to Commonwealth countries. Alas, that is not true of German and Italian aid, however desirable it may seem to us. I think that in the next few weeks the hon. Gentleman will come to accept that there are historical reasons why some countries have larger aid programmes in central America than ours.

The hon. Member for Monklands, East referred to Cambodia, and I shall respond reasonably fully to his comments. As he suggested, the history of Cambodia over the past two decades has been one of appalling suffering. The bloody Khmer Rouge experiment in remodelling society has been appropriately described as taking Cambodia back to the year zero. The Vietnamese invasion, which was initially welcomed as instrumental in overthrowing the Khmer Rouge, compounded the problem of the Cambodian people by extending the invasion into a continued illegal occupation that has lasted for almost a decade. During this period we have refused to give development aid to Cambodia. We believe that aid would send the wrong signal of implicit support for Heng Samrin and help to prop up his regime. Instead, our aid has been directed to Cambodian refugees in the Thai border camps, who have been made homeless by the years of conflict. Since 1979, we have contributed more than £13 million, which has been channelled mainly through international agencies such as the Red Cross and the United Nations. We are the largest bilateral donor of such assistance.

We welcomed the recent tentative signs that various factions in the conflict may be moving towards a political settlement. It is too early to judge the outcome of the discussions in Indonesia, which have just finished. We have taken note of the announcement by Vietnam that it will be accelerating the withdrawal of its troops from Cambodia. According to some reports, as yet unconfirmed, the withdrawal will be complete by the end of 1989, or the first quarter of 1990. We hope that further progress will be made when China and the Soviet Union discuss Cambodia next month.

In view of these signs, however tentative, of movements in the political situation, I intend to examine closely our aid policy towards Cambodia. We have always been prepared to consider assisting any internationally organised relief effort that sought to provide humanitarian assistance within Cambodia. I therefore propose to contribute £100,000 to the Food and Agriculture Organisation appeal that was launched in May for Cambodia. We shall be examining also whether we should now provide some support for humanitarian aid for projects administered by British non-governmental organisations working in Cambodia. It is far too early to consider aid for reconstruction. We would be prepared to reconsider these matters when a Government acceptable to the majority of Cambodians is in place.

The hon. Member for Monklands, West referred to Europe. I set out in a speech at the Royal Commonwealth Society a couple of months ago, which he may have seen, our principal objectives for the Lomé renegotiation. I do not want to rehearse those again today. I agree with the hon. Gentleman's remarks about the importance of greater co-ordination between bilateral donors, bilateral donors and multilateral donors, and multilateral donors, even when they are separated by the Atlantic. It is important that the Commission and the Bretton Woods institutions engage in a closer dialogue on developmental objectives. That view is shared by Commission staff and by Vice-President Natali, who has made such a distinguished contribution to the development and strengthening of the Community's own substantial aid programme to which we contribute a large amount of money.

The hon. Member for Eccles (Miss Lestor)—I am coming to the question of gross national product—talked about African debt. Britain has been to the fore in advocating special measures for low-income debtor countries, chiefly in sub-Saharan Africa. The Toronto summit agreed on debt relief measures. The initiative behind that was launched by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the spring of 1987. I am delighted that at Toronto other creditor nations agreed to join us in providing interest rate relief or the taking of equivalent measures. Good progress has already been made in working out the detailed arrangements in the Paris Club. These involve ways of ensuring comparability between the concessions offered by different creditors. I hope that the final agreement will allow measures to be put into effect as soon as possible. It is clearly in the interests of African debtor countries that that should be so.

Finally, let me say a few words about the size of our aid programme. We inherited from the last Labour Government a level of total public expenditure that was simply not sustainable. I do not think that many members of the outgoing Labour Government in 1979 thought that it was sustainable, and I certainly do not think that the outgoing Chief Secretary to the Treasury thought so. Between 1979 and 1983 the priority had to be to get public expenditure under control, and aid could not be exempted from that. It was during that period that aid fell in real terms.

Between 1982-83 and last year, the aid budget was broadly constant in real terms. I am delighted that as a result of the last public expenditure round, or more properly as a result of our economic achievements, we are now planning for aid to grow in real terms. We are aiming for cash increases over our 1987-88 budget of £72 million this year, £140 million next year and £185 million the year after that. That reflects the fact that with a strong economy we can afford to do more, and the fact that, used in the right way, aid can be effective in enhancing economic growth and alleviating poverty. It also reflects the recognition that an effective aid programme is in Britain's own long-term political and economic interests. We have the seventh largest aid programme among OECD donors. My job is to continue to seek further improvement in its effectiveness as the best argument for ensuring that it continues to grow in real terms.

The whole argument of the hon. Member for Monklands, West and other Opposition Members is about the 0·7 per cent. target and the proportion of GNP that we spend on aid. The Opposition always avoid any mention of the target mentioned by the United Nations for official and

[Mr. Patten]

unofficial flows—the 1 per cent. target. I suspect that they do that because of our extraordinarily good record of private investment in developing countries.

Mr. Tom Clarke *rose*——

Mr. Patten: I keep on giving way to the hon. Gentleman. I am going to finish this point. The United Kingdom provides almost as much in private investment in developing countries as the rest of the European Community put together, but that does not suit Opposition Members' argument.

Let me now turn to the extraordinary proposition that it matters more to have a proportion of GNP increasing than to have real volume increasing. I have no doubt that, without doing anything to the volume of our aid programme, the Labour party, if in government, would ensure in a very short time that we had an increase in the percentage of GNP, because the growth rate would fall so rapidly. That is all that they would have to do.

Mr. Clarke *rose*——

Mr. Patten: I shall give way when I have finished.

Let us follow the hon. Gentleman's perverse argument to its logical conclusion. Let us take two countries. Country A increases the volume of its aid substantially year after year, but by not quite as much as its economy grows in percentage terms. That country is bad, in the hon. Gentleman's book. Country B, which has a low economic growth rate, increases its aid programme by miserable amounts year after year, but by slightly larger percentages than its increase in economic growth. That country is virtuous.

To the developing country the virtuous country is the one that is managing its economy successfully and the one whose aid programme is growing in real terms. The resources for building roads, hospitals and schools and for the provision of technical co-operation in developing countries are provided by such programmes and successful economic management. The hon. Member for Monklands, West never talks about absolute terms, volume terms or real terms. It is about time that he recognised that his argument is positively perverse.

Mr. Clarke: The Minister is taking a long time to get to the point. We still want to hear whether it is the Government's objective to achieve the 0·7 per cent. of GNP target, as accepted by the United Nations. Given that other OECD countries whose economies have developed in a similar way to ours, although they have not had the beneft of North sea oil—not one drop in many cases—have still stuck to the 0·7 per cent. objective, why are we not sticking to it, or have the Government gone back on that objective?

Mr. Patten: I believe that four, possibly five, countries have achieved the 0·7 per cent. target, and only one has an aid programme that is larger than ours in real terms. The hon. Gentleman refuses to face up to the fact that volume——

Miss Lestor *rose*——

Mr. Patten: I must answer the hon. Gentleman's other question, otherwise he will be on at me again.

The first question that the hon. Gentleman asked obliges me to agree with the previous Labour Government. My hon. Friends may think that that means that I am not entirely sound on this matter, but our views on the 0·7 per cent. target are the same as those expressed by previous Governments. It remains an objective, but we cannot, any more than previous Governments have done, set a timetable for achieving it. If the hon. Gentleman thinks that that is wrong, he must have also made that criticism of the previous Labour Government because that was also their view.

Miss Lestor: I tried to start with a note of agreement because it is the holiday period. At the beginning of this debate, behind Mr. Speaker's Chair, the Minister, in his conspiratorial way, said "I want about 10 minutes." I said "OK. It is the middle of the night and people want to get away." The Minister has now taken almost three times as long as we agreed and he still has not dealt with our argument.

Mr. Corbyn: And he is in a bad mood.

Miss Lestor: I do not mind that, but I could have taken an equally long time. I did not because I have a degree of honesty when it comes to agreements. My old dad was right when he said "Never trust a Tory."

The Minister is sliding away from the point. He says that he accepts the target of 0·7 per cent. but that we cannot have a timetable for its achievement. Previously he has implied that if GNP goes up it does not matter whether the target slips—that the percentage of GNP spent on aid falls to its present low level—so long as there is an increase in the volume of aid. If he was sticking to that objective and steadily moving towards the 0·7 per cent. target, the volume of aid would be greater than it is now. It is wrong to say that GNP has increased and that, therefore, the proportion spent on aid does not matter very much.

Mr. Patten: I apologise unreservedly to the hon. Member for Eccles. I have spoken for about three times as long as I had intended and doubtless longer than my right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office wanted. However, I have given way to every intervention and I have tried to answer the questions that the hon. Member for Monklands, West asked—although I have not satisfied him. If I had delivered the carefully unprepared remarks that I had brought with me, I could have sat down after 10 minutes. However, as the hon. Gentleman made an important speech, I thought it right to try to respond to it. I have not had the advantage of hearing him in full flood before. I wish to make one more point, and then I will sit down, otherwise the hon. Member for Eccles will scold me again.

What matters to me is that we should have an aid programme which is growing in real terms, supported by an economy which makes that situation likely to continue into the future. The best justification for growth in real terms is the effectiveness of our aid programme. At the very least, the hon. Lady, the hon. Gentleman and I can agree that, although some countries would like us to do more, and although they would like us to do more overall, we have an effective aid programme which is a considerable credit to those who manage it and work in it, whether in the public sector or the non-governmental

organisations which play an increasingly valuable role in making sure that aid reaches its targets and helps to alleviate poverty throughout the world.

I could continue, in response to the hon. Lady, but I shall leave it at that and thank the hon. Gentleman once again for giving us the opportunity of dashing around the course. I hope that we shall have a rather longer circuit at some future date.

Latin America

2.51 am

Mr. Jacques Arnold (Gravesham): I am most grateful for the opportunity to initiate a debate on our relations with Latin America. It is no fewer than 38 years since the last general debate on this most important subject. On 26 May 1950 the House last had the opportunity to review the matter, so I believe that the debate is long overdue. So often foreign affairs debates in this place centre strategically on East-West relations, fashionably on Europe, nostalgically on the Commonwealth and indifferently on the remainder.

Latin America represents some 8 per cent. of the world's population. It has outstanding potential, abundant natural resources, skilled work forces and few extremes of poverty with which we are so familiar in Africa and Asia. Above all, Latin America has a close cultural identification and rapport with Europe.

Britain has long had a very special relationship with Latin America. It was our then Foreign Secretary, George Canning, who acted as the midwife of the independence struggles of the new nations in the early part of the last century, with his statement in the House in the debate on the Address of 12 December 1826 that he had

"called the New World into existence, to redress the balance of the Old".

Illustrious Britons fought alongside the freedom fighters in the wars of independence in Latin America. Admiral Lord Cochrane played a vital part in the independence of Brazil, Chile and Peru, and O'Higgins became the first president of Chile. A British legion of veterans of the Peninsular wars made up the backbone of Simon Bolivar's liberating armies in Venezuela, Colombia and Ecuador.

We have a great heritage of good will to draw upon in the region. That was supplemented by the leading part that we played in developing its railways, livestock industries, mining and public and financial services. Latterly we earned their respect in the lead we took for the democracies in the second world war.

The affection with which we are still held compares favourably with the respect for the power of the United States, motivated by the Monroe doctrine and which descends into resentment at the United States' high-handedness and pressures over the years—not least that manifested recently in central America.

However, during the past 40 years, we have returned the Latin American affection very poorly indeed. In 1945, a quarter of Latin America's trade was with Britain. As a boy, I saw the majority of merchant shipping coming into the port of Santos in Brazil flying the red duster. By the late 1970s, our share of trade with Latin America had fallen to a mere 2 per cent.—way behind our trading partners.

We should draw on the fund of good will in Latin America, and at least the Government have made a good start. Our trade share now tops 3 per cent. Three of our right hon. and hon. Friends have travelled to Latin America in the past year to rekindle the flames of friendship, but we must do better. When I used to travel through Latin America 10 years ago Britain meant nostalgia to its people—the battle of Britain and the weird game of cricket. But they had written us off as delightfully decadent.

[Mr. Jacques Arnold]

Today we are seen in the context as a new beacon; the virtues of Thatcherism, privatisation and sound economics are extolled. Perhaps the most salutary thing that my right hon. and hon. Friends on the Front Bench could do would be to encourage our right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to make a tour of the great cities of Latin America. That would show the high regard in which this country holds the countries of Latin America.

We must not let the trauma of the Falklands episode divert us. Latin American solidarity in that matter is proverbially as wide as the River Plate, but only ankle deep. Latin Americans respect our military achievement in the Falklands, but consider the islands a minor irrelevance in the great scheme of diplomatic and commercial relationships. The vivid scar on our relations with Argentina must be allowed to heal with time and without rancour.

British industrialists, told of Latin American opportunities, will often talk of failure to pay, of the debt mountain and of their personal expectations of mud huts, discomfort and palm trees. The debt crisis in Latin America represents Government and bank lending problems, and not necessarily the settlement of trade debt. Even these medium-term lending problems are mixed. Chile, in particular, is paying interest and principal on its debt. Venezuela is repaying official debt, and the recent Toronto summit paid particular attention to overcoming debt problems.

The message must go out: the slumbering giant of Latin America is again on the move, with a new realism setting in. Conditions for foreign investment in the continent are easing. Better trading conditions are prevailing. For instance, Mexico has joined the GATT. There are massive opportunities for joint ventures by companies from this country. There is scope for reciprocity deals with the EEC.

We must give a higher profile here to Latin American affairs. Canning house, the Latin American business and cultural centre in London, already does a sterling job. LATAG—the DTI's Latin American trade advisory group—must be given a greater airing. The British Council must be encouraged in its English language teaching thoughout Latin America. And the outstanding example of the Cultura Inglesa in many countries of Latin America shows what can be achieved in the region. Incidentally, a little more teaching of Spanish and Portuguese in our own schools would not come amiss.

We must also pay closer attention to the sponsoring of students in these countries to come to Britain, to our universities and colleges of further education. We are already making major advances with Mexico and should see what can be done in other countries, notably Brazil.

After a period of extreme difficulty for Latin America's economies, things are again on the move, and I hope that Britain will play a leading part, as it has done in history, in the development of Latin America.

2.50 am

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): The House should be grateful to the hon. Member for Gravesham (Mr. Arnold) for ensuring that there is a debate on Latin America, albeit at 3 am. I regret that it is seldom debated. I especially agree with one of the hon. Gentleman's remarks: Spanish and Portuguese should be taught much more in schools in this country. The teaching of the history of Latin America could be developed with great benefit to the school curriculum and to the chairs of the history of Latin American development in universities. I learned virtually nothing about the continent at school, although I have since visited almost all its countries. The hon. Gentleman rightly mentioned Latin America's significance to Britain in the past because of its trading relations with Britain.

The hon. Gentleman said that developments were proceeding apace in Latin America. It is true that some Latin American countries are experiencing rapid rates of growth at present, but that often masks the most hideous poverty and the most appalling social disruption of people fleeing to large cities, where they lead short, bitter, miserable and poor lives in shanty towns. That is the lot of many Latin American workers.

There are great contrasts in wealth between Latin American countries. Brazil has a per capita income of about $1,700 per year, which is quite high by the standards of developing countries, but Honduras has a per capita income of only $721 per year. Averages can mean very little. If one's head is in an oven and one's feet are in a freezer, is one's body normal? The contrasts in wealth between Latin American countries are quite appalling.

I fear that the attitudes of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in dealing with Latin America's debt problems are solving the problems not for the majority of poor Latin American people but for the banking systems of the United States and western Europe. They are trying to impose economic policies that involve a reduction in public expenditure, loss of education and health programmes, high rates of unemployment, loss of public-sector employment and increased privatisation. That might make some balance sheets in Washington, New York, Frankfurt and London look a bit better, but it does not make life better for poor people, whose efforts to produce crops are not being rewarded if commodity prices continue to be depressed. Life is tough for many poor people throughout the continent.

We should be treating Latin America as part of the same world in which we live and doing what we can to alleviate the misery and poverty of its people. I am not convinced that the economic strategies being used by the world's financial institutions are doing anything of the kind. The line taken by President Garcia of Peru in attempting to limit debt repayments to no more than 10 per cent. of export earnings is a reflection of the anger felt by many Latin Americans about the vast repayments that they must make to banks elsewhere.

Some may say that Latin America's debts should always be top of the agenda and should always be repaid, but I ask them to consider how those debts were incurred. In many cases it was because of the oil boom. The oil-producing states were loaning money to anyone for anything, but the countries that borrowed money do not control the interest rates under which it was borrowed or the commodity prices which their exports earn. The position in Peru, Bolivia and Mexico has become worse as they have had to pay more in interest payments. Increasingly, they are having to take out loans to finance loans that have not been paid. The problem has become quite appalling.

The writing off of debt is the only way in which many countries will survive or recover. That has been recognised by many banks that have written off debts, and last year,

for the first time, some British clearing banks recorded a loss because of non-repayment of debt by Latin American countries.

Mr. Jacques Arnold: The hon. Gentleman should differentiate between writing off the Latin American debt, which has not occurred, and the provision in the balance sheet of major banks against potential loss to the loans they have made, which has occurred. There is an important difference between the two.

Mr. Corbyn: I accept that there is an important difference. I was saying that many banks have accepted that they will not get all their debt back and have made provision for the non-payment of it. I am going a little further and saying that the debt is unpayable because Chase Manhattan bank cannot possess the economy of Peru or Boliva any more than anybody else could. Therefore, there comes a point at which the debt becomes unpayable.

The political consequences of attempting to impose economic models on so many Latin American countries are so catastrophic that I urge people to think carefully before they start urging policies on them that are impossible to achieve.

I am conscious of the fact that other hon. Members want to speak, and I do not want to take up too much time. However, I want to deal with central America, which is much in our thoughts at present. The conflicts there are deep-rooted and long-standing. In Nicaragua, the origins lie in the way in which the United States behaved before the second world war in the imposition of the Somoza family, and the war of liberation, which culminated in 1979 when the Sandinista revolution triumphed and the Sandinistas took over in Managua.

Since 1979 there has been nothing but a process of attack, destabilisation, economic and physical warfare and hired terrorists attacking the Government, all paid for by the United States. That has occurred largely because of President Reagan's obsession with the supposed threat to the United States of the Sandinista Government in Nicaragua. That is a bit of a hollow laugh when a small and poor country is struggling to provide its people with a health service, an education system, housing, jobs and opportunties. I do not understand how that can be a threat to the United States, unless it is the threat of an example which may be copied elsewhere in Latin America as people try to escape from the cycle of debt, poverty and deprivation.

The war that has continued since 1979 has cost the lives of thousands of people. It is ironic that the United States gives so much military aid to the Contras but refuses to give any humanitarian aid to the people of Nicaragua, other than through the Contras. The degree of interference in Nicaragua is appalling.

Mr. Ray Whitney (Wycombe): Is the hon. Gentleman aware that, in the first 18 months of the Sandinista Government, the United States, directly and through the World Bank and the American Investment bank, made available to the Nicaraguan Government more aid than they made available to the Somocista regime throughout its 19 years?

Mr. Corbyn: The Carter Administration promised substantial aid to the Sandinistas. There is doubt as to how much of that aid was delivered before Reagan took office and, in effect, prevented that aid from reaching Nicaragua. The hon. Gentleman must agree that President Reagan has been obsessed with Nicaragua since taking office and that that obsession is continuing into the dying days of his Administration.

The process of peace that has taken place in the region in the past couple of years with the Arias peace plan and the agreement that all Governments in each country in the region would negotiate with the opposition forces, be they guerrilla forces or any other form of opposition, was a significant step forward.

In Nicaragua we see the efforts of the United States at their worst. They are trying to prevent that peace process. No Government has been more open, more quick or more ready to accept the Arias peace plan than the elected Government in Managua. At this moment it is still being frustrated by the decisions and destabilisation measures of the United States. Even now, in the last moments before its recess, Congress is debating yet more proposals for a resumption of lethal aid to the Contras against the Government of Nicaragua.

Mr. Jacques Arnold: Will the hon. Gentleman explain how it helps the peace process for the Nicaraguan Government to close down the Opposition radio station and newspaper in direct contravention of what the peace process is trying to achieve?

Mr. Corbyn: In the past, the Nicaraguan Government have closed down *La Prensa*, and have now closed it down again, and have closed down Radio Catholica because they were telling absolute lies and were inciting the Contra terrorists to continue their work of maiming.

The hon. Gentleman does not seem to understand that Nicaragua has been at war for a long time. During that war, many people have been killed and all sorts of dirty operations have been undertaken. I have visited Nicaragua several times; I have met the editor of *La Prensa* and discussed these matters with him. He showed me some of the stories that had been spiked out of the paper when it was in publication. Frankly, I was not in the least surprised that some of those stories had been spiked. I also met opposition forces in Nicaragua, before the last elections there.

The fact is that we are in the process of the peace plan. The new methods of destabilisation of the past few weeks have been deliberately designed to obstruct that peace process. I hope that the British Government will do what they can to put pressure on the United States Government not to resume lethal aid to the Contras because, if they do, we are straight back to the civil war and to all the deaths that have occurred. A ceasefire is a precious thing to have achieved. I very much hope that the British Government will be prepared to do what they can on that.

Last week a delegation of us went to the American embassy to discuss these matters and we argued with Mr. Seitz, who is responsible for Latin American policy, our view that the United States should not give any lethal aid. We made strong political points.

One point that cannot be answered by the United States Administration or anybody else is that made by Father Metcalfe, the priest to the Bluefields region on the Atlantic coast, which is not an area in which the Sandinistas initially had a great deal of support, although they now have much more. I am sure that Father Metcalfe will not mind me repeating that he has wondered what he can say

[Mr. Corbyn]

to the people in his parish and region, to the mothers of the young men who have been killed by the Contras, to the relatives of those who have been murdered by the Contras, to the people who have lost their homes because of the Contras, and to the people who have had their crops destroyed by the Contras, about the obsession of a man a few thousand miles away in the White House who is so frightened of the process of liberation in Nicaragua that he finances terrorists to murder, kill and destroy.

It is incumbent on the British Government to express the point of view that they support the Arias peace plan; that they support the right of self-determination of the people of central America—but, above all, that they tell the United States to stop financing the Contras, to stop the process of destabilisation and to give Nicaragua the chance that it is seeking for itself to develop its own economy for its people, and to develop its health, education and housing services. The crime that has been perpetrated against the people of Nicaragua during the past eight years is one of the most appalling since the second world war.

Mr. David Ashby (Leicestershire, North-West): Is the hon. Gentleman saying that there is not one iota of genuine opposition to the Sandinista Government among the Contras? Is he saying that no Contras are genuinely and properly opposed to the Sandinista regime? If he is not saying that, is not the process that should be followed one of dialogue and of trying to get the two together?

Mr. Corbyn: Of course the process of opposition must be by dialogue, debate, discussion and election—all those things are possible in Nicaragua. What is not possible in Nicaragua is dialogue, debate, discussion and election if, at the same time, the richest country in the world is financing a group of terrorists to destroy that very process. That is precisely why it is essential that the British Government put all the pressure that they can on the United States to stop funding the Contras.

It is quite interesting that Amnesty International has no cases against Nicaragua at the moment. That cannot be said about very many countries. It is important to remember that the political freedoms in Nicaragua do not exist to the same degree—or any degree—in the neighbouring countries in the region.

Mr. Ashby: I agree with much that the hon. Gentleman says. I take an independent view. However, has not the unofficial human rights group in Nicaragua cited a number of instances of breaches of human rights? Are there not a number of well-documented cases of breaches of human rights in Nicaragua?

Mr. Corbyn: The unofficial human rights group had drawn attention to some cases. Some cases have been resolved and many prisoners have been released under the amnesty towards the ceasefire.

The best way to achieve peace in Nicaragua, as I said earlier—I cannot repeat this often enough—is to end the financing of the Contras so that the peace process and the dialogue can continue. That would be a spur to the peace process and the dialogue in the region as a whole. When the Minister replies, I hope that she will be able to give us some hope in that direction.

I want to refer to the British Government's attitude to Chile. Chile is a poor country. It is one of the most indebted countries in the region. The debt figure per head is $1,540. Some 35 per cent. of its population cannot eat properly. As an example of the very low wages that poor people who have work in Chile experience, I can tell the House that those on the Government's temporary work programmes receive $32·20 a month. There are very many very poor people in Chile.

Chile's recent history is among the most tragic in the region. In 1973, a Government dedicated to eradicating poverty and to the development of a democratic society was overthrown in a brutal coup. General Pinochet has the blood of thousands on his hands. He supervised the murder of Salvador Allende and of about 20,000 other people. He herded all political opposition into the stadium in 1973. Since then there has been a monetarist experiment in Chile which gave great riches to a new middle class and brought terrible poverty to many others. Chile has been through purges; many people have suffered at the hands of the secret police and have been imprisoned. Many Chileans have found refuge here or in other European countries.

Tragically, in more recent years not only have the British Government been happy to trade with General Pinochet, but they have not been as forthcoming as they should have been in condemning the many abuses of human rights. Most appalling of all, they have been prepared to sell arms to Pinochet's Government which have been used to bolster his position in the region.

The horror continues day after day. Last week there was the festival of Chile Crea. That is a festival of culture, science, education and art. During the festival, a number of students were arrested and there were allegations that the Government had tortured people. Such allegations of torture by the Government have been made by many people.

Pinochet does not believe in democracy, fair play or the rights of the Opposition. That is clear, and his record speaks for itself. He is one of the most murderous, bloodstained dictators that the continent has ever seen. I find the British Government's attitude very surprising. They are prepared to sell Pinochet arms and to concede that some democratic process is going on in Chile.

A plebiscite is due to be held later this year, but the registration forms are very expensive, and many poor people will not be able to afford to take part. There will be only one candidate.

Mr. Ashby *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Corbyn: The hon. Member for Leicestershire North-West (Mr. Ashby) shakes his head, but the fact is that poor people cannot afford to take part in the vote in the plebiscite. If the hon. Member looks at the income of the poorest people in Chile, he will begin to realise what I am talking about.

Few people have any faith that General Pinochet, the army or any of the institutions supported by General Pinochet will allow a democratic election of any sort in Chile. I do not believe that the man who murdered his way into power is about to walk out of power because the ballot box finds against him. Dictators are not usually from that mould, despite what some of the United States press might say about him.

We want to know what the British Government's attitude is towards this plebiscite. Do they plan to send any observers to find out what happens during that election? Are they observing the political scene in Chile? The crime that was perpetrated in 1973 against the people of Chile did not stop then. There are not normal political freedoms, in the sense that we understand them, in Chile. There will never be normal political freedoms in the sense that we understand them while Pinochet is in power and the army dictatorship continues. We want the return of a real democracy in Chile, but I do not believe that that is compatible with the presence of General Pinochet.

Mr. Jacques Arnold: One of the difficulties that the hon. Gentleman has in referring to the events of 1983 is in explaining why it is that overwhelmingly the people of Chile were relieved by the change of power and the overthrow of Salvador Allende, because of the disorder and the hunger that that regime brought about. One of the significant aspects of Chile was the initial strong support for the regime of General Pinochet. The hon. Gentleman cannot get away from that point. Further, in saying that a military dictator will not give way he must look at the example of Brazil and a number of other Latin American countries which have made the difficult transition from a military dictatorship to a quasi-democracy without bloodshed.

Mr. Corbyn: The hon. Gentleman has come out in his true colours—as an apologist for the murderer that Pinochet is. Only a year before Salvador Allende was murdered, his party received over 50 per cent. of the vote in the local election. Salvador Allende was elected with 33 per cent. of the vote in 1970. By 1973, in all the local elections that took place, the Unidad Popular Front was achieving more than 50 per cent. of the vote. He was murdered at that time because he was so popular, because he was attempting to nationalise foreign-owned multi-national companies and because he was redistributing wealth to the poorest people. That is why the army, the CIA and ITT moved in with a major vehicle for destabilisation.

The hon. Gentleman said that the coup was some form of popular event. I advise him to talk to the Chilean refugees who live in this country and who went through that hell of September 1973; when they saw their families shot in front of them; when they had to go to the stadium and try to get people out; when people had to hide in the Mexican embassy; and when people had to flee for their lives in fear of a Fascist dictator who had murdered an elected president in cold blood. When an elected Member of the House comes here as an apologist for that process, it is a disgrace of the highest order. I invite the hon. Gentleman to withdraw his words of apology for General Pinochet.

Mr. Arnold: I asked the hon. Gentleman to face up to the fact——

Mr. Corbyn: The hon. Gentleman is an apologist, and he knows it.

Mr. Arnold: —that the people of Chile noted the change of regime with considerable relief, because of the suffering and hunger that went before it as a result of the Allende regime. To suggest that that is some kind of apology for the undoubted breaches of human rights that occurred in that process is a completely different matter and is certainly not the case.

Mr. Corbyn: It is interesting that even now the hon. Gentleman cannot bring himself to condemn the fact that a military coup took place in 1973 and an elected president was murdered. I find it surprising that the hon. Gentleman is still not prepared to do that. If the hon. Gentleman wants to do that now, I shall happily give way to him. He does not want to. *[Interruption.]* I do not know why the hon. Member for Leicestershire, North-West finds this so funny. We are dealing with a murderer. If the hon. Member for Gravesham wants to condone it, so be it—it is on the record.

Mr. Arnold: The hon. Gentleman still refuses to——

Mr. Corbyn: Why does the hon. Gentleman not answer the point?

Mr. Arnold: I intervened on the hon. Gentleman to ask him how he explains the fact that the military regime of General Pinochet in Chile has undoubted support from the ordinary populace. That does not mean that I condone the disgraceful excesses and infringements of human rights that have occurred in that process. There is the difficult problem, which must be tackled, that the Pinochet regime —perhaps even to this day—has the support of the great mass of the Chilean people. If the hon. Gentleman does not face that, he is flying in the face of the reality of Chile.

Mr. Corbyn: The hon. Gentleman is not talking about the Chile that I understood we were debating. If the Government of General Pinochet, as the hon. Gentleman so politely calls him, are popular, why do they require such an enormous secret police? Why do they require so many political prisoners? Why are there so many Chileans in exile? Why are so many Chileans who return from exile in danger? Why are so many poeple shot on the streets? Come on—we are dealing not with a democracy but with a Fascist dictatorship. It is about time that the hon. Gentleman recognised that.

There are, of course, Ministers in the Government that the hon. Gentleman supports who have been to Chile and commended its economic policies. Presumably they are happy that 35 per cent. of the people do not have enough to eat. I hope that the Minister will be able to answer the questions that I have raised.

It is on the record that the British Government have sold ships and arms to the Chilean Government. I hope that the Government will say that there will be no more such sales. I also hope that they will say that British military forces will not use bases or any military facilities in Chile as part of the south Atlantic presence.

There is a great deal of suspicion that British forces have been using Chilean bases as part of the Falklands operation. I hope that the Minister will be able to make a clear statement that the Government condemn the violations of human rights in Chile, that there will be no further arms sales and that observers will be sent to see exactly what goes on in the plebiscite. Apparently they are not planning to do that at the moment.

3.27 am

Mr. Ray Whitney (Wycombe): I also thank my hon. Friend the Member for Gravesham (Mr. Arnold) for giving the House an opportunity, albeit at this time of the morning, to debate, after a very long interval, the affairs of Latin America.

My hon. Friend is the admirable secretary of the all-party Latin American committee, of which I have the honour to be chairman. I know that his deep knowledge of and commitment to British relationships with Latin America are profound. I hope that this debate will carry that interest forward and that we shall invigorate even more the Government's interest in furthering links between us and that continent.

I would like only to reinforce what my hon. Friend has said. Our relationships with Latin American countries are deep and long standing. They are only dimly perceived in this country, but they are remarkably alive in nearly all Latin American countries. Our forebears played a leading part in the liberation of the continent. They did, 150 or more years ago, what I believe the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) would thoroughly endorse. It is right that we should continue to take pride in the achievements of our country men and the lives that they sacrificed in the cause of Latin American independence from the Spanish empire, and encouragement from the fact that Latin Americans continue to recognise Simon Boliver, San Martin and all the other liberation heroes of the 19th century.

It is said that the tremendous commercial stake and position that we carved out towards the end of the 19th century and the first part of this century has declined so sharply. Everyone who has visited those countries knows about the railways, the public utilities and the banking systems. For example, Argentina was virtually rescued by the Baring loan in the 1840s and 1850s. All those left a legacy which we have squandered since the war.

The percentage of British trade with Latin America declined to an abysmal extent so that among the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries our exports to Latin America were at barely 2 per cent. In recent years there has been an encouraging increase, but we are still only at 3 per cent. of the exports of all OECD countries to Latin America. That is deplorable and we must rectify it. For many years I have sought in various capacities to boost that effort, but so far we have not succeeded to the extent that we should. I hope that those efforts will be redoubled or even quadrupled.

One of our problems is the poor quality of reporting in the British media and probably the western European media as a whole on the affairs of Latin and central America. That is why we have misguided views, such as those we heard from the hon. Member for Islington, North. It must be recognised that the United States held out the hand of friendship to the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, following the overthrow of the Somocista regime. The Marxist-Leninist regime of the Sandinistas rejected it and immediately installed a vast army by central American standards before there was any question of civil resistance or Contras. The Soviet Union, its allies and Cuba poured in and built up the army so that the Nicaraguan army is greater by far than the total of her neighbours' armies.

All that happened long before there was any question of action by the Contras or support for them from the United States. The repression that began when the Sandinistas took office, the impact of the so-called Turbas Divinas, and the mobs and thugs who spread revolutionary terror predated any civil war in Nicaragua. The hon. Gentleman and people like him perpetrate this complete misrepresentation of the real position in central America because of the abysmally low quality of reporting in the British media, and they should not be allowed to get away with it.

The other impact of the low standard of reporting, so much of which is extremely biased, is the poor level of understanding of what is happening. In many respects events in recent years are encouraging. Obviously, there is a debt problem and it would be wrong simply to write it off. The British Government, rightly, are taking a positive lead in helping the countries of sub-Saharan Africa with their debt relief. The countries of Latin America are of a very different order. It is true that they have severe problems, but they are greatly in advance of the really poor countries of the world in terms of per capita income, basic wealth and export earning potential. Each of the countries of Latin America has a different problem. They must be helped in terms of flexibility, and the IMF and the World Bank are providing that, but any idea of a blanket write-off would be misguided for the countries of Latin America—or, indeed, for any other developing country that looks to take loans from the international business community in the future.

I agree with the hon. Member for Islington, North that the banking system of the world was, in a sense, becoming too easy thanks to the oil glut and the effect of the Arab oil surpluses. I agree that in the 1970s both the lenders and the borrowers had their faults. I hope that we shall all learn from that. I believe that the debt situation has improved and that it should not be writ too large as a threat.

Our own business men should look at Latin America country by country. The phrase "Latin America" rolls off the tongue far too easily. We all know that there are 20 separate countries with their own traditions and pride and their own possibilities for commercial, political and cultural co-operation. There are great opportunities.

To most of us, the other aspect of relations between Britain and Latin America is the problem of the Falklands. We all recognise that it is a deeply sensitive issue. I suspect that my views are slightly different from those of my hon. Friend the Member for Gravesham. I think that the Falkland islands question looms somewhat larger in relationships with Latin America than he believes. I accept that we are talking largely about words rather than reality, but I think that there is some reality in terms of solidarity with Argentina on this issue.

We must continue to ensure that the freedom and the interests of the Falkland islanders are preserved. We should also acknowledge, however, that we are in a brittle situation and that it is not in the longer term interests of the Falkland islanders that this brittle situation should persist. It is unsatisfactory for them, for us and for the region as a whole.

I recognise that the impact of what has happened in the five or six years since the conflict has been a remarkable economic advance for the islands. However, that is a short-term perspective and before very long we must begin to look for a longer term settlement. That will require sensitivity and understanding on the part of the three communities involved—the British, the Argentines and, above all, the Falkland islanders.

The problem will not go away and the Government should realise that and accept that we cannot rest on the status quo, although we must nevertheless recognise that the interests of the islanders are paramount. In my view, they can be preserved and there are ways forward. I believe that even so we can proceed with a much more positive approach to Argentina, and I hope that the Government will take every possible opportunity to do that. The proposals made by my hon. Friend the Member for Gravesham about the possibility of more frequent visits by Ministers—in particular our right hon. Friend the Prime Minister—to leading capitals of Latin America is an admirable proposal.

I place more emphasis than does my hon. Friend the Member for Gravesham on the need to teach Spanish and Portugese, particularly Spanish, in our schools. We are now embarking on the new national core curriculum and are keen to ensure that what our children learn is relevant to their needs and the needs of Britain in the coming years. One of those is the need for greater facility in foreign languages. The most obvious and effective language, an easy one to learn, is Spanish, a delightful language to speak and one which enables the speaker to communicate with the people of 20 countries.

As we develop and produce the new curriculum, I strongly urge the Minister of State to make sure that her colleagues at the Department of Education and Science are aware of this need. Some hon. Members have been communicating with that Department on this issue and I have been far from satisfied with the response we have obtained. The Government as a whole, including the Department of Trade and Industry with its export promotion responsibilities, must do more about this matter.

It has been a long time since we debated Latin America. This is an extraordinary hour and an extraordinary time in our parliamentary timetable at which to be having this debate, but it has been valuable and I hope the Government will renew their efforts to reawaken British awareness and commercial interest in the continent of Latin America.

3.42 am

Mr. David Ashby (Leicestershire, North-West): We seldom debate foreign affairs. It is noticeable on the rare occasions when we do that the debates are dominated by what we call the great and good in the House. They make wide-ranging speeches covering the world; they deal with America, Europe, China and Japan, and they might just about deal with South America. But they never deal with central America. The reason for that is historical. We in Britain were put off taking an active part in debates on action in central and south America by the Monroe doctrine in the 19th century. Although that doctrine is said to be something of the past and is not part of our policy today—and is not part of America's foreign policy—it still looms large on the horizon and in fact forms an active part in our policies.

We do not seem to have an independent foreign policy covering central America. That poses a problem because almost every other country has such a policy. We are part of Europe and, come 1992, we shall have the Single European Act. Italy, France, Spain, Portugal and Germany have never been inhibited by the Monroe doctrine and they have policies covering central America. They are making use of their political clout to make economic headway in that and other areas. I intervened on this subject in the previous debate initiated by the hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke). Yet we are losing out in south America and in central America because we are stuck with this outdated Monroe doctrine as a result of our special relationship with the United States, which still treats central and south America as its own sphere of influence which the British are not permitted to enter. Yet other countries are allowed to do so. The Americans do not say to the Spanish or the Italians, "Hey, this is our area and you should not go there."

Mr. Jacques Arnold: The Monroe doctrine with which the United States said, in effect, "Don't interfere in our back yard," predated Canning's support for independence and was thus the first instance when Britain made it clear that it would not be associated with the Monroe doctrine —a figment of American wishful thinking which the rest of the world, including Britain, has never recognised.

Mr. Ashby: Britain may not have recognised it, but the spirit or idea of it has inhibited our actions, certainly since the last war. Something in the background of our special relationship with America has inhibited our participating as fully as we should. Other countries such as Italy, Germany and Spain have not been inhibited in that way. One has only to consider the aid going to central America and to Nicaragua from Italy and Germany, which are not Left-wing countries. Since 1945, Italy has been a conservative country ruled and run by the Christian democrats. yet this year, and indeed in the past couple of months, Italy has given substantial amounts of aid to Nicaragua. We have not given that kind of help and our exports are not following our economic ventures.

Mr. Whitney: I continue to be puzzled by my hon. Friend's references to the Monroe doctrine, although I share his concern at the decline in our share of exports to Latin American countries, which is now down to 3 per cent. Is he suggesting that the failure of British business men to look for markets in Latin America is governed by a 180-year-old doctrine, or is he suggesting that there is some kind of Government influence involved?

Secondly, as my hon. Friend the Minister for Overseas Development pointed out in the earlier debate, the balance of aid to Latin America is different for Italy and Germany because the vast majority of our aid goes to Commonwealth countries.

Mr. Ashby: My hon. Friend has not followed my argument. I was pointing to the total absence of any substantial independent British policy towards central America. That is the major point. Countries such as Italy also have former colonies into which they put substantial amounts of aid. It may even be that Latin countries have a tendency to put their aid into other Latin countries, but that does not detract from the fact that countries such as Spain and Italy have policies towards central America which are followed up by substantial exports. That is why they are getting the business there. Germany as well has been following up its aid with business and exports. It has made substantial inroads into central America.

I visited Nicaragua about three years ago and I hope to revisit it during the recess to see the changes that have taken place and to renew my friendships there. The

[Mr. Ashby]

revolution took place following a despicable regime which had been put in place and maintained to a large extent by the United States. There was strong resentment within the region towards the United States for that reason, and that resentment continues to this day.

It is important to remember that it was an all-party revolution, not a Sandinista revolution. When I was in Nicaragua I met a number of people whose politics are not dissimilar from my own. They are Conservatives, but they were all supporters of the revolution. I met Liberals who were strong supporters of it and had participated in it.

The problem is that after the revolution the Sandinistas went on to some extent to hijack it. They took it over as their own. In so doing, they sat upon many who had participated in the revolution. They disregarded them. At times they were to treat them quite harshly.

It was not a revolution that lacked popular support. Indeed, it had the overwhelming support of the population. I believe that the Sandinista Government have the support of the majority of the population. If there were a proper plebiscite, we would find that it is a regime that has the support of the majority. They are a Government who have been accepted de jure and de facto. They are recognised by the United Kingdom and other nations, and they should be respected as such a Government.

In 1984, for the first time for a long time, there were elections in Nicaragua. We must not take a black or white approach to Nicaragua for there are shades of grey in everything. We must not say yes or no, black or white or Stalinist or Marxist. Even within the Sandinistas there are moderate elements as well as elements far to the Left. It is a mix, and it must be regarded as such.

As I have said, in 1984 there were the first elections for a long time. The first steps were being taken towards democracy, and such steps are to be encouraged. It is rather unfortunate that the election was condemned in harsh terms by the world, including the United Kingdom Government and the American Government. It was not a fully fair election, but within limitations it was one to be accepted. We must look to the municipal elections next year and elections in the 1990s in tuning the process of democracy. If we continue to treat this and other central American countries in this way, we are not helping. We should be encouraging what is taking place, and urging the country towards more dialogue and democracy.

We must remember, for example, that a large percentage of the Nicaraguan population has suffered in the wars. I believe that a considerable element among the Contras is genuinely opposed to the Sandinista regime. We are not encouraging dialogue or getting people together by dismissing them as an odious regime. We can take a positive step. It must also be remembered that there are a number of English-speaking people in the Caribbean area. There is a strong English-speaking contingent in the Bluefields area, among the Meskita Indians, and we can be of great assistance there.

In the little time available, let me deal with the Panama. Like Nicaragua, the Panama is being treated most unhelpfully by the Americans. The leader General Noriega has behaved disgracefully, and his involvement in drug-running is well known and documented. But the attempt to destabilise the Government and get rid of him has only strengthened his position and that of his supporters. There must be a better way of achieving what we all wish to achieve than by destabilising the country to the extent that America has done. Our Government can play a part in achieving a decent, democratic Government there.

We should be taking a positive role in central America, and we should have a positive policy there.

3.57 am

Miss Joan Lestor (Eccles) *rose——*

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Has the hon. Lady the leave of the House to speak again? I hear no dissent.

Miss Lestor: When we are dealing with a wide range of countries—I agree that we should consider them independently rather than grouping them together—it is very difficult to know which one, or two, to choose in the short time left to us. I should have liked to follow the hon. Member for Wycombe (Mr. Whitney), who raised the question of the Falkland islands, because I feel that we cannot leave things as they are: at some stage we must return to discussing the future of the Falklands and, indeed, Argentina. But that is a matter for another occasion. I shall confine my remarks to two countries, Chile and Nicaragua: perhaps the Minister will be able to deal with them in her reply.

I am not sure whether my information is accurate, but just before the debate began the Nicaraguan network in Washington told the Nicaraguan solidarity campaign that the Stevens-Dole amendment was being supported by the Democrats and was likely to be passed 60-40 in the Senate.

Mr. Corbyn: Disgraceful.

Miss Lestor: As my hon. Friend says, that is disgraceful. If it is true, it is possible that the package could go through before the Congressional recess on 11 August.

The package proposed in the amendment consists of $27 million to the Contras for humanitarian aid, $20 million for lethal aid and $27 million in unspecified aid including insurance for air transport, making a total of $74 million. That is regrettable. It takes no steps towards what we all want to see—a resolution of the terrible problems in Nicaragua.

It is particularly ironic that, just as the first anniversary of the central American peace accord is reached in August, and while the Sandinistas have again unilaterally declared a ceasefire, the only United States of America contribution to that progress is an aid package to the Contras. That will only continue a process from which we hoped that we had moved away. My hon. Friend the Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes) recently led an all-party delegation to protest about that. It was pointed out to the United States embassy that the eight-year war has led to 50,000 deaths. The Contra leadership is now dominated by a man who openly advocates terrorist tactics.

I remind the House that the central American peace accord was a strategy for all central America. However, United States, and to some extent British, policy has emphasised the lack of compliance in Nicaragua. In contrast, to date only the Nicaraguan Government have engaged in serious negotiation with the armed opposition. Talks in El Salvador and Guatemala have long been abandoned, and death squad activity in El Salvador is now

increasing at an alarming rate. Deaths and torture have dramatically increased in Guatemala and its Government have closed down a television news station. A weekly newspaper was also forced to close after its building was set on fire.

It is odd, therefore, that of the five central American countries that have signed the accord, Nicaragua should be singled out for infringement of it. Whatever the arguments about human rights abuses, Amnesty International has no Nicaraguan cases on its records. Surely we should ask the United States to leave Nicaragua alone and ask it not to go ahead with the aid package for the Contras. It should try to make everyone comply with the principles of the central American peace accord of non-intervention. At this stage, Nicaragua should be given encouragement and support rather than subjected to sabotage.

My hon. Friend the Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) spoke about Chile and I agree with his description of its past and the present state of affairs. It now appears that the junta is getting nervous. Recent opinion polls have shown that large sections of the electorate are undecided about the plebiscite that is to take place, and that the noes may have the majority. We do not know whether that is true, but we know that the state of emergency in Chile continues and that it impedes the activities of any opposition to the junta—that is the reason for it. Access to the media, which was promised, is still not allowed.

It is obvious to me and to many other people that, in such circumstances, intimidation will occur now rather than in the final days before the election. It is essential that, from now on, monitoring is undertaken.

The junta has just announced that it will meet on 30 August to nominate its candidate. Under the constitution, that plebiscite must be held between 30 and 60 days after the nomination and the speculation is that it will take place in the first week of October.

My hon. Friend the Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley will be part of two delegations to Chile. One is an international, pre-plebiscite delegation. The other delegation will visit Chile in election week when my hon. Friend will be accompanied by Bishop Taylor, Lord Avebury and the well-known barrister, Geoffrey Bindham. It is important that the Government should also play a part in encouraging a return to democracy in Chile. They should send observers, just as the Labour party and others intend to do, to see what is happening now and at the time of the plebiscite.

I hope that the Minister will explain what pressure the Government are exerting upon Chile to ensure that the plebiscite is fair and that it is conducted according to democratic principles. At the moment it appears that such principles will not be observed.

Until 15 years ago, Chile had a long-standing tradition of democracy. We are concerned that, when human rights violations take place, the voice of our country should be heard. Our country should send representatives to Chile to ensure that such violations do not take place and to ensure that the election is held in as free and as fair an atmosphere as possible.

I am conscious that we have had a wide-ranging debate and that many other issues could have been discussed. Although I strongly disagree with the hon. Member for Gravesham (Mr. Arnold), I am grateful that he initiated the debate. I hope that, some time in the future, the Government will take time to allow the House to debate in full the issue of Latin and central America, which could play an important role in developing other ties with the United Kingdom—particularly trading links, which are badly needed.

4.5 am

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mrs. Lynda Chalker) *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Does the right hon. Lady have the leave of the House to speak again?

Hon. Members: Yes.

Mrs. Chalker: I welcome the opportunity to speak on Britain's long-standing and varied relations with Latin America. It is quite clear that there is need to explain certain aspects of policy.

I listened carefully to my hon. Friend the Member for Gravesham (Mr. Arnold) and I welcome his special role in the formation of the new all-party group on Latin America, which is important to the House. I welcome the role played by my hon. Friend the Member for Wycombe (Mr. Whitney), who is the chairman of the group.

Britain's links with Latin America go back a long way. British troops fought under the great General Bolivar in the struggle for independence from Spain. British business, through trade and investment, has played a major role in the development of almost all Latin American economies. British engineers built Latin America's lighting and water systems, its railways and its river craft. The Portuguese royal family travelled in British vessels to Brazil to escape from Napoleon and it is the clearly stated wish of the Government to build on and develop those long-standing links.

The clear trend of a return to democracy throughout the region is encouraging. It is not as fast as any of us would like, but there are now only four Latin American Governments which are not democratically elected. The British Government very much support the process of redemocratisation.

I shall come straight to the point about Chile. The national affairs of Chile attract particular public interest and excitement. It is now embarking on the democratic process by holding a plebiscite later this year. We want an orderly return to democracy. We make that clear to the Chilean Government bilaterally and with our 11 partners in Europe. The EC statement of 11 July makes absolutely clear our wish to see fair elections. We welcome the fact that there is now co-operation between the democratic opposition parties which have courageously come together in the plebiscite campaign. We do not know definitely who will be the candidate for the opposition, but it is particularly important that the plebiscite takes place in fair and open conditions. I respond to the hon. Member for Eccles (Miss Lestor) on that score.

I can tell the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) that, although we are not sending an official observer delegation to Chile, our embassy will report fully on the outcome. The registered democratic opposition can nominate its own observers and scrutineers at all polling stations, and we shall make best use of our team in Chile during the plebiscite.

Mr. Corbyn: What about registration?

Mrs. Chalker: I have only 12 minutes to finish my comments on several countries. Let me try to get them on the record.

The hon. Gentleman is right in intimating that there is a problem about registration, but it is important to note that there has been an increase in voter registration which is now more than 6·5 million people. The democratic opposition now has access to television. I do not wish to prejudge the plebiscite, but the United Nations special rapporteur has declared that the electoral machinery has been prepared in a serious and responsible manner.

We have consistently made clear our concerns about human rights in Chile. We have done so elsewhere in Latin and central America—particularly in Colombia, in the light of the recent Amnesty report. We shall continue to make sure that we take a clear public stand whenever violations of human rights occur. It is not only a matter of "He who shouts loudest." We must recognise improvements when they take place and encourage further progress. We shall condemn violence from all quarters, however it occurs—and the violation of human rights likewise.

It would be easy to spend the whole debate discussing Chile. The hon. Member for Islington, North asked me about arms sales. He knows that it has been the policy of successive British Governments not to disclose details of defence sales. We believe that Chile has a sovereign right to secure its means of defence, but we take great care not to approve the sale of items that we judge could be used for internal repression, and we shall continue so to do.

My hon. Friend the Member for Gravesham spoke a great deal about trade and investment. They should form a much more major element in our relationship with the region. The economic importance of Latin America is not always fully recognised. Latin American GNPs total more than those of the whole of Africa, the Indian sub-continent and south-east Asia combined, and we do well to remember that. Recent moves in the area to modernise economies present important opportunities for United Kingdom business. It has become a cliché that our trade performance is poor. It is now about 3 per cent. of the market in most countries again, having previously fallen to 2 per cent., but our entire trade with Latin America is only about 2 to 3 per cent. of our foreign trade. United Kingdom business men could and should do better, although our percentage share has risen over the past four years.

Latin America is now beginning to emerge from the debt crisis, although I readily admit that it is still worrying for many nations. In trade terms, however, Latin America is ripe for a more concerted export effort. I cannot stress too strongly the importance of personal contacts and of regular visits to the area. Official services are ready and glad to help. I commend the work of the Latin American trade advisory group which brings together those from Government and business who are interested in improving our economic performance there.

I must also mention the reopening of the consulate in Miami, and the British Florida chamber of commerce, which are there to assist United Kingdom trade into Latin America and the Caribbean. The DTI has held a seminar on the advantages to British companies of selling through Miami, and missions to the region are being encouraged to consider Miami in their itineraries before launching forth into Latin America.

We are seeking to offer exporters a range of services for Latin America, as for other markets, and the increasing interest of British companies, which is being reflected in the growth of market share, suggests that the service we are giving is effective. But we shall be truly effective only if—as hon. Members have said—our people can trade in the language of the countries with which they wish to trade. That means Spanish and Portuguese being spoken by our business men, let alone being taught in our schools.

Despite Latin America's problems, it is important that its potential should be made better known to investors. There is now well over $1 billion worth of investment in Brazil, where we are the fifth largest investor. A number of British companies with subsidiaries there and in Mexico and Venezuela, in which we are the third largest investor, are doing well. By expanding debt-equity swaps, we want to give a new entree into these markets. The Government are paving the way for business in Latin America by double taxation agreements and investment protection agreements. We are determined that our competitors, who have been active in Latin America in recent years, will not have the field left to them.

As hon. Members have said, debt still looms large in the popular perception of Latin America. We are trying to work with Latin American nations to solve the debt problems on a case-by-case basis. Many Latin American nations have made enormous sacrificies to meet their debt obligations. I welcome recent moves by Brazil and other countries to reach agreement with their creditors. I understand the frustrations that have been expressed in the debate, but we shall succeed in helping those countries economically only by working with them, not by simply believing that problems will go away if we ignore them. That has sometimes been the attitude of a few countries.

I shall not speak at length about the drugs industry, but one of the most worrying aspects of Latin and central America is the seamy side of their marketing of drugs. It is rather like a ghastly parody of economics that there are problems with demand and supply. If the cocaine problem is not tackled effectively, the dangers not only for south America but for the rest of the world are enormous. We shall continue to attach a high priority to combating the corrosive effects on all our societies of drug misuse and trafficking.

Many of the points made by hon. Members about drugs were too detailed to answer at this stage, but we are giving material support to Bolivia and Peru and have pledged money to the United Nations drugs law enforcement programmes to tackle the problem. We welcome the efforts being made by Latin American Governments to combat the evil of drugs. We shall attack the problem from the cultivation of the basic crop to the smuggling of it into developed country markets and its sale and consumption on the streets of our cities.

I must deal with central America, although I cannot spend long doing so. I add a serious note of caution about the position in central America, where, sadly, the peace process is barely alive. Esquipulas II offers the best hope for peace. We call on all central American Governments to redouble their efforts to implement its provisions in full, especially the conclusion of ceasefire agreements to make rapid progress towards a pluralist democracy. It is important for Europe to urge all parties to comply with their commitments, especially for democratisation. In this

context, I deplore the recent measures taken by the Nicaraguan Government in direct contravention of their Esquipulas II obligations.

Together with our EC partners, we welcome the Esquipulas II agreement, which was made in August 1987, and the Sapoa truce, which was made in March 1988. I am sorry that the regional peace process and the Nicaraguan ceasefire talks are virtually at a standstill. The peace agreement is still the best hope, and we must make progress at the various meetings of central American foreign Ministers and presidents, which will be held, as the hon. Member for Islington, North said, in August, towards a successful, peaceful, negotiated settlement of the conflict in the region. We shall continue to urge all parties to comply with their commitments.

My hon. Friend the Member for Leicestershire, North-West (Mr. Ashby) accused the Government of not having a central American policy. It would be helpful to write to him at length to outline what is going on in central America.

I was asked whether I would condemn the United States' support for the Contras. My colleagues and I have been asked that question many times of late in the House. United States' policy is a matter for the United States. We do not always agree with the United States, and that is well known. Our position is quite clear. We shall continue to advocate peaceful, negotiated solutions, not military ones. We believe that to be as right in central America as anywhere else. The problems of the region cannot be solved by armed force, and we shall continue to urge restraint on all sides. We tell the United States of our views repeatedly.

Several hon. Members have mentioned the importance of language. I commend the sterling work being done by Canning house in promoting the study of Spanish and Portuguese. However, we need more teaching of those languages in our schools. We shall continue to press our colleagues for greater attention to be paid, not just to the language training of children but to the need for teachers able to train the next generation of children.

Mr. Whitney *rose*——

Mrs. Chalker: We try to help with scholarships for Latin Americans to come to study here and some of those Latin Americans help to increase our understanding of their countries as well as increasing their understanding of our country.

I cannot go any further other than to say that the Latin American region is one of great potential. We have historical links and we want to build on and expand those links. There are opportunities for business. Much work has been done and much remains to be done. The debate has been useful in showing our recognition of the importance of the region and I hope that by the efforts of the group in which my hon. Friend the Member for Wycombe and other hon. Members are participating we shall be able to build up political and economic links between Latin America and the European Community.

Latin America is increasingly looking to Europe, and we have made it clear that we support regional integration in Latin America. We hope that the region will learn some lessons from the European experience and that there will be greater political dialogue between the European Community and the group of eight countries, which has been a recent feature of international life. There is much to be done, and at 4.21 am it is time we got on with it.

The Environment

4.21 am

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): It is an odd time of the day to be debating anything, either ending or beginning. However, I am glad of this opportunity to speak on the environment. This is the first debate that any member of my party has introduced under our new leadership. I hope that it is significant that the first debate opened by a Social and Liberal Democrat under that new leadership reflects two of the expressed concerns of our leader—our internationalism and our environmentalism. As my party's spokesman on the environment I am glad to have this opportunity.

I welcome the Minister on her first appearnace at the Dispatch Box. She would probably have chosen a different time and possibly a slightly fuller House. However, it is good to see her. I congratulate her sincerely on her appointment. I am a little embarrassed because I intended to write to her to congratulate her but she is on duty so quickly that I have been beaten to it.

I have to concede that I campaigned briefly against the Minister's election in the year after I was elected. I had mixed thoughts about the result, but I am glad that she can sit on her party's Benches and has been promoted and taken on her new responsibility. I am sure that she will do a good job.

It is said that, as yet, the structure of the Government does not allow us to have a department of environmental protection with the same overview of environmental matters as the Treasury has of economic matters. I received today the list of ministerial responsibilities under the new regime since the Government reshuffle earlier this week. It is to be noted, and a little regretted, that so far there has not been a clear division of ministerial responsibilities with appropriate titles, similar to the previous way, which I thought was an improvement in the way in which the Department was structured after the general election. Ministers were then described as being the Minister of Environment, Countryside and Water, the Minister for Housing and Planning, or the Minister for Local Government. Perhaps that will come but it is not yet the way in which Ministers are described. At the moment the Under-Secretary of State has a rather anomalous group of responsibilities in her Department. I hope that in future the Department can be structured in a way that will allow the importance of environmental protection to be recognised in its form as well as in its subject matter and work.

What I propose to do is to air a range of issues of which I notified the Minister's office. Without wanting today to have a particular go at the Government, I want to put these issues on the political agenda. The Library has told me that there has not been a general debate on international environmental matters since the 1979 general election. That is sad. I hope that one objective that we may achieve in the coming years is more often to debate our international environmental responsibility.

The title of the debate that I submitted originally to the Table Office was "The Global Environmental Crisis." In the way that the Table Office does, that title was slightly amended to be more objective and less judgmental. But it is the growing awareness of the environmental crisis internationally which has prompted me to seek this debate, and it has prompted many people in the country and throughout the world—not just politicians—to raise it recently as a much more important issue on the political agenda. That is a good thing. It is good that our international and environmental responsibilities are now seen to be politically important.

I confirm that by referring to the words of the Prince of Wales when he presented the European Year of the Environment awards at Merchant Taylors' hall in the City of London in March this year. He said:

"When we read that over the next 60 years, if we go on as we are doing, something like a third of all the forms of life at present living on this planet may be extinct, can we feel anything but a kind of cosmic horror?

We were facing a serious and urgent challenge on a huge international scale.

Too many political leaders still gave far more attention to the obvious costs of action than to the concealed costs of inaction."

That recognition represented an increasing awareness among the establishment in this country, as well as a general concern. An opinion poll, conducted last year by MORI on behalf of Friends of the Earth and the World Wildlife Fund, showed that 81 per cent. of respondents felt that the Government should give a much higher priority to protecting the environment. I am sure that that is a correct analysis of people's concerns and that that number will increase rather than decrease.

I am aware that this subject crosses departmental boundaries. Clearly, it involves the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the overseas aid and development portfolio. The two areas are very much interrelated because the way in which we contribute economically in trade and in patterns of trade within the international community affects environmental matters. Therefore, it is difficult in simplistic terms to analyse how much we spend on environmental protection because some of that expenditure is hidden rather than explicit. However, I should point out that there is concern, and I ask the Minister to take on board and recognise the fact that we have been cutting our expenditure on important environmental matters in certain key areas, which is to be regretted.

In reply to a parliamentary question last month the Secretary of State for the Environment gave total figures for the Department's expenditure on environmental research and protection. The figures were then broken down into expenditure relating to radioactive waste, air pollution, water and countryside. The figures supplied cover 1981-82 to the present day.

In real terms, expenditure on radioactive waste and water matters in connection with environmental research and protection has been reduced. It has been reduced for radioactive waste from £11·9 million in 1981-82 to £9·9 million in 1987-88. Expenditure on water has been reduced from £4·5 million to £3·5 million over the same period. We have seen attacks on science and research funding and there have been staff cuts at the Natural Environment Research Council. An article appeared in *The Guardian* on 6 July anticipating large-scale cuts in oceanographic research. The Minister should recognise that there is scientific and professional concern that we are not spending what we should to ensure that Britain is sufficiently aware of what is happening. We are not investing sufficiently in research on environmental matters. I hope that that position will be reversed.

Everyone who has considered this subject believes that expenditure today can be very helpful in preventing

enormous waste and destruction tomorrow. Unless we are prepared to make that financial public expenditure commitment, the Government's contribution to the strategy of dealing with environmental destruction and despoliation will be considerably impaired.

One of the encouraging aspects of the past few years has been the amount of international concern about this issue. The Minister will be aware that there are two seminal works on the subject—one more general, the other more specific. I am referring to the Brandt and the Brundtland reports.

I want to refer to some of the comments made by the Prime Minister of Norway. Mrs. Gro Harlem Brundtland was appointed by the United Nations to chair the World Commission on Environment and Development at the end of 1983. Her statements are trite in a way, but they deserve to be repeated because they reinforce the conclusion that, after taking evidence of the international nature of the problem, there is a need to deal with the issues internationally. Mrs. Brundtland states:

"one of the most fundamental of our findings is that the problems we face are global in nature and that they defy solution by local or even national endeavour . . . There is now a growing recognition that much of today's development is not sustainable. Rather it is based on a squandering of our 'biological capital'; soil, forests, animal and plant species, even air and water. It consumes its own ecological foundations. The result has been devastating, as was bluntly stated by Bjornulf Kristiansen, a speaker at the Commission's Oslo meeting."

He said:

"The most serious threat facing the world today, apart from nuclear war, is a global ecological crisis."

Mrs. Brundtland continues:

"Many of today's economic, monetary and trade policies as well as energy, agriculture, forestry and human settlement policies, induce and reinforce non-sustainable development patterns and practices. Widespread poverty and concentrated affluence conspire to increase environmental degradation, to increase pressures on resources and to increase inequities that lead to global instability and political tension. Indeed, poverty can be said to be one of the most important environmental problems."

One witness who gave evidence in Ottawa said:

"Poverty is self-sustaining, a self-generating process that compels people to live in a way which destroys valuable soils, water resources and forests. Much of the environmental degradation is the result of the desperate search by the poor and the landless for such basic needs as fuel, food and water. Small farmers are held responsible for environmental destruction as if they had a choice of resources to depend on for their livelihood, when they really don't. In the context of basic survival, today's needs tend to overshadow consideration for the environmental future. It is poverty that is responsible for the destruction of resources, not the poor."

It is not that the poor are unaware of the problem. I met an impressive man last year, who was the leader or representative of a group in north India, mainly women, who have taken to protecting their trees by hugging them, and they received one of the Right Livelihood awards. They did this to protect what is both necessary for their ecology and their community. They have taken direct action and it has been successful.

Mrs. Brundtland continued:

"We are beginning to learn that there are better ways to manage our small planet than to 'react and cure': we must anticipate and prevent. This may sound simple and obvious, but it requires that we recognise environment and development as essential and mutually reinforcing goals. We must learn that we cannot separate the two. The environment is not a luxury, nor can it be postponed until later. Environmental considerations must be built into development at the earliest possible stage, otherwise it will not be economically sustainable. The world—and especially the Third world—is littered with cases of 'development-without-environment', often aid-supported, that have literally consumed their own bases—in soil, in water and other resources—and ended up reducing rather than increasing the future economic potential of their countries.

Finally, it requires that we begin to take a much broader view of environmental policy, seeing it not just as air, water, waste and noise policy, but more importantly as resource, energy, agricultural and transportation policy, and development assistance, trade and economic policy".

I started there because that was the conclusion by the representatives of the international community, which made it clear that we must look at the subject as a whole. Of course, the subject is made up of component parts, and I now want to deal with them in turn.

Land is a delicate, finite and precious resource. Every year we lose more than 200,000 sq km of land to desert. That happens because of erosion, over-grazing, over-ploughing, poor irrigation and bad farming techniques generally. According to United Nations estimates, every 10 years the Sahara desert alone spreads by the size of Czechoslovakia. History shows repeatedly how more ancient civilisations have been destroyed by desertification than by conquest. There are some very telling examples. The Sahel comprised what once were great civilisations. Timbuktu, which we are all taught in primary education was the end of the earth—the furthest and most remote place one could ever get to—was the centre of a vast empire at the time of the Roman empire. The Lebanon was once famous for its magnificent cedars, which it exported around the world, and were used to build the royal palaces of Egypt, of Babylon and of Assyria, but there are not many of those left. The pattern has been changed as much by ecological as by military or economic change. It is important to recognise that.

By straining land in the short term, the very agricultural practices that produce the food surpluses, which enable civilisations to flourish, starve them in the long term. For example, the area along the southern Mediterranean—all the African shoreline—used to produce the wheat for the Roman empire. Now there is very little production of wheat or other crops; it is very much desert with, I suppose, some tourism thrown in. A once grain-rich area has given way to sand.

Desertification is a major international problem. The expansion of deserts has been far more rapid in the past few decades. We must realise that other countries feel the consequences of that process. The whole international economic order is affected.

Global warming is recognised as a cause of desert expansion. There was an interesting conference in Toronto at the end of June. It considered, even if not for the first time, the climatological crisis that will arise if we continue to interfere with the atmosphere. It is estimated that the earth's temperature has risen by between 0·3 and 0·7 deg. C this century. If the temperature were to decrease by only 4 per cent. on average, we would be into a new ice age. An increase of 0·3 per cent. is therefore enormously significant.

The greenhouse effect contributes to global warming. The concept is now well known and it is the subject of parliamentary questions. It was debated in the other place earlier today. Its causes are becoming clearer. They are gases and pollutants which are used by man, the felling and burning of tropical rain forests and additional carbon dioxide, methane and fluoridated hydrocarbons and other gases which accumulate in the atmosphere, preventing

[Mr. Simon Hughes]

heat from bouncing back into space. The climatological consequences of that are potentially devastating. Many cities could be flooded within 50 or 60 years. If Antarctica were to melt just a little, we would face enormous problems, and they would be the result of our own activity.

There are simplistic ways in which to tackle the problem, such as dealing with CFCs and gas pollution produced privately and by industry, but we must co-operate internationally to anticipate and deal with the potential crisis.

We destroy the earth's resources substantially through soil erosion. Scientists estimate that soil which can have taken between 200 and 120,000 years to form can be lost in a few years. We know from our own gardens that topsoil is vulnerable. It is much needed and can be "lost" easily. Topsoil only 2 cm thick can be removed by wind or water power, but farming throughout the world depends on it. Soil was previously able to form at the same rate as it was eroded, but the pace of erosion now outstrips reformation alarmingly.

The wind erodes soil when natural vegetation cover is removed. Man might cut down forest or overgraze grassland, as happened in the American dustbowl disaster of the 1930s. The soil was lost because of the interests of short-term production. A very odd phenomenon resulted. About 350 million tonnes of fertile topsoil were blown up into a giant cloud, even producing an eclipse. The topsoil was lost and it has taken half a century to recover from that climatological aberration. The retention of soil for farming in this country and north America, particularly in times when, as now, there is a substantial drought, has an important effect. Farming and incentives to farming that we encourage through our aid programme and collectively in the international community are influential.

The third form of effect on the land is water erosion. When the natural protective cover of trees and plants disappears on hills and mountains topsoil can be lost permanently. I gather that 25 million tonnes of soil is washed away by rains, rivers and flood waters every year. Next week I hope to go to north Wales where my family comes from. I have been there in August most years of my life, when there is normally a substantial amount of heavy rain. We see in a small way exactly what happens. It is a major problem and we cannot prevent the effect of water eroding the soil, but we can work to anticipate how we recover it. That is particularly necessary in the poorest areas of the world where only one phenomenal period of heavy rain can eliminate the potential for farming for a long time.

Since farming began in the United States it is estimated that one third of the topsoil across the nation has been lost. The present escalating demand for firewood and forest land for cultivation will mean that increasing quantities of our precious land—I say that as a world citizen—will be exposed to degradation. There are deserts in every continent bordered by vast areas of semi-arid land that support huge populations, many of which are in danger of becoming deserts. We tend to forget that the semi-arid areas provide the world with 20 per cent. of food supplies and support 850 million people. If in 60 years' time they become desert, 20 per cent. of our food capacity will be lost, probably when there is an increase in population making demands on those areas.

At present, 230 million people are directly threatened by desertification, and by the year 2000, only 12 years hence, one third of the world's present farm land will be desert. That is a frightening statistic. Although that figure is reached using the scientifically agreed definition of a desert, which is according to its aridity, we will have a major problem which we must help to solve.

At the same time we must recognise that if we farm over-intensively, whether in our country or by contributing through chemicals and so on to farming abroad, and if we interfere in the soil composition either by using chemical fertilisers, lime, humus and other ways of dealing with the acidity of the soil, or by over-intensive ploughing we shall damage irreversibly an element that we need. The issue is simple: man and woman cannot survive without food, and the earth produces it.

The second most fundamental element of our environment is air. The older citizens of this city will be more aware than most people of air pollution at its worst. I remember that when I was young we had smog the like of which we no longer see. I was brought up in what is now Greater Manchester and we certainly had some pretty grim autums and winters. Such conditions caused thousands of deaths at the turn of the century and before.

We have done better than that. The Clean Air Act 1956 was the beginning of recent legislation on these matters. Unfortunately, however, we do not yet have clean air. A number of very effective lobbying organisations are still trying to ensure not only that legislation is introduced but that when Acts such as the Control of Pollution Act 1974 are passed their provisions are implemented. Sadly, in the past decade or so there have been substantial delays between the enactment of legislation on this subject and its implementation.

We have moved pollution away from the centres of population. We have made chimneys taller and thus spared ourselves, but the pollution that we create now gets sent further afield—western and northern Europe have been the principal and doubtful "beneficiaries". It is a well known fact—we have debated the question quite often—that the forests and lakes of Europe and north America are being damaged, in some cases irreversibly, by the pollution that still comes from our manufacturing processes.

The obvious enemies are sulphur dioxide and nitrous oxides, which are discharged mainly by power station chimneys. They mix in the atmosphere to produce acid rain, which may fall near or further afield. Every time I drive up the M4 I look to see the state of the trees on either side of the motorway. People have examined, much more carefully than I, the terrible effects of acid rain in Germany and Scandinavia. The Scandinavians are still very cross with us—that is putting it nicely—because we still cause destruction to their fish stocks, lakes, fjords and trees.

Approximately 40 million tonnes of airborne sulphur dioxide were still being produced in Europe a few years ago—the equivalent of 66,000 30-tonne lorries full of sulphur being dumped directly into the lakes of Europe. In southern Norway, more than 13,000 sq km of lakes are nearly empty of fish. It is estimated that 50 per cent. of trees in West Germany are affected.

Unfortunately, we are still the dirty man of Europe. We still produce nearly 30 million tonnes of airborne sulphur every year—two thirds of which is blown away to Scandinavia. It is estimated that of the 610,000 tonnes of

sulphur deposited in Sweden every year, only about a sixth comes from there; the rest is imported, not by invitation but because we expel it.

I am sad to say that we have dragged our feet. I know that at the Environment Council in June we reached an agreement to reduce our sulphur emissions by the turn of the century. It was not as much as Opposition Members —and indeed some Conservative Members—had hoped for. Our refusal to join the 30 per cent. club is sad, and there is substantial room for improvement. I hope that the Minister will take a specific interest in that. The Department has done some good work but when it comes to the crunch we are one of the countries in Europe that has been most reluctant to agree to strict enforcement of control on our pollution.

Similarly, the ozone layer is threatened by air pollution produced on an everyday basis by our chemical processes. That produces not only harmful effects on the environment, but health consequences, too. Skin cancer is on the increase and it is suggested that a factor of 2 to 3 per cent. of its increase is attributable to the damage to the ozone layer. Ultraviolet radiation is causing increased eye disease and there are also effects on marine ecosystems, plant life, crop and timber yields and so on.

The third major element is water, the third resource in the world under threat. Our planet's waters have been contaminated by waste deposited in the sea by rivers, streams, pipelines and dumping vessels. I heard on "Today in Parliament" at 11.30, over five hours ago, about a debate in the other place in which they discussed how, when we talked to the French about sewage deposits, we suggested that perhaps the answer was to make our pipelines longer. Apparently the French replied that if we built longer pipes, sending out our sewage nearer to them, they would build longer pipes, too, and we would get similar coming back. That is clearly not the way to proceed.

With the threat of unclean, environmentally unacceptable beaches—which have now to be notified; we have all had experience of visiting beaches which are foul, to put it mildly—we often have foul water. There are hazards of a short-term nature, and concern has also been expressed recently about the aluminium contamination of water in Britain. Water pollution is bad for the health of this and every other nation, bringing bacteria, viruses and other disease-causing effects. The pollutants are mainly industrial by-products—apart from sewage—and we have a responsibility to deal with this issue to protect curselves, marine and bird life.

About 3·5 million tonnes of oil is dumped into the sea every year. The Mediterranean contains an enormous amount of sewage, 85 per cent. of it untreated. If people knew that as they waited at Gatwick airport they might decide it was not such a desirable and healthy place to go for their often delayed summer holiday. Mussels and oysters are becoming increasingly unsafe to eat. Typhoid, paratyphoid, dysentery, polio, viral hepatitis and food poisoning are common. They are caused, among other things, by poisoned and contaminated water.

In addition to contaminating the water, the world has been guilty of over-fishing and over-drawing from the marine environment. We cannot afford to do that. For example, nearly one third of Peru's foreign exchange is earned through anchovy fishing. In 1974, it fished 9 million tonnes of anchovies, and the world was grateful for the fish. But those methods allowed woefully insufficient time for the anchovies to breed and replenish themselves, and by 1980 the catch had gone down to 1 million tonnes. One could give many other examples worldwide. That sort of foolish over-exploitation causes many problems.

In Britain and elsewhere we rely on estuaries for the breeding of fish, crustaceans, and so on. But that is where pollution is at its greatest because of chemical, industrial and sewage pollution. As a result, many of the world's estuaries are dying. We cannot put off dealing with that problem.

If, as estimated, there is a 200 to 300 per cent. increase in water withdrawals in the world by the end of the century, we must make sure that the water that is withdrawn is suitable and is used properly. At the same time, the water table is falling in many key agricultural areas. Much water needed for irrigation is being lost through over-evaporation and transpiration and is not available for re-use.

If we do not have water we will perish. Earth, air and water are the staple elements of our planet's life-support system. With them we have the basis for food and shelter. With them we can accommodate, feed and provide the resources for the increasing global population, and that is one of the remaining issues with which the world must deal.

Although world population growth has been slowing since 1965 to 1970, the highest annual increase, averaging 87 million extra people per year, will be between 1990 and 2010. The global total has already passed 5 billion and may reach more than 10 billion before it starts to level out—and 96 per cent. of that growth will be in the developing countries. Regional trends are highly diverse. Birth rates remain high in Africa and western Asia, growing at 3 per cent. and 2·8 per cent. per year respectively. In Latin America and south Asia the figures are 2·3 per cent. and 2·2 per cent. and have started to slow down. In east Asia, the increase has slowed considerably. Rapid population growth, coupled with wasteful or polluting technologies and lifestyles, are depleting the planet's finite resources and jeopardising our life-support systems of soil, forest and climate. We can produce enough food to feed future populations, but in 73 of the 122 developing countries food production has fallen behind population growth, arable land per person is declining and in many countries population exceeds, or soon will exceed, the carrying capacity of the land. That is a vital area to address in terms of political pressure.

Aid for population programmes is still inadequate. Since 1965, when the total was just £10,000, it has grown to £1 million and then to £15·5 million, but population programmes receive only 1 per cent. of total British aid compared with an OECD average of 1·5 per cent. British bilateral aid is patchy, with one or two projects accounting for a large chunk of the aid. In 1984 and 1985, two thirds of our bilateral aid for population programmes went to one project in Orissa state in India. The whole of sub-Saharan Africa received an average of only £235,000 per year from us in the three years from 1982 to 1985—the price of a four-bedroom flat in Hampstead, as was pointed out in a briefing note that we all received, and scarcely an acceptable contribution on a world scale from the British Government.

Aid for population programmes drawing attention to the dangers of failure to act and concern that we give more

[Mr. Simon Hughes]

in overseas aid must be among the key elements of our strategy in the future. We must anticipate the greater problems that lie ahead.

We must educate to ensure that our young people are aware of their global responsibility and invest in that education. We must encourage the idea that an environmental approach to all our activities, particularly our economic activity, is a prerequisite for a sustainable economy for us all in this and every other country. Those are the principles of environmental awareness that we must follow.

I end as I began, with a quotation from Mrs. Brundtland:

"We stand at a crossroads. In the past the pursuit of 'progress' in the industrialised West was founded on four dominant beliefs: that people dominate the earth, that they are masters of their destiny, that the world is vast and unlimited, and that history is a process of advancement, with every problem solvable. But we must now call into question those four basic beliefs. Instead, the essential basis for sustainable development must be the concern for the world's environment. We need individual participation at all levels in the care of the planet and, based on this deeper and wider perception of the basis of life and human activity, we need profound changes in economic and social attitudes. If the planet is to be saved, this is a battle we are all called on to fight."

Government and Parliament have a responsibility to respond to an international call such as that. Whether it is food, energy, arms, defence, aid or education policy, we have a collective responsibility to ensure that all activity of Government makes for a much greater priority to be attached to it. I believe that the international community is now ready to be pushed into taking that sort of action. I hope that our Government will make international environment and responsibility a major political priority. I trust that we shall see that reflected in an increasing amount of attention being given to these matters in this place, and increasing resources given to them on behalf of the people of Britain, both in energy and in money.

5.5 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mrs. Virginia Bottomley): It is a privilege and an honour to reply to the debate, which has centred on environmental issues. I thank the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) for raising such important questions, and especially for presenting his remarks in such a thoughtful, detailed and well-informed fashion. I thank him for his kind remarks about my appointment. I have taken an interest in our environment throughout my career, and it is an exciting challenge to tackle the many problems that remain to be solved.

The Government's environment record is a good one. One of the first papers that I read this week was the Department's recent publication that is entitled "Protecting Your Environment". This excellent guide, which understandably had to be reprinted to meet public demand, sets out succinctly and convincingly the Government's policy for environmental protection. Our basic principles stress the need to base decisions on the best available scientific foundation, to adopt a preventive approach and when necessary take precautionary measures, to set realistic goals for the quality of the environment, and to take full account of technical feasibility and economic considerations. We want to ensure that the public are aware of the state of our environment and that their feelings are reflected in our policies, which are designed to develop the concept of the best practicable environmental option. We have published today a consultation paper on integrated pollution control.

We recognise the international dimension to so many environmental problems, and welcome the fact that the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey has chosen to focus on this aspect of the subject. We play our full part in finding international remedies.

I am especially keen to work more closely with the many environmental groups that have done so much to raise the profile of environment matters, and with the press and the journalists who keep the public better informed and more enlightened about the vital importance of developing policies for the environment worldwide.

I am looking forward to working with my noble Friend Lord Caithness, the Minister of State, who has already proved his commitment to the environmental cause as well as showing his great skills as an international negotiator. The hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey referred to some confusion about the roles of various individuals. My noble Friend will still lead on this subject, but I am pleased to say that I shall be speaking on environmental protection in this place.

I hope that the House will join me in paying a tribute to my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State with responsibilities for sport. He has shown his understanding and persuasive abilities in this place when discussing these important topics.

I pay a personal tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Broxbourne (Mrs. Roe). She is a much valued parliamentary colleague whose concern for rural housing, the provision of low-cost houses and protecting villages has greatly impressed the House. Her personal commitment to and support of the housing association movement is well known to us all in this place and to many outside.

Before dealing with the issues that particularly affect the Department, I shall deal briefly with some of the arguments that the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey was advancing, which is some respects should more properly be raised by the hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston). Having had the privilege to serve my hon. Friend the Minister for Overseas Development earlier in my time here, I am well aware of the serious commitment the Overseas Development Administration has to many of the topics raised by the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey. He rightly pointed out the extent to which these subjects cross departmental boundaries. One of the privileges of being a Back Bencher that I am quite sad to lose is that of being able to stroll freely across Departments. I shall now have to observe the convention and confine my remarks primarily to my own Department.

I refer the hon. Gentleman to the ODA booklet "The Environment and the British Aid Programme". The questions of preservation of soil, desertification and tropical rain forests were all given keen attention during the International Year of the Environment, and I think that he will find there a good deal of useful material. The tackling of population expansion, which the hon. Gentleman also mentioned, is also a matter primarily for the Overseas Development Minister. The Government accept the grave threat to sustainable development posed by rapidly increasing populations in many poorer parts of

the world, and we share many of the Brundtland report's conclusions about giving more priority to support for primary health care activities, with special emphasis on mother-and-child health and family planning.

I hope that the hon. Gentleman will agree that my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has taken great steps to spell out the need for reform of the common agricultural policy, and to consider the overproduction in Europe and the United States in the context of the shortages in many Third world countries. Again I refer the hon. Gentleman to the work done by the Minister for Overseas Development on the reform of food aid, in which he has given priority to these issues.

Let me return to the responsibilities more directly in my Department, particularly the international aspects. Clearly the European Community plays a central role. More and more legislation in Brussels affects our lives here. Important EC legislation helps to govern the quality of the air we breathe, the water we drink, the seas and the life that surround us, and even our stratosphere. This is not an imposition; the Government are positively committed to improving the quality of our environment. We see Europe as a challenge, an opportunity to share our concern for the environment and to work together with others on transboundary issues to shape the environmental future for our own children and those of our fellow Europeans.

A major event last year was the European Year of the Environment, which was a great success in the United Kingdom. Our national committee included many non-governmental bodies, which played a crucial role. It mounted an energetic publicity campaign which stimulated hundreds of first-rate, small-scale environmental projects. This is relevant to what was said by the hon. Gentleman in relation to the increasing public awareness, interest and concern about these important subjects.

The European Year closed on 31 March, and its momentum led within three months to European Ministers agreeing far-reaching measures to protect the environment. The positive role played by the United Kingdom in helping to bring about those achievements was of major significance.

On 16 June, after four and a half years of difficult negotiations, the Environment Council reached agreement on the large combustion plants directive: a phased programme of reductions in emissions of sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxide from power stations and other large combustion plants. Even more far-reaching was the agreement to ratify and implement the Montreal protocol. I am glad to say that we also reached agreements in December 1987 and June this year on pollution standards for medium and small cars. June also saw the virtual conclusion of negotiations on amendments to the so-called Seveso directive, which deals with major accident hazards from chemical stores. We also made substantial progress on a draft directive aimed at controlling waste from the titanium dioxide industry. We hope it will be possible to sew up an agreement in November.

The hon. Gentleman rightly spoke about the importance of air pollution. Many thought that the Clean Air Act 1956 would solve the problem. It was a major improvement and a recognition of the need, but of course new threats have emerged and developed since then.

This year we have reached historic agreements on the means to protect the quality of our air. I thought that the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey was a little mean-spirited in his description of the country's performance in that regard.

The outstanding agreement is the large combustion plants directive. The directive commits the United Kingdom to reducing 1980 levels of sulphur dioxide emissions from existing large combustion plants by 20 per cent. by 1993, by 40 per cent. by 1995 and by 60 per cent. by 2003; and nitrogen oxide emissions by 15 per cent. by 1993 and by 30 per cent. by 1998, again from a 1980 base.

Before that agreement, the United Kingdom was already undertaking a substantial £1 billion programme to reduce acid emissions, the second largest in Europe. That included plans to retrofit three major Central Electricty Generating Board coal-fired power stations with flue gas desulphurisation equipment and to fit all major CEGB coal-fired power stations with low-nitrogen oxide burners. All new coal-fired power stations are required to have technology to control acid emissions. The commitment undertaken in the directive will require substantial further effort over and above existing programmes.

The United Kingdom can be proud of the major part it is playing in reducing European emissions and helping to bring about an end to the acid rain problem.

Vehicle emissions are another important component of acid rain. They are set to fall substantially following the Government's intention to introduce, as soon as practicable, tighter new exhaust emission standards agreed in the European Community in December. Still further progress was made last month when EC Environment Ministers reached agreement, subject to views of the European Parliament, on the further tightening of standards for small cars.

I would like to point out the great strides we have made in promoting sales of unleaded petrol. The Government are fully committed to the introduction of unleaded petrol. My first engagement in the Department was to chair the unleaded petrol group, which brings together the oil and motor industries, consumers and Government Departments to work for a smooth transition to the new fuel. In this year's Budget the tax differential in favour of unleaded petrol increased significantly. Unleaded fuel is now being sold some 6p per gallon below the price of 4-star and comfortably below that of 2-star. There are powerful incentives for motorists to save money and contribute to a cleaner environment.

I urge all motorists to find out whether their cars can use unleaded petrol—two thirds of cars can run on unleaded petrol, although some may need a minor adjustment. Some 1,520 petrol stations now sell unleaded petrol—a significant improvement, but there is still further to go. Environmental groups, fuel companies, vehicle manufacturers and the media, working with the Government, must urgently get the message across to more motorists.

Global issues need global solutions. Protection of the ozone layer is a classic instance of the need for action on an international basis. The United Kingdom was one of the first countries—and the first EC member state—to ratify the Vienna convention on the protection of the ozone layer, which we understand is due to enter into force in September. We played an active part in negotiating the Montreal protocol to control emissions of chlorofluorocarbons. That protocol is a landmark in international

[Mrs. Virginia Bottomley]

co-operation on the environment. It is the first international measure designed to prevent rather than cure a global environmental problem.

Our first priority—shared with our partners in the EC—is to ensure that the protocol enters into force on 1 January 1989 as planned and with the widest possible participation. On 16 June the Council of Environment Ministers agreed, in principle, proposals for the Community and for all the members states to ratify the protocol before the end of this year and to implement it in the EC. Clearly, however, in the light of important scientific developments since Montreal we must look ahead to the process of assessment and review of the protocol measures. British scientists, economists and officials will be participating fully in the international meetings in the Netherlands in October which will set the process in hand. By then the Department's stratospheric ozone review group will have published its second report, which will give a full assessment of the latest evidence. In the meantime, we have noted carefully the warning in the executive summary of the group's report issued last month about the need to strengthen the protocol. The Environment Council, on 16 June, gave a clear political signal in its resolution on the ozone layer about the importance of going beyond Montreal and calling for further measures on a voluntary basis to reduce the use of CFCs and halons to the maximum possible extent.

The hon. Gentleman mentioned research. I can assure him that the NERC changes will not affect research on stratospheric ozone. The United Kingdom has a strong programme of stratospheric ozone research. British scientists were involved in the Antarctic campaign last September, and will be involved in the Arctic programme next January. The Department supports this and other work and keeps in close touch with the results of other United Kingdom research programmes, principally the Meteorological Office, NERC and SERC, collectively amounting to some £2 million a year. The United Kingdom has taken the initiative in bringing together research programme managers from EC and EFTA countries to discuss how stratospheric ozone research in Europe should be co-ordinated. Progress on that front has been encouraging.

The protocol provides a stimulus to research into alternatives. The two United Kingdom producers are actively engaged in research and development work to find substitutes and have joined an international consortium to speed their commercial development.

We are all well aware of the importance of the issue of climate change, raised by the hon. Gentleman. As my noble Friend said in a message to last month's conference on the changing atmosphere in Toronto, the principle of sustainable development faces possibly its greatest challenge in man-made climate change. Its causes and effects pose difficult and challenging problems which can be solved only internationally. There are great uncertainties, but it is important to reduce them as quickly as possible by co-ordinated international research. The Department has increased spending on climate change research and has commissioned a study of possible impacts of climate change on the natural environment of the United Kingdom. There are measures which can be taken now on the basis of our current understanding. For example, CFCs and halons are also greenhouse gases. The Montreal measure will not only benefit the ozone layer but reduce the greenhouse effect.

Turning to the water environment, the hon. Gentleman mentioned bathing and the water round our beaches. I can assure him that £70 million a year is already being spent on cleaning up bathing water, and it is likely that the amount will increase.

The United Kingdom has a history of international collaboration on measures to prevent and remedy pollution. Because of our island location, we do not suffer from the problems of transboundary pollution in the same way as many of our continental partners situated on major international waterways. As a result, much of our collaborative effort has been directed towards combating pollution of the seas.

The North sea is one area in which the United Kingdom has taken a series of initiatives, together with its North sea partners, to make a real contribution towards protecting and improving the international environment. Last November my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State hosted the second international conference on protection of the North sea. Its successful outcome was internationally acknowledged.

The United Kingdom has taken an early lead in implementing the conference declaration. In February the Department published a detailed guidance note on implementation addressed to water authorities, industry and other relevant agencies throughout the United Kingdom. Today we are publishing our detailed proposals for reduction of dangeous substance inputs to rivers. Earlier in the year a new programme of regular aerial surveillance was launched by the Department of Transort to monitor illegal discharges by ships and offshore installations. In March, we hosted the inaugural meeting of the international scientific task force and, together with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution is now reviewing licences for liquid industrial waste dumping and incineration.

Mr. Allan Rogers (Rhondda): Will the hon. Lady give an undertaking that, in investigating those issues, her Department will look closely at the development of "the polluter pays" principle so that the people who pollute our waterways pay for the cleaning up?

Mrs. Bottomley: I thank the hon. Gentleman for making that point. I shall certainly consider it with some urgency. I know that it is the subject of discussion, and I shall provide him with a more considered response.

Many of the issues raised tonight—and many more—are covered in depth in the Government's response produced this week to the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, "Our Common Future". The hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey paid his repects to and drew at length on the Brundtland report. Like his, the Government's response recognises the importance of a variety of Departments. They include the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the ODA, the Department of Trade and Industry, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the Department of Energy, the DHSS—or rather the DH and the DSS—the Ministry of Defence, the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland Offices, the Treasury and indeed the Prime Minister herself——

Mr. Simon Hughes: That shows better than anything I could have said the importance of giving one Department a cross-departmental lead responsibility in environmental matters. In economic affairs, it is impossible for Departments to run their finances without someone from the Treasury taking charge. Clearly, as the Minister's list shows, the same needs to apply to environmental matters. Either her Department or another newly created one needs to be in charge and bring others together.

Mrs. Bottomley: An excellent response has been produced by co-ordination and collaboration, and I find no fault or difficulty in that. I commend that response to the hon. Gentleman and other hon. Members.

When the Brundtland report was launched in April 1987 the Government gave it an immediate and warm welcome. The response, "Our Common Future", examines the report point by point in more than 60 pages of detailed commentary. It demonstrates where we have already made progress in putting the message of the report in hand. For example, all Government Departments have been asked to examine their policies against it. But the report also recognises that many of the problems identified will require concerted international efforts if they are to be resolved. We are working hard through various international organisations, notably the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the United Nations environment programme, to follow up the report. And we have seconded a senior Government official to help the Norwegian Government with their preparations for a major follow-up conference in 1990 to review progress. Copies of "Our Perspective" have already been placed in the Library. I would thoroughly commend it as suitable holiday reading for all hon. Members.

As my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister says in her foreword, "Our Perspective" describes where we stand in the United Kingdom. It is intended to inform interested organisations and individuals at home, and to stimulate further international consideration of the report, notably within the OECD and the United Nations. I see it also as a contribution to the ministerial conference which the Norwegian Government will hold in 1990 to examine what progress we have made to safeguard "Our Common Future".

The Prime Minister's remarks underline the nature of the task that lies ahead. Considerable and encouraging progress has already been made on international measures to protect the environment. The Government have played a leading and constructive role in a series of important achievements. In the past year the Montreal protocol was signed and the successful second North sea conference held. In the past few months agreement has been reached on the European Community large combustion plants directive and the Luxembourg vehicle emissions package. The EC ratification and implementation of the Montreal protocol, the endorsement of the Brundtland report by the Toronto economic summit and the publication of our formal response to it have all occurred in recent months. Only a consultation paper on integrated pollution control was published.

I congratulate the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey on raising this vital subject, and I assure him that I shall give serious consideration to what he said. This has been an excellent opportunity to emphasise the great importance that the Government attach to improving and preserving the environment, to highlight a number of the Government's achievements in this crucial area and to point the way ahead.

National Health Service (Lottery)

5.28 am*

Mr. Simon Burns (Chelmsford): I should like to take this opportunity to thank my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health for being present at this unearthly hour of the morning, and I apologise for subjecting her to being present for the debate.

The purpose of the debate is not to discuss the funding of the National Health Service but to consider the effect of lotteries in providing additional funds for the Health Service.

People in this country enjoy a justifiably high reputation for giving generously to good causes. The Charities Aid Foundation has calculated that in 1985 there were 160,000 charities in England and Wales, which raised over £12·5 billion for good causes. Just under 9 per cent. of those charities raised money for health-related services.

Since that time, there have been the phenomena of Live Aid, telethons, the Wishing Well appeal and other fund-raising events, which have shown that we are a nation of givers.

In addition to high-profile fund-raising activities, there are different forms of local lotteries across the country, which raise money for a variety of richly deserving causes, including the Health Service.

In my constituency there is the excellent Friends of St. John's hospital, which is always raising funds through lotteries, even if they are called raffles. Two children's intensive-care cots were provided for the local hospital by people in the area joining together and raising money through fetes, collections and raffles.

In the past two months, Trafford health authority has announced the setting up of a local lottery to help finance a breast cancer screening unit, a coronary-prevention programme and a scheme to help children who have special emotional and learning needs. All these enterprises are laudable, but I wonder whether the prizes of dinner for two in an air-raid shelter, a trip down the Manchester sewers or a day at an operating theatre as an observer will appeal to everyone.

While raffles and other fund-raising activities have gone from strength to strength in the past few years, the same cannot be said of local lotteries, which are allowed under the Lotteries and Amusements Act 1976. They must be registered with the Gaming Board for Great Britain or a local authority.

In the past five years, total ticket sales and the number of lotteries have declined dramatically. In 1983-84 there were 4,045 local lotteries registered with the Gaming Board for Great Britain, with total ticket sales of £40·4 million. In 1987-88 the number had fallen to 1,401 lotteries, with total ticket sales of £21·5 million. These figures show a decline of 76 per cent. and 59 per cent., respectively, over that period.

Why have local lotteries, which raise additional funds for the Health Service and other good causes, fallen off so much while other forms of fund raising have done so well? The answer is that local lotteries are too small to generate enough interest to be a success. They dilute their effects, and the maximum prize money of £2,000 or £6,000 is too low. The fact that draws do not take place for weeks or months after the sale of tickets dilutes excitement, anticipation and interest to the point where most people will not participate.

I am convinced that the answer to that problem, which would bring immense additional financial benefit to the National Health Service, would be a single, legal national lottery. It would help to avoid the problems that we have seen over the past few months. Organisations, such as the National hospital trust, have tried to get round existing lotteries laws and jump the gun. With a properly run national lottery, over £1 billion could be raised for the National Health Service by the fourth year of its operation. That money could be spent on extra equipment, such as kidney machines, computerised axial tomographic scans, intensive-care cots or on providing more accommodation so that parents could live near the hospital when their children had to stay in hospital for more than a day.

A national lottery would harness the deep-seated generosity of the British public and provide invaluable additional funds in a way that would create excitement and the reassurance that if somebody does not win a prize they will at least have the satisfaction of knowing that the money they have lost has gone to a good cause. In that way they would not feel that it was money down the drain. The vast majority of British people are not puritanical. They enjoy a harmless flutter and would warmly welcome an initiative of this nature.

It must not be forgotten that this idea is not particularly new or revolutionary. The first lottery in England was in 1569 to raise money for repairing the Cinque ports and our sea defences.

Mr. Peter Thurnham (Bolton, North-East): Will my hon. Friend accept that there is more than one sort of lottery in life? Some people are born healthy and others are born unhealthy. Some people who are born with handicaps are able to go to court and come out with £500,000 if they can blame somebody else, but some people come out with nothing and have to carry a burden all their life. Any source of funds that can help the Health Service is of help to them.

Mr. Burns: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his remarks and I agree with him.

Since 1569 and the first lottery, lotteries have been used to raise money to bring fresh water to London and for the ransom of English slaves in Tunis in 1660. Just as the Sydney opera house was built by lottery money, so was the British museum in the 1750s, with the first prize being a staggering £200,000.

Since then, supporters of national lotteries have ranged from the 1978 Royal Commission on gambling, which concluded that

"there should be a single national lottery for good causes",

to Sir Robin Day, who wrote in *The Times* in May 1987 that he believed that a national lottery

"would greatly enrich the national life . . . and be hugely popular into the bargain."

Even the noble Lord Lord Jenkins of Hillhead, in a previous incarnation as Labour's Chancellor of the Exchequer in the 1960s, supported the idea of a national lottery.

A national lottery for the Health Service would be monopolistic. That might seem odd coming from someone like myself who believes passionately in deregulation. However, I have reached that conclusion because all the

advice I have been given from directors of state lotteries in New Jersey, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Ontario is that it is only with a single lottery that the scheme will work properly because it will not dilute the effect of maximising the fund-raising initiative or general excitement generated, which is so important to the success of a lottery.

There should be an independent monitoring body such as the Gaming Board to ensure that the lottery was being run properly and honestly. The day-to-day running of a national lottery should be put out to private tender and a private company with proven expertise in that business should be appointed to run it. The successful company should have a fixed-term contract of three or five years and should provide all the money to finance the investment in setting up the system, as is done in the United States.

I would envisage 20,000 to 25,000 retail outlets using the latest technology and all linked to a central computer to register the sale of tickets and make the draw. Points of sale would be in existing retail outlets such as tobacconists, confectioners, newsagents, supermarkets, corner shops and sub-post offices. It would provide a valuable additional income for those outlets. In certain instances it may help to keep open small shops in rural areas.

There would be a series of games costing either 50p or £1 and would include lotto, which has proved to be so popular in newspapers such as *The Sun*, and instant games. The lotto games would be drawn daily and weekly with a number of smaller prizes and one large prize at the top of the pyramid. If the large prize was not won, it would be rolled over to the next draw and in that way substantial prizes could be won. Again, that would contribute to the publicity of the scheme and would help generate excitement and encourage people to buy tickets.

Lotto, which is used in some of our national newspapers, and the football pools show that people are attracted by the idea of being able to win a substantial sum of money in one go. Looking at the money that would then go to the National Health Service, the costs would break down as follows. Operating and advertising would initially be no more than 15 per cent. of the total sales revenue per year. That figure should and could be reduced to between 8 and 10 per cent. once the lottery is firmly established. Prize money would be 50 per cent. of sales revenue and the money that would go to the National Health Service would start at 35 per cent. of sales revenue in the first year and rise to 40 per cent. by the fifth year.

The example of other countries—we are the only country in Western Europe that does not have a national lottery—suggests that by the fourth year of operations a British national lottery could raise £1 billion for the Health Service on a total sales revenue of £2·8 billion. That figure is arrived at by projecting the revenue for the Health Service of £246 million in the first year on a sales revenue of £703 million; of £564 million in the second year on a sales revenue of £1·6 billion; and of £836 million in the third year on a sales revenue of £2·2 billion.

If hon. Members doubt those figures, I suggest that they examine the sales revenues that have been generated in other countries. In Spain, in 1986, the sales revenue was £3·5 billion; in the 22 states in America that have lotteries it was £7·3 billion; and the story is similar in France, West Germany and Australia. With that sort of money being created, the Great Ormond street Wishing Well appeal could have received its money in two weeks and Peter Pan's profits could have been used for further items of expenditure in that hospital.

The other issue at stake is that when 1992 arrives and we have a European internal market I understand that there will be nothing to stop lottery tickets from France, Spain, West Germany or anywhere else in the Community being sold legally in this country. If there is no lottery here for the National Health Service or any other good cause, the people who buy those tickets in this country in the hope of winning a prize will be contributing their money to some foreign good cause rather than to one in this country. In my view, that would be a grave error.

I should now like to deal briefly with those critics who claim that a national lottery for the Health Service would encourage gambling or take money from existing fund-raising activities. I accept that there are people who have serious misgivings about gambling, but I wonder how many take part in lotteries when they go to their local church fete, their Conservative garden party, their SLD Chablis and Brie do, or their Labour fund-raising functions. All such functions hold raffles to raise money. It is the most elementary form of lottery in this country, but nobody raises a hair because in the view of the people attending the money is going to a good cause. To my mind, a national lottery for the Health Service would come in the same bracket.

Similarly, people will claim that a national lottery would deter other fund-raising activities. That is true but only with regard to the football pool companies. Over a number of years, their revenue would decline because the number of people who play the football pools would decline correspondingly as they bought tickets in the national lottery instead. Football pools are, to all intents and purposes, a national lottery, but with the difference that, although they pay taxes to the Treasury and donate about £16 million to the football clubs, any profits that they make go into the companies' coffers. Surely that money would be better going to the Health Service. Perhaps there should be a system that complements the football pools with a lottery. People would then have a choice between the two.

Some people also fear that a national lottery would deprive existing charities of funds. I do not share that fear, nor do many charity organisations and organisers with whom I have discussed this. They also believe that a national lottery would simply complement the existing system and in some ways would help the charities because, by encouraging people to give money to good causes, they would be encouraged to give money to a local charity as well. The experience in Massachusetts and Ontario shows that charities do not lose out by the presence of a national lottery.

There is also an argument that the Treasury would try to get its hands on the money and absorb it into general public expenditure. That is a too cynical view of the Treasury and how it behaves. The Treasury would not behave like that, because it would consider the experience in other countries where treasuries or exchequers do not poach the money.

If people are worried that the Treasury would hover over the money like a vulture waiting to grab it, the money can be denied to the Treasury if it is never given to it. The money could be placed in a separate fund, organised by the great and the good who have experience of running charities or of the health care sector. Local hospitals could

[Mr. Burns]

contact them directly with appeals for money or equipment and hospitals that met the criteria could receive money.

Lotteries have a role to play in providing additional funds for the Health Service. I believe that a single national lottery would fulfil that role, providing a great deal of money for the Health Service and an immeasurable amount of fun for millions of people who would welcome the idea by supporting it and buying the tickets. They would ensure that it was the success that I passionately believe it would be.

5.46 am

Mr. Peter Thurnham (Bolton, North-East): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Chelmsford (Mr. Burns) on his good fortune in being drawn in the ballot in such a position that his debate has been reached. I also applied for a place in this debate and was drawn at No. 16. However, it is unlikely that I shall be reached.

I welcome all sources of additional funds for the National Health Service. My hon. Friend the Member for Chelmsford made an excellent case for a major lottery. I believe that a large national lottery could stimulate the collection of funds in small local lotteries. However, some people feel that a large national lottery would draw funds away from small local lotteries which have always done so much to raise funds for local hospitals.

In Bolton a great deal of money has been raised for equipment for the local hospitals and for the larger hospitals in the region, such as the Christies hospital for cancer in Manchester. Such small local lotteries could well be stimulated by general interest in a larger lottery for the Health Service.

I welcome the introduction of another source of funds for the Health Service, because health itself is a lottery. The point that I made to my hon. Friend the Member for Chelmsford earlier is that it is all a matter of luck. Some people are born with good health and some without it. Some 2 per cent. of children are born with a registrable handicap. Scientists have said that cancer is, in many cases, a purely random process. It is all a matter of chance whether some of us will suffer from a disease that will kill us while others will live.

About one child in 50 is born with a registrable handicap. Of those, a further one in 50 has a major handicap which presents massive problems to the family when the child is born. Many of the children fail to survive, but with modern medicinal methods increasing numbers survive to become adults. Parents may have been able to cope with young children, but as they grow old they struggle desperately to manage youngsters who may grow physically into adults, but have severe mental handicaps.

If parents cannot manage, their children may have to go into a National Health hospital or into some other institution, or be adopted or fostered by other families who are able to cope. I draw attention to an appeal for funds by the British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering, which says that it costs £2,000 to find new parents for each severely handicapped child. It is appealing for an extra £50,000 during 1988 to meet the increasing demand for its services. Perhaps that is the sort of cause that could benefit from the moneys raised in a national lottery.

Bolton has a better record than most both for care in the community and for the fostering and adoption of not only healthy, but handicapped children. It has been chosen as a pilot area for care in the community.

I should like to address my remarks to the funding of this aspect of the Health Service which would benefit from the moneys raised in a lottery. Care in the community has been the Government's policy for 25 years, but it still causes a great deal of confusion. I was surprised to read that that confusion exists not only in the minds of the public, but in the minds of mandarins. *New Society* of 18 September 1987 stated that a former DHSS permanent secretary apparently said to his staff:

"If you are not confused about community care, it shows you are not thinking clearly."

I felt then that I had, perhaps, been thinking clearly about this subject all along.

As I said, Bolton has been chosen as a pilot area for care in the community policies. Families who live in the area feel that there is good statutory provision up to the age of 19, but after that there is a cliff edge with little beyond. The families say that they need good respite care so that they can cope for part of the time themselves with the confidence that their handicapped young adult is being properly cared for during the rest of the week.

In Bolton I helped to carry out a survey of families with handicapped children over the age of 19. That showed that many of them are unhappy with the services available to them. If respite care was more readily available, many parents feel that the respite homes could become more permanent homes as their children become older and they themselves reach the end of their lives.

In my constituency some of the most desperate cases that I have come across fall into that category. I have encouraged parents to form a handicapped action group, and I have helped them to prepare a survey of their needs. After interviews with some 40 carers with very severely handicapped children—that includes people who may have the minds of children, but have the bodies of 30 or 40-year-olds—it was clear that there was a need for much improved services.

My hon. Friend the Member for Chelmsford will be aware of the Audit Commission's report and the Griffiths report, which first reflected the tension which inevitably exists between individuals, the Health Service and other providers in the local area and central Government.

We would all like to know what the Government's response will be to the Griffiths report on care in the community. I hope that the Government will make clear which Minister has responsibility for care in the community, especially after the division of the Department of Health and Social Security.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): I appreciate the hon. Gentleman's interest in the subject, but at the same time I feel that he is poaching on another hon. Member's debate. If he relates his remarks much more to funding the National Health Service rather than to care in the community, I will hear him out. I ask him to try to relate his comments much more to the subject before us.

Mr. Thurnham: I am grateful for your clarification, Madam Deputy Speaker.

More funding is needed for Health Service provision in this area. The feeling that there is insufficient funding, and of uncertainty about how it is to be provided, has led to

confusion about provision for the mentally ill and those who suffer from some mental disorder. There is confusion nationally as well. Funds must be allocated properly.

If additional funds were made available through a lottery, perhaps they could be used to smooth out the difficulties caused by funding by different local departments. The division of the Department of Health and Social Security may add to the confusion. I do not know whether responsibility for care in the community will lie with the Department of Health or with the Department of Social Security, the address of which may now be known as the DOSS house. Perhaps my hon. Friend the Minister has not been able to establish which is responsible in the short time that the two Departments have been established.

No doubt my hon. Friend the Minister will be able to tell us how funds that are made available nationally will be divided between the two Departments. Griffiths said that the problem is essentially local. His solution is to give greater responsibility to local authorities. I take a different view, and ask the Government to carry out a full audit of every area in the country to assess how each area is coping. The audit could be carried out by the Social Services Inspectorate or the Audit Commission, or perhaps both, but the SSI will have to be beefed up for such a task.

I have heard good reports of both bodies, so both could make a contribution. The Government have not said when the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986 will be implemented in full. Reports, especially by the SSI, will be needed on sections 7 and 11 when they are implemented. Section 8 has already been implemented. It would be nice to know what advice my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is to give to local authorities on services that should be provided for the carers.

The survey which has been conducted in my constituency shows considerable dissatisfaction with services provided by the health authority and others. One of the worries is that if someone who suffers from a severe mental disorder is to go to one of the new neighbourhood network homes, he or she must first go to one of the local large mental institutions such as Brockhall or Calderstones to qualify for funds to come out again into a neighbourhood network home. That is bureaucratic nonsense. We must provide for people to go straight from their own family home to a neighbourhood network home without the nightmare of two moves and going into a large institution, which the family will have struggled all their lives to prevent the child from entering. That was one cause of concern.

Another was the fact that a child with a mental disorder could go to Pendlebury children's hospital, but from the age of 19 could not be seen locally and would have to go to a mental health institution to be provided with the necessary drugs or whatever. Great anxiety was expressed in the interviews, and perhaps I may write to my hon. Friend and tell her of the anxieties brought to my attention so that she can be aware of local feelings.

Without taking up further time, I conclude by again thanking my hon. Friend the Member for Chelmsford for affording me time in his debate to draw the attention of the House and the public to some of the problems in this sector of the NHS which could be eased considerably if additional funds were provided by a lottery. I hope that it would be sufficiently flexible to sort out some of the difficult areas in the care-in-the community policy where the bureaucratic nightmare of the provision of funds between all the Departments involved could be overcome by the discretion which could be exercised by the trustees of a large lottery-funded provision.

6.1 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Mrs. Edwina Currie): This has proved to be an interesting end to a lively week for this Minister and I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Chelmsford (Mr. Burns) for offering us, in a well informed and argued speech, this opportunity for considering once again some of the possible alternative forms of funding for the National Health Service. My hon. Friend will realise that policy on lotteries is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, and I shall ensure that he is aware of the points that have been made today.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, North-East (Mr. Thurnham) did me the courtesy earlier today of discussing some of these matters with me and I hope that he will accept that at present I should like to note his thoughtful remarks. I know that he will send the fruits of some of his research in Bolton to me and I look forward to it. I take his point about exactly how the allocation of responsibilities for aspects of community care will be met, and I assure him that the announcement of ministerial responsibility will be made in due course.

My hon. Friend the Member for Chelmsford mentioned some of the lotteries in the United States. A great deal of research work has gone into this. There is a strong tradition there because some of the earliest English public lotteries were run to support the new colonies. I think that the earliest was for Jamestown, Virginia. Contrary to some of the ecclesiastical history in this country, the colonists in America relied heavily on lotteries to support their churches, which were among the primary beneficiaries. There were a number of other good causes and many of those lotteries trace their history back to that time.

At roughly the same time, European Governments seized on lotteries as sources of new money. Official lotteries were started in the Netherlands in 1726, in Denmark in 1754, in Spain in 1763 and so on, and some of these lotteries are continuing. By the mid-1800s Government lotteries were falling prey to abuse and fraud, as was everything else at that time. Licensing procedures and communications were simply inadequate to the task of ensuring the integrity of the games. Profits were diverted to middle men and to pay bribes, so that the money flowing through to the designated beneficiaries was no longer sufficient to make the operation worthwhile. Therefore, by 1900 there were virtually no official lotteries in the English-speaking world, although they continued unbroken in many parts of Europe. That is why there is such a diversity of experience now between us and Europe.

Today Government lotteries are big business and represent important sources of money to many countries. Governments around the world use lottery profits to the benefit of good causes or to enlarge their general fund. Of all the countries in the developed world, not just western Europe, only the United Kingdom is without a national lottery.

My hon. Friend mentioned some countries in detail. Many people come across the glossy promotions which they give to their national lotteries and think that we

[Mrs. Edwina Currie]

should do something similar. They do not realise the cost of prizes and promotion. Administration in some established lotteries usually consumes a large proportion of the takings—sometimes as much as 60 per cent. The net benefit is comparatively modest.

Apart from that, such schemes do not enjoy consistent support. After the first year or so people tend to lose interest and new incentives must be devised to try to maintain support.

I have a little experience of lotteries myself. When I was a councillor in Birmingham, we tried to take the opportunity presented to us by a local lottery, which went very successfully for a while. A substantial sum was raised in the city. However, as with other local lotteries, after a couple of years interest dropped away and so did the money. Fairly rapidly, the administrative costs started to swallow a much larger proportion of the money that was being offered by Birmingham citizens.

My hon. Friend will know that a Royal Commission on gambling reported in 1978. It concluded that it would be inappropriate to use a national lottery to help fund services such as the NHS which have a statutory source of funding. I hope that my hon. Friend will forgive me if some of my remarks, which will show some sympathy for the report, seem a little negative. We always welcome additional ideas, especially for more money for the National Health Service. I suspect, however that a national lottery for the Health Service would neither produce the net return nor be as trouble free as my hon. Friend seems to claim.

Even if the entire estimated net yield from a national lottery were devoted to the National Health Service it would probably continue to contribute only a tiny percentage to the costs of running the service. All sorts of figures have been bandied around, but given that the National Health Service is costing about £23·5 billion a year to run now, we could not expect a lottery to provide more than a tiny percentage. There would also be considerable problems in allocating this comparatively small sum to provide any worthwhile addition to normal funding, with no guarantee of a steady income.

My hon. Friend mentioned the question of European Community countries selling lottery tickets here. However, he should be aware that our legal advice is that the development of the European Community's internal market cannot be used by other countries to set up a national lottery in this country. The Lotteries and Amusements Act 1976 does not permit a national lottery and other countries cannot escape that. I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Home Office on 8 July:

"There are no measures in the single market programme at present specifically relating to lotteries and, in their absence, the controls which United Kingdom law places on lotteries would not appear to be affected."—[*Official Report*, 8 July 1988: Vol. 136, c. *765*.]

Mr. Burns: I fully understand my hon. Friend's point, but does she not accept that, although European countries could not set up a national lottery in this country, after 1992 there would be nothing to stop them selling tickets in this country for their own lotteries back home in France, Germany or Spain?

Mrs. Currie: As I said a few moments ago, that is a policy matter for my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary. I understand that it is not legal to sell such lottery tickets and that no change of the law is proposed in 1992. If my hon. Friend will allow me, I shall ensure that my colleagues in the Home Office have their attention drawn to this point. They will be able to give him a more substantive answer than I can.

In the debate on the report of the Royal Commission on 29 October, most of those who spoke were firmly against the idea of a national lottery because of the difficulties that they mentioned of control and bureaucracy and especially because it would take money away from local voluntary effort. Although attitudes have shifted somewhat, those remain our concerns.

There is a genuine fear that money might be diverted from the existing fund-raising effort for local good causes. The Health Services Act 1980 gave health authorities the power to raise money locally, but its provisions did not extend to local lotteries. In 1986-87, the most recent year for which I have figures, the fund-raising activities by the health authorities generated about £3 million, but that was only a small proportion of all their charitable income, which totals nearly £117 million, much of it from legacies and other such sources.

Large sums of money can be, and are being, raised for health care through fund-raising activities and there is no doubt that the success of one-off appeals for funds—for example, the Great Ormond street appeal, which is proving to be very successful—or by national charities is to be commended and welcomed. But that is no indication of how successful a national lottery might be, whether it was organised by the Government or, as my hon. Friend wisely suggested, by some outside body.

Charitable appeals seek unconditional donations and may be only an annual event or, as in the case of Great Ormond street, an event of a generation. A national lottery would be much more frequent, would have to run for a number of years, and would appeal mainly to gambling motives. We are genuinely concerned about the effect that a national lottery would have on many voluntary and charitable groups who do much good work to raise money locally for NHS hospitals.

These people work to low overheads and are mostly volunteers. By choosing a specific fund-raising target, such as the purchase of an advanced piece of equipment, they attract considerable support from the local community. We would not want to see that support undermined by some counteraction, such as a national lottery with its conversely small net return.

I suspect that my hon. Friend's letter dated 30 March 1988 to the present Secretary of State for Social Security recognised this problem, for he wrote saying that

"such a measure . . . would help to harness the existing local charitable fund-raising activities".

I am not sure what he thought he meant by "harness", but there is at least a slight suspicion that it might mean "compete" or "detract from." One must be aware that that danger would need to be dealt with.

The other side of the issue is that some money could possibly be diverted from other forms of gambling, such as betting or bingo. That may be regarded as a thoroughly desirable change, but the NHS and national Exchequer do rather well out of the tax revenue from gambling; in Britain in 1986-87 it amounted to almost £800 million. The pools alone yield about £250 million in tax a year. A switch

in gambling habits to support a national lottery could cause the Government to lose as much or more in taxation as it might receive from a lottery.

Some careful calculations on this have been done and they show that the lottery would not be starting from scratch. We are already getting a great deal of money from the gambling habits of the British people and we would be wary of challenging that behaviour in too dramatic or drastic a way for fear that we might end up losing more than we gained.

We feel that these fears are genuine. For example, an article in *The Economist* of 9 July 1988 pointed out that bingo clubs felt that they had suffered badly from the introduction of newspaper bingo. Meanwhile, in Spain the national lottery suffered when the gambling laws there were liberalised. That too was pointed out in an article published on 16 January 1988 in *The Economist*, which seems to take a close interest in these issues. I notice that some of the reforms in Spain did not turn out to be quite what the Spanish Government intended.

The Spanish spend about £13 billion a year on gambling, half of which goes through slot machines. Recently they have tried to reform some of their lottery legislation. For example, says the article, they have a

"normal diet of three lotteries a week. One of these is the Primitivo, introduced by the Government three years ago as a supposedly simpler and easier-to-play lottery. However, Mr. Carlos Solchaga"—

my opposite number there—

"the economy minister, recently admitted on national radio that he did not know how to fill in a Primitivo lottery form."

So it could not have been quite that easy. The Catalonian Government started two lotteries of their own last year and intend to use some of the money to help finance the Barcelona Olympic games in 1992.

They found in Spain on the restoration of democracy in 1977 that the liberalised gambling laws presented gamblers with a feast of choices, and one result was that the lottery income was damaged. If it works one way, we suspect that it might work the other way as well and that if one were to promote lotteries heavily some of the other income which we already get from other forms of gambling might be damaged. I think that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor would be unwilling to forgo much of the £800 million currently raised from such sources.

We have said many times, and we remain of the view, that we wish to encourage the long-standing tradition of charitable support for the National Health Service. Such support is often aimed at specific goals such as research into or treatment of particular conditions or the provision of improved facilities or new equipment for a particular hospital, and such effort is extremely effective. In that sense, therefore, we should recognise that the money currently coming in from gambling is already being spent on kidney machines, CAT scanners, parents' accommodation and so on, but we would always encourage and wish to benefit from the enthusiasm, interest and inspiration of local people who wish to express their appreciation of the work of the Health Service by raising money locally. I have been involved in such activities both as a local citizen and as chairman of a health authority and it is very valuable indeed. I often wish that those who object to such activities realised how much personal satisfaction the people involved obtain. It often helps bereaved people to express their appreciation and assuage their grief in this entirely laudable way. We must also take into account the fact that by its very nature income from lotteries is unpredictable and thus not always conducive to the system of longer-term service planning that we are trying to improve in the National Health Service.

My hon. Friend the Member for Chelmsford wrote to my right hon. Friend the present Secretary of State for Social Security asking for lotteries to be considered as part of the review of the National Health Service. He should be aware that lotteries are being discussed rather more broadly by colleagues and if there is anything new to be said about our views it will be said in due course.

I am grateful to my hon. Friend for raising the subject today and to my hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, North-East for setting out once again his thoughtful views on care in the community for people with mental handicap. We shall take the views expressed by both my hon. Friends very seriously and will hope to make progress.

Royal Naval Armaments Depots (Milford Haven and Trecwn)

6.17 am

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): I rise to speak on a matter of great concern to my constituency and to many people in the adjoining constituency of Ceredigion and Pembroke, North—the future of the two Royal Naval armaments depots at Milford Haven and Trecwn. The debate is of great importance to my constituents because the Milford depot in my constituency is one of the largest employers in the area. It is thus a matter of vital concern that the future of the depot should be resolved as quickly as possible so that we know where we are going in terms of employment in the area.

I begin by paying tribute to my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces, who is present at this ungodly hour of the morning and who, throughout all the discussions that I have had with the Ministry, has shown great courtesy and concern about the future of the two depots. He visited both depots about two months ago, and all the employees there are grateful for his promise to have further meetings with them now that the report has been published.

I pay tribute to the work of the two depots. Their work for national defence since 1939 has been invaluable and their work at very short notice in stocking the task force for the Falklands campaign should be on record for people in the town to note.

I also pay tribute to the staff of the Milford depot, whom I know quite well, and in particular to three gentlemen who have been leaders of the work force—Peter Sizer, chairman of the joint union action committee who took over from George Noden, the previous chairman, and the local official of the Transport and General Workers Union, Mr. Danny Fellowes. I hope that it will not be the kiss of death for Mr. Fellowes' career in the TGWU when I say that he has acted in a most responsible and intelligent way throughout all the discussions about the future of the depot. He is representing the men in an exemplary manner. He has been giving them invaluable advice on the best course of action that they should take.

The report has been awaited for a considerable time. In a letter to me on 20 July 1987, shortly after I was elected the Member for Pembroke, my hon. Friend the Minister said that he hoped that the unclassified consultative document would be issued later in the year. That statement was repeated to the hon. Member for Ceredigion and Pembroke, North (Mr. Howells) in a letter of 3 September from the Ministry of Defence. Yet we had to wait until July of this year for a report which was commissioned in 1986, a report which has been eagerly awaited by the people of Milford Haven.

What do we get? We have a seven-page, double-space typescript, which could have been written during a day. I accept, of course, that the research would have taken longer than that. It has taken the gestation period of an elephant to produce a mouse. The report leaves unanswered far more questions than it attempts to answer. It is somewhat surprising that it has taken so long to produce a report that lacks so much detail. I have made numerous attempts to raise the matter by tabling questions. I have raised the matter twice in debates. The first occasion was on 28 October 1987 during the Defence Estimates debate, when I said:

> "I appreciate that any inquiry or review into the future of those depots must start from the position of their importance to the future defence of the country. It is important that there is a role for the mine depot—ensuring that we have conventional mines for the Royal Navy for use in our waters for defensive purposes.—[*Official Report*, 28 October 1987; Vol. 121, c. 368.]

I asked my hon Friend the Minister to take into account also the important social and economic consequences for the depot and the town of Milford Haven. The town has 30 per cent. unemployment. If the depot were to close, or to be transferred, the effect on the town would be dramatic.

I raised the matter again during the St. David's day debate on 2 March. I said then that there was considerable concern in Milford Haven about the depot, which employs nearly 300 people. I explained that there was great concern about the future of the depot and that I hoped there would be an early decision. Having seen the report, I am none the wiser about what the Ministry of Defence hopes will stem from its publication.

I return to the background in 1986, when the report was commissioned. The study for the Ministry of Defence was at that time to be conducted by a Mr. John Glover, an official of the Royal Naval Supply Transport Service, which manages the depot. The terms were as follows:

> "*(a)* to review the current and future tasks, organisation and staffing of the RN Armament depots at Trecwn and Milford Haven and to determine how the depots' tasks can be achieved most economically and effectively.
>
> *(b)* to consider the implications of any changes that may be necessary, and to recommend how they should be achieved and over what time scale."

The foreword added:

> "The study will need to cover the possibility of concentrating tasks at Trecwn and reducing or closing facilities at Milford Haven, but other options will also be fully examined and there can be no foregone conclusions about the outcome. Ministers will of course take the eventual decision on the basis of all relevant factors."

I suggest that one of the most important things that needs to be taken into account is the impact on local employment at Milford Haven. A report issued by the local authority's steering committee in November 1986 observes that the majority of employees at the Milford Haven depot live within the former jobcentre area. The benefits from employment are localised, and if the depot were to close there would be the worst possible scenario.

The local area of Milford will feel the brunt of closure. When I asked how many are employed at Milford—a figure that I thought would have been in the report, but is not—I was told that the information was not yet available and would be supplied later. I must therefore fall back on the figures given in the local authority's report, which showed that, of the then 285 people employed at the depot, 231, or 81 per cent., lived in Milford Haven itself. The implications for Milford Haven are therefore very important. The report points out that the jobs are predominantly male jobs, and will be difficult to replace. A high proportion of them are skilled and professional posts. The depot provides a higher-than-average local wage level, and work for registered handicapped people would probably be almost impossible to find elsewhere in the area.

There are implications not only for the work force but for the town. We must consider the wider effects of the

amount spent by the depot and by the work force in the surrounding area. The local authority's report calculates that the average annual amount spent directly by the Ministry of Defence is £270,000, which includes £63,490 commercial expenditure and £206,000 spent on utilities. The PSA annual expenditure on Milford and Trecwn combined is estimated at £1·9 million.

The signs of the multiplier effect—the effect of a pound earned by the employees in the depot on the economy of Milford Haven—are impossible to calculate exactly, although evidence from various studies suggests that the local multiplier could be of the order of 1·15 to 1·3. That implies that another 85 jobs could be dependent on the Milford depot, and makes clear its importance to the local economy.

On 17 November last year I asked the Secretary of State for Defence:

"what estimates have been made by his Department of the economic impact of the location of its establishments on United Kingdom regional policy; and if he will make a statement."

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary, my hon. Friend the Member for Hove (Mr. Sainsbury), said:

"While we aim to secure a more even spread of defence employment across the regions, decisions on all proposals affecting the future of defence establishments must be made on their own economic and operational merits."—[*Official Report*, 17 November 1987; Vol. 122, c. *464-65*.]

I entirely agree with that sentiment, but I believe that, given the concentration of Government employment in the south-east and the desire of all Ministers to spread the impact of Government jobs to the rest of the country, the effects on the area of closing the depot ought to be considered in that light.

The importance of defence establishments to the county of Dyfed, in which Milford Haven is situated, is clear from the figures given in a parliamentary answer on the same day as the one to which I have just referred. At the last count, 2,209 civilian personnel and 831 service personnel were employed by the Ministry of Defence in the county of Dyfed. I hope that the Ministry will pay great attention to the importance of ensuring that, if the depot has to close in its present form, every effort is made to consider whether some other form of defence establishment can be established on the site.

I said a few minutes ago—when I quoted from a speech that I made on 28 October last year—that I believed that the depot must justify itself on defence grounds. I see no reason to retract that statement. I have made my view clear to the work force, to my local press and during the last election. It is important to recognise that the Ministry of Defence faces a difficult decision. It is not a job-creation scheme; it is the defence of the country. Therefore, it must ensure that whatever it does is in accordance with the principles laid down by the Government for its role.

I recognise that the role of the Milford depot, as now constituted, is coming to an end, and that it would therefore be unrealistic for the work force to argue for the status quo. The work force recognises that. However, that does not mean that we should simply fold up our tents and creep away. I believe that there is plenty of opportunity for the depot to be used for other MOD purposes.

A recent article in the *Western Mail* announced:

"The Property Services Agency Wales has been asked to investigate sites which could bring the Royal Navy's Sea Systems Controllerate under one roof."

That would employ 4,500 personnel.

I am not suggesting that Milford Haven is the right location for that establishment, but it does have a deep-water port facility and I can think of worse places for it to be located. If that establishment cannot come to Milford Haven, the MOD should consider carefully what other naval establishments could be suitably transferred. If there is nothing for the Royal Navy at Milford Haven, a possible site for the other armed forces could be considered.

Before the future of the depot is signed and sealed, we must consider whether the MOD's traditional use of it can continue. If that is not possible, we must consider the employment implications.

The MOD report is feeble. As I have already said, it has had the gestation period for an elephant, but a mouse has been produced. The local authorities have been able to produce an 18-page, closely argued report, with a number of appendices, within a few months. Therefore, I am amazed that, after two years, the MOD has produced a double-space typescript of only seven pages. It has failed to address the main issues that are of concern to the employees and the local people. The report contains no detail of the work force—grading structure, age and sex profile, salary structure, and length of service of individual employees. The local authorities and the unions need to have that information so that sensible decisions can be made about the depot's future.

If the depot is closed, the report states that between 40 and 50 or 80 and 90 staff could be transferred. That demonstrates that the report is vague and wishy-washy. There is no information about whether those who transfer will be given free transport, which was provided for those who were forced to move to Carmarthen when local government was reorganised in 1974. The staff are asking about such matters and they deserve answers.

Little information is given about the possible redundancy package. I put down a written question about what constitutes the normal redundancy package at the Ministry of Defence. That question was answered today and I received some additional information, but the staff, their families, the unions and the local authorities should have had such information made available in that report.

The report gives no information about the possible future use of the site. One of the main anxieties in the town is that the site is reputed to have explosives impregnated in the ground. Before that site is used for any other purpose it must be cleaned. In a written answer, the Minister informed me:

"The estimated cost of (a) certifying RNAD Milford Haven free from explosives is estimated at between £500,000 and £1 million."

The absence of those figures from the report is a glaring omission. The author of the report did not set out to answer the questions that the local people needed to have answered.

An apprentice training school is based just outside the main gates of the depot. We have been told that it could be unaffected by the closure of the depot. Will it be a viable training school if it is so far from any other RNAD complex? It is a long way to Trecwn when one is 17 or 18 years of age and without personal transport. Will it have a viable future as an MOD apprentice school, or should it become a general engineering school for the area? Should it continue to be run by the MOD, or would it be better run by the Training Commission and the local authorities? Those questions have not been answered by the report, or

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even by the questions put forward and flagged. I recognise that it is a consultative report, but for consultation to take place the report needs to convey meaningful information so that the staff and the unions can discuss what should be done next.

No information has been provided about other uses for the site, apart from use by the Ministry of Defence. How many other people have expressed an interest? What package will be made available should the site have to be closed to ensure that it is used for the benefit of employment in the Milford Haven area? That question is not answered.

I very much welcome the reply to one question that has been answered. The people who live in Ministry of Defence houses, now owned by the PSA, welcome the fact that they may now purchase those houses under the right-to-buy legislation. I welcome my hon. Friend's assurance on that point, and the ending of the uncertainty that has lasted for a considerable time.

I turn briefly to the Trecwn depot. I have concentrated most of my speech on Milford Haven because it is in my constituency. The Trecwn depot is half a mile outside my constituency, but the last count of employees in October 1986, provided by the local authority's joint committee, revealed that 46·5 per cent. were constituents of mine. Therefore, whatever happens to Trecwn is important to the people of Pembrokeshire, because it will have an impact on the local economy.

I am very disappointed that after two years the report leaves the question of Trecwn in the air. Paragraph 14 of the report states:

> "The reduction of the mining support task will also have a substantial effect on the loading of Trecwn. This will be the subject of further study by the Ministry of Defence. These studies will include an examination whether other MOD tasks can be put to the depot. The outcome of this further work will not be known until 1989."

I wonder why the MOD works at snail's pace when it comes to examining what it will do for the future of the depots. We waited two years for the report, and now we are told that we need another report, another study, on the future of Trecwn, which will take another year. I hope that it is a little more informative than the report which was published earlier this week.

Finally, what will happen to the site should it be decided that there is no future for the depot in the Ministry of Defence and it becomes available for commercial use by private enterprise or by other Departments? An urgent meeting should be held between the Ministry of Defence and the Welsh Office to ensure that that prime site of 260 acres, situated on the shores of the River Cladeau on the Haven, should be brought into use for other commercial undertakings if the Ministry of Defence does not want it. That should be done as quickly as possible. I have always made it clear that if the decision is taken to close the depot, it should not be death by 1,000 cuts over a long time. The closure of the depot should be fast, the site should be cleaned up and prepared for other uses, and there should be early advertising of the site for other enterprises.

The Welsh Office should consider whether it has any uses for the site which would create employment and whether any other Government Departments which are decentralising from London have any uses for the site. If that is not the case, we have to ensure that the site is made available for private enterprise.

Yesterday's *Western Mail* states that workers at the depot have asked whether the MOD would make a gift of it to the town. That is highly unlikely. I am not sure that it would be right for the local authority to take over the site. It is not terribly experienced in running commercial undertakings or sites of that size. Of course the Welsh Development Agency would be the right body to take over the site and prepare it for business occupation after the MOD has cleaned it up. I do not say that it is the Welsh Development Agency's job to pay for cleaning up the site. That is an MOD responsibility. The Pembrokeshire business initiative could, with the WDA, help to identify possible uses for the site and attract employers to it.

I finish on that positive note because I believe I should follow the example of the work force at Milford Haven, which has recognised the reality that the depot will not continue as a mine depot. It recognises that mine warfare and defence strategy have changed. The MOD must recognise that realism and reward the loyal service of the work force and the dedication of the people of Milford Haven to the depot since 1939. The MOD should ensure that, if the site is closed as an MOD depot, it will be made available for the future employment and prosperity of the people of the area.

6.41 am

Mr. Allan Rogers (Rhondda): I had not intended to speak in this debate, but my hon. Friend the Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen), who has the next debate, has not arrived yet, so perhaps we should continue this one for a while.

I listened to the hon. Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett) with great interest. I thought at one point that he might have been converted to the views of the Opposition, but towards the end he covered his bets with the Conservative side. What he faces is something of great difficulty and concern for any hon. Member: the closure of a works, factory or—as in this case—depot, with the consequent unemployment. Many Opposition Members who represent industrial areas have had to face this problem often under this Government. I only wish that the hon. Member for Pembroke was as forthcoming in his support for other areas as he is for his own.

Because Opposition Members have faced this problem so often, I want to speak in support of the depot, and I hope that the Government will change their mind about it. The area faces certain difficulties with employment. It is on the periphery of the European Community—that is one strike against it. Secondly, it is surrounded by a mainly rural area, so the development of service industries there will be extremely difficult. It cannot act as a nucleus for warehousing, so it will find it difficult to attract jobs. However, as the hon. Gentleman said, the people of these communities have given a great deal of service to the country in war and peace and they deserve better than to be summarily dismissed.

The hon. Member for Pembroke talked of dispersing MOD jobs. I noted with interest that that happened this week, with the dispersal of jobs to Llangennech, near Llanelli, and the people there are grateful. However, I warn the hon. Gentleman that the MOD's history of dispersal is not good. Some years ago it undertook to

disperse jobs to Glasgow. We found that jobs were leaving the south-east and going as far afield as Gloucester and a little north of London. Then those jobs shuffled up as far as Manchester, and by the time the ripples of the dispersal reached Glasgow there was little advantage to be had from the process. As a positive scheme, it was a disaster. That was recognised in a report of the Public Accounts Committee, which I think was published about two years ago. If I were the hon. Member for Pembroke, I would not rely too much on the Ministry of Defence dispersing jobs to replace those that are being lost.

The hon. Member for Pembroke tried to change horses or face all ways in relation to local authorities. It was gratifying to hear him extol the virtues of local authorities. The hon. Gentleman praised the local authority's report, and I am sure that his praise will be received by the local authority with satisfaction. His damning indictment of its ability to run a small industrial site will not be so well received. I was pleased that the hon. Gentleman said that local authorities could do anything. On numerous occasions in debates over the past couple of years and on the Widdicombe report on the organisation of local government, Conservative Members have criticised local authorities for taking initiatives.

The report that the hon. Gentleman praised could be illegal, if any political comment is made in it, under the new rules that the Government are introducing. I hope that when we debate the rules and regulations the hon. Gentleman will have the courage of his convictions and condemn the Government for trying to strangle local authorities and prevent them from carrying out their duty to protect local communities.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: I appreciate that the hon. Gentleman is trying to prolong the debate until his hon. Friend the Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) turns up, and that he knows little about the subject and has not seen the local authority's report. The authority has made an excellent report that is not political but neutral and unbiased and deals with the problems facing the area.

Mr. Rogers: That shows the political naivety of the hon. Gentleman. If a report that deals with an institution that provides jobs and bread to the community is not political, what is? The hon. Gentleman showed his bigotry and prejudice. He believes that all matters must be party political, and that was the view of the Government when they reorganised local government. The recommendations of the Widdicombe report were based on the sort of prejudices that the hon. Gentleman has just shown.

The local authority has done a good job, but it would be illegal under the new rules that the Government have introduced. If a local authority fights for jobs in a community, the Government say, "You cannot do that because you are criticising Government policy and it is political." Throughout the country, Labour authorities —they are the only authorities fighting for jobs in their communities, unless a Conservative Member such as the hon. Member for Pembroke is affected by a proposal—are condemned for fighting for jobs in their communities. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will have the courage of his convictions and will support our opposition to the Government's proposals. It is perfectly understandable —I speak from the arrogance of a large majority—that the hon. Gentleman wants to cover his back on this electoral issue. That is what it will be. The hon. Gentleman's constituents will be looking not at what he did but at what the Government did to jobs in the area when they vote in the next election.

The hon. Gentleman is not alone in his inconsistency. We have seen it time and again among Conservative Members. They talk about market forces and letting the market economy operate. However, when that affects their constituency it is a different story. In the previous Session some Conservative Members complained bitterly about the dumping of nuclear waste. However, they would vote for the Government in their nuclear energy development policy. I will tell the hon. Member for Pembroke what I told them then: one cannot have it both ways. If one supports a nuclear industry, one has to be prepared to be the recipient of the waste from that industry. Significant Members of the Government fought hard against having a nuclear dumping ground in their constituencies.

The hon. Member for Pembroke asked the MOD not to fold up its tent and creep away. It will fold up its tent, and I am afraid that the local authority, in conjunction with the Welsh Development Agency, will have to fight for it. I agree with the hon. Gentleman that the MOD should take the responsibility for clearing up the site. Many pits have been closed in the south Wales valleys and for a considerable number of years the sites were left derelict and were an eyesore. It is a tribute to Governments of all persuasions that they have developed, particularly over the past 15 years, extensive land clearance schemes that have restored areas to the community for housing, recreation or industrial development. I urge the Minister to pay attention to that point and follow the advice given to him by his hon. Friend the Member for Pembroke. If the MOD quits the site, it should clean it up and leave it in a decent condition so that it can be used for other purposes. I have more confidence in the local authority than the hon. Member for Pembroke. The local authority should be the agency to develop the site.

Mention was made of the apprentice training school related to the site. Naturally the hon. Member for Pembroke is worried about the future of youth training in his area. It is a serious problem because, throughout south Wales and the rest of the country, the Government have been closing down skill training centres and depriving young people of the opportunity of becoming skilled. It is a real problem and I shall give an example to the hon. Gentleman.

One county council area in south Wales was looking at where it should place the new schemes for next year. In that county there were bids for 77,000 places. The resources available will allow the county to develop only 8,000 places. That area is not far from that represented by the hon. Member for Pembroke. I have little hope that he will be able to obtain support for the development of the apprentice training school or that the Training Commission will put any substantial effort into it.

I advise the Minister that he may have closed the depot, but he has a responsibility. He cannot pack up his tent and walk away; he should invest by clearing the site and ensuring that it is handed over in a fit and proper state for use by the local community.

6.54 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces (Mr. Roger Freeman): I add my congratulations to my hon. Friend the Member for

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Pembroke (Mr. Bennett) on securing this debate. I know that for him, his constituents and other hon. Members, this is an important issue. He has demonstrated great persistence and great energy and courtesy in representing the interests of his constituents in this matter. I have visited the site with him and met some of his constituents. I have corresponded with him for a considerable time and we are now joined in debate. Doubtless this will not be the last time that we have the opportunity to debate this matter.

Before I reply in detail to the points that my hon. Friend has raised it might be helpful if I were to remind the House of the main facts of this issue. The House will be aware that on 25 July the Ministry of Defence published a consultative document, which recommended that the Royal Naval armaments depot at Milford Haven be closed. At this stage I should like to deal with what may be a misconception in my hon. Friend's mind about the consultative document. It is not a report. It is not a document that purports to be a comprehensive study of the problem—that is a separate document, which is classified, and which we have in the Ministry of Defence. The consultative document is a brief summary. I believe that my hon. Friend referred to it as being seven pages long. I apologise for its brevity if my hon. Friend believes that it shortchanges him and a number of his constituents on some matters. I shall attempt to answer some of his points.

It is important that we appreciate the purpose of the consultative document. The procedure is as follows. When I come to consider the closure of a particular base, garrison or depot, a report is commissioned internally in the Ministry of Defence. The issue is considered properly and thoroughly. Indeed, the criticism is often made that we take far too long to study the problem. I believe that when one is dealing with the future of loyal work people, who have spent a considerable period of time in a particular locality, it is important that the study should be comprehensive, factual, free of prejudice and emotion, and that, after consultation with other Government Departments, it should present the facts as fairly as possible.

I make no apology for the fact that sometimes those studies take what may seem an inordinately long time. That is perfectly understandable and defensible. I would much rather get all the facts right, and have all the facts, than get half a story, sometimes tinged with emotion.

Mr. Rogers: Why does the consultative document need to be classified? I can understand that there might be a section dealing with the grand strategy of the defence of this country—that might be in the first two paragraphs—and that that could be classified. However, we are talking about an industrial issue and I cannot see why the hon. Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett) should not at least see the document. I do not see why the document should be classified.

Mr. Freeman: Perhaps I should explain to the hon. Gentleman that the consultative document is not classified. It is a seven-page document which was produced specifically for the trade unions. The report, which is something separate, and which runs to several hundred pages, is a classified document. It is classified for the simple reason that we are dealing with the technology of making, distributing and laying sea mines for the Royal Navy. Therefore, for obvious reasons, the document must be classified.

The consultative document is produced for consultation with the trade unions, so that they understand what recommendations and proposals have been made to me or to the relevant Minister for the future of the depot.

The consultative document is not a sales document. It does not offer alternative uses for the site. It does not spell out redundancy terms; nor does it describe the real estate. It is a brief statement, stating that the recommendation is to close the depot. It sets out the main reasons for that and explains that we should like to enter into a brief period of consultation with the trade unions, to ensure that we have the facts right, and to take into account any other factors. Only after that will a decision be taken. Once the decision is made—and it has not yet been made in this case—what my hon. Friend the Member for Pembroke wants will be produced. The welter of detail about the future and welfare of the work force, and full details about the real estate involved, will be available for distribution and discussion in the Ministry of Defence, and with our allies and perhaps with other Government Departments and the private sector.

I hope that my hon. Friend will draw a distinction between the report and the consultative document.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: I appreciate the difference between the wider 200-page report to which my hon. Friend referred, with its defence implications and classified nature, and the consultative document, but does he agree that perhaps the MOD should reconsider what it produces as a draft consultative document, bearing in mind the importance of all the closures and decisions, not just for the work force and the unions—which may be well informed—but for the local authorities that will have to consider the matter, the Member of Parliament in this case, and anyone else in the area who is concerned about the future? In the next few months we are to be asked to consult and discuss a matter about which there is very little information. The information will not be of much use to us if we get it after the decision has been taken.

Mr. Freeman: I understand the point made by my hon. Friend and the hon. Member for Rhondda (Mr. Rogers). My hon. Friend has made a valid point, which I accept. When we prepare the next consultative document in the next case I shall look at the extent of the information included. If it would be more helpful to the work force and local authorities to have more information at an early stage, I shall bear that in mind.

The consultative document that we are discussing gives the work force, the trade unions and local authorities two months in which to comment in principle on the proposal. We are seeking a reaction to our decision on the future of the depot. Only when I have had a chance to consider the replies will I be able to make a final decision about the future of the depot. We are not talking about the imminent closure of the depot at Milford Haven. That may be two or three years away. We are embarking upon a consultation process—albeit a fairly brief one. The MOD is committed to ensuring that the process is frank and open. I have already told the work force that I am prepared to meet a delegation, should the workers so wish. I made that promise when I visited Milford Haven and I am happy to repeat the assurance to my hon. Friend.

The Royal Naval armaments depot at Milford Haven was built in 1939 to wartime emergency standards and covers about 260 acres. The depot's principal tasks in recent years have been the storage and maintenance of exercise mines, the updating of high explosive mines, the upkeep of what is called replenishment at sea gear, the repair and maintenance of motor transport and the training of apprentices. At present there are 285 employees.

As the result of long-term changes in mine technology and mining policy the size of the task performed at Milford Haven has been considerably reduced in recent years. If the depot were closed and the tasks transferred, capital expenditure of about £500 million would be necessary to provide new buildings elsewhere. The costs for extra staff at the new location, or locations, would amount to about £500 million per annum, or between 40 and 90 posts. My hon. Friend the Member for Pembroke chastised me for not being precise about the number of new jobs that would be created elsewhere. Perhaps we are being unduly cautious, but it would be foolish to be too precise at this stage, when work still has to be undertaken.

Given that the operating costs of Milford Haven are £3·6 million per annum, the House will readily understand why, in our view, there is a persuasive argument in favour of closing the depot. It gives me no pleasure to announce the possible closure of one of our establishments, but the Ministry of Defence has an obligation to obtain the best value for money for the taxpayer within the defence budget. The task for which the depot was built has substantially declined, and there is no longer a defence requirement for it to remain open. We cannot ignore the reality of the situation, however grateful we are for the loyal service rendered by the work force in both peace and war.

The news for west Wales is not all bad. On 25 July I announced that up to 250 jobs were likely to be created as a result of the transfer to Llangennech of the forms and publications stores of the three services, which we hope will take place early in 1991. In addition, we are examining the possibility of moving some other complementary activities to Llangennech, absorbing more of the depot capacity and creating additional local employment. That is evidence of our determination to make use of our assets, if at all possible, by moving other activities and departments within the Ministry of Defence.

The consultative document is merely a short summary of the outcome of the Trecwn district study. The Trecwn district includes both the Trecwn and Milford Haven depots. The original report cannot be published, because it is classified. The consultative document is not intended to provide all the answers to the questions that the work force or their representatives may wish to raise. It is designed to form the basis for consultation. My officials will do their best to reply to the questions that arise during the consultation process.

There have been criticisms of the length of time taken to publish the consultative document. As I have said, we are dealing with a highly complex subject—the future of the United Kingdom's mining policy and the storage capacity necessary to meet it. Last year it was necessary for all the Ministry of Defence branches to give full consideration to the implications of the Trecwn district study. We consulted the Welsh Office about the future of Milford Haven, and we shall consult it, too, about the future of Trecwn. I regret the time that all that has taken, but to have proceeded more speedily would not have been in the interests of either the Ministry of Defence or the work force.

My hon. Friend the Member for Pembroke is unhappy because the consultative document does not say what other defence uses were considered for the depot. The depot's facilities have serious shortcomings and its layout no longer meets stringent explosive safety prescriptions. Therefore, it is not an option to continue to use it efficiently as an explosives depot, and we have been unable to identify any non-explosive, Navy task that could be transferred there. The Army and Air Force departments have said that they have no need for any of the Navy's surplus storage space. If that changes, and a defence use for Milford Haven is identified, I shall inform my hon. Friend and the House as soon as possible.

The possible use of the site by other Government Departments will be fully assessed if and when I take the final decision to close the depot, and the closure process will take three years. If no further use is found for the site, our normal procedure will be to offer it for sale on the open market. In reaching a decision about disposal I shall ensure that there is full consultation with the normal authorities, the Welsh Office and its agencies. I assure my hon. Friend that any disposal procedure will be pursued with vigour and with the objective of ensuring that the site is not left idle.

My hon. Friend asked for some detailed information about the number of staff who might transfer to Trecwn and about a possible redundancy package. Yesterday I answered a parliamentary question from my hon. Friend giving him information about the Ministry of Defence's standard redundancy terms. It is impossible at this stage to be precise about how many staff could or would transfer if the depot were closed. That will emerge during the consultation process.

As for the cost of certifying the site free from explosives and removing all existing buildings, the former would cost between £0·5 million and £1 million, and if the site leaves the ownership of the Ministry of Defence, I give the assurance that that will be done. Consideration of the removal and demolition of the buildings is an integral part of the disposal process. We shall consider what needs to be done when we examine other uses.

The Ministry of Defence has no plans to close the apprentice training school. I am glad to give my hon. Friend that assurance. I shall ask my officials to consider his suggestion about widening the scope of training there. In the event of the depot being closed, sitting tenants of Ministry houses will be given an opportunity to buy them on favourable terms.

My hon. Friend's disappointment over the further study on Trecwn is understandable, but the proposal to close Milford Haven means that the residual task still performed there will have to be transferred somewhere. Trecwn is certainly the favoured option.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: Will my hon. Friend consider providing transport for the transferred staff?

Mr. Freeman: I said earlier that between 40 and 90 new jobs would be created at one or other location to which we transferred the remaining tasks performed at Milford Haven. I visited Trecwn shortly after visiting Milford Haven, and I know that the distance between them is not inconsiderable. I shall look into the possibility of assisting

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with transport to carry workers who might be offered jobs and accept them at Trecwn but who live at Milford Haven. I am sure that my hon. Friend does not expect me to give any guarantees, but I shall look into the matter.

I shall ensure that the work on the future of Trecwn is undertaken as quickly as possible, but the result cannot be expected before 1989. During Operation Corporate Milford Haven was involved in assisting with the supply of replenishment at sea gear to some Royal Fleet Auxiliaries, while Trecwn provided stocks of naval ammunition to the armaments depots at the base ports. The Government are grateful for the work undertaken by the work force at both depots during the operation, which was in accordance with the high standards of the Royal Navy supply and transport service.

I am grateful for the opportunity to respond to this brief debate. I look forward to joining my hon. Friend in ensuring that the site, if we close the depot, is used profitably and that the loyal, hard working and efficient work force finds alternative employment.

Disarmament

7.12 am

Mr. Harry Cohen (Leyton): I congratulate the Minister on his new appointment to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Some people have called it a sideways shift following his row with his previous boss on the Housing Bill. If it is, he has done quite well out of it because he has got quite an interesting portfolio. He has a bit of a reputation as a stonewailer. Some people might think that that is appropriate for the Foreign Office, but I have to warn him that there is a spirit of glasnost now, so he might come up against a few problems if he stonewalls. I wish him well in his new job.

One of the Minister's important jobs concerns disarmament, which is the subject of this debate. I recently received a postcard which simply had a picture of the globe. At the top, coming out of the shadow, was an arrow marked, "Them", and in the middle of the globe was another arrow marked, "Us". The legend said:

"The Russians, being cunning and devious, hide their country behind the curve in the earth so that we can't see. We, on the other hand, are right out in the open on the flat part."

I am afraid that that has been the cold war attitude of some people in the West. The result has been a disastrous build-up of military spending. It has meant a continuous cold war of the type to which the postcard refers, and an enormous drain on the resources of both sides which could be much better used elsewhere, and it has perpetuated impoverishment in the Third world because while we spend on arms we cannot relieve poverty and suffering there. It has also involved a high risk in terms of the potential destruction of our people, particularly from the nuclear element.

In addition, there has been an increasing risk of accidents. Chernobyl is the prime case, arising from the drive to create more nuclear material, but the Iran Airbus is a more recent example of how accidents can happen. If it is said to be in defence interests to shoot down an Airbus, it may also be in defence interests to fire a nuclear weapon. Those are the consequences of the cold war and the material build-up that we have seen since the war.

Mikhail Gorbachev has attempted to break the logjam, and since he came to office all the initiatives have come from the Soviet Union. As Frank Blackaby, the former director of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, said, a more liberal-minded, intelligent elite has risen to a position of influence in Soviet politics. The Soviet Union has enormous economic pressures. About 16 per cent. of its GNP is spent on defence, which is immensely crippling and wasteful. That pressure has brought about the initiatives.

NATO has been reacting primarily. It has been intransigent in many respects, especially on short-range nuclear missiles. There was a great chance to get a deal on them, but the Prime Minister in particular would have none of it and that worked its way into NATO philosophy. Moreover, the Government have imposed great pressure to increase militarisation and military spending. That is what modernisation is all about. Only last week during defence questions, when the Secretary of State was asked about burden sharing and the Americans pushing more of the costs of NATO on to European countries, he made it clear that he was acquiescing in more defence spending and Britain picking up a bigger part of the bill. We should

be reducing expenditure when there is an opportunity to do so, not increasing it. NATO has not even produced a comprehensive concept of arms control and disarmament. It has not got its mandate together to go to the negotiating table. That is poor when there is an opportunity to make big reductions.

Recently the Government produced a leaflet entitled "The UK Role in Arms Control: a short guide to British Government policy". Short is the right word because there is precious little substance in it. It should have had a photograph of the tea and salmon sandwiches that the Prime Minister gave Mr. Gorbachev at Brize Norton because that is about the biggest contribution that the Government have made to arms control. It even states:

"The UK's national deterrent is a minimum force, and it will remain so when the new Trident submarines become operational."

Trident represents an eightfold increase at a time when the super-powers are trying to get rid of some of their weapons in that category. Yet the Government still described that as a minimum force. One can only conclude that the Government use those words as they choose and that in that context "mimimum force" means just what they want it to mean.

The document discusses the Geneva protocol and Britain's role in it back in 1925, as well as new efforts to reach agreement on getting rid of chemical weapons. I pay tribute to the Foreign Office for what it did up to halfway through last year in trying to get an agreement to a chemical weapons ban. Subsequently, however, there has been undue delay and foot-dragging by the Government on this matter. Out come the same old slogans about the Soviet Union's chemical weapons supply, and we are told the Russians have 300,000 tonnes. No justification has ever been given for that and the Soviet Union has said solemnly that it has 50,000 tonnes. Whatever it is, Conservative Members may laugh, but the Soviet Union is keen to get a deal. We should be taking the Russians up on it to ensure that they get rid of chemical weapons.

The foot-dragging has come about because on 16 December the United States resumed its supply of chemical weapons—in particular the new binary and big-eye weapons. It already has enormous stocks even without the new binary systems. According to my information, the United States has over 1 million GB nerve gas artillery rounds, 13,000 GB nerve gas bombs, 300,000 nerve gas artillery rounds and over 1 million mustard gas artillery rounds. They must be in good condition because the West German Government have said that there have been no accidents or leakages in West Germany where they have been stored. The United States ambassador once said that many of the weapons could strike into Soviet territory. The Americans have stocks, although the United States has not published figures. If the Government are pushing for the release of true information from the Soviet Union, they should do the same with the United States; they should ask what its stocks are.

The Foreign Office says that the United States provides information about the composition and location of its stockpile in order to build the confidence needed to underpin a comprehensive ban. Yet the Select Committee on Defence said that the United States had not published the figures to show the size of its chemical stockpile. The Secretary of State for Defence said to that Select Committee:

"There is no agreed NATO strategy covering the circumstances in which chemical weapons may be used."

The Committee said:

"From the evidence we have received, it seems that the arrangements for moving US chemical weapons to Europe or authorising their release has still not been adequately clarified within the Alliance. Until this is done, chemical retaliation in kind hardly remains a viable option for the Alliance; and a lack of clarity about the procedures involved carries with it other dangers. The urgency for progress to be made in this area remains undiminished."

The Select Committee says that the urgency is undiminished, but the Government have actually slowed down. Now the Secretary of State has said that chemical weapons fall within the flexible response strategy, so he is even contemplating their use.

The Government should get a move on and start getting together with the Soviet Union for a realistic ban on chemical weapons. We should get an agreement and get the United States involved as well.

This foot-dragging has had appalling consequences because we have seen in the middle east, in the Iran-Iraq war, the use of chemical weapons. Unfortunately, the combatants have had some success with these weapons —success in war terms though terrible in human terms —and this will result in other countries wanting chemical weapons and being prepared to use them. That is why we need an immediate global ban on chemical weapons. The British Government do not seem to be aware of the need to take urgent action in this matter.

In terms of conventional arms, there is a chance for agreement to be reached on a degree of disarmament at all levels. Following a meeting of the Warsaw pact on 16 July, the pact renewed its initiative for sizeable cuts in conventional armaments in Europe, from the Atlantic to the Urals. It called

"for early talks to leave NATO and the Warsaw Treaty countries with forces and systems needed for defence but insufficient for a surprise attack or offensive operations, with a corresponding curtailment in military spending."

Three areas were covered in that initiative. The first was

"to achieve equal, lowered levels—roughly equal and balanced collective levels—in troop strength and conventional weaponry"—

certainly lower than currently exist on both sides—

"mutually eliminating imbalances and asymmetries."

That was achieved in INF terms for one category of nuclear weapons, so it could be achieved as well for conventional forces.

The second point was designed to prevent a surprise attack, and it referred to

"lowered arms level strips . . . zones created along the line of contact between the military/political alliance, again ensuring only a defensive capability; and confidence-building measures which would limit military activity in those zones."

It went on to say that there should be a ban on major exercises and restrictions on troop movements.

The third part of the initiative on conventional weapons was for data exchange and verification. That would, naturally, involve the exchange of information on both sides, with on-site inspections and possibly an international verification commission to check that all was working properly.

Those were the main aspects of the initiative—

"to strengthen stability and lower the levels of armed forces and armaments, with the principles of equality and equal security being observed and being verified."

I make no apology for quoting at length from that text because it is an important initiative that is now on the

[Mr. Harry Cohen]

NATO stocks. It has been welcomed—in terms of a pan-European summit—by President Mitterrand, who is reported as having said that

"the reduction of conventional arms was an absolute priority which should take precedence over any reinforcement of short or very short-range nuclear weapons."

That was a direct snub to the British Government, who take the opposite view and who do not seem to be interested in that aspect. They seem interested only in increasing that type of short-range weaponry.

The West German Government have welcomed the idea of new talks on lowering conventional arms levels. They have every reason to take that line because, demographically, the numbers in the West German conscript army will be 40 per cent. lower in the coming decade, so they desperately need reductions in conventional arms.

The British Government do not seem to be worried about the concerns of our allies in this matter. We seem prepared to allow them in the coming 10 years to be in a perilous position, which we have already done in terms of short-range nuclear weapons, a subject to which I will come shortly. So, again, the British Government are foot-dragging. They are among the few Common Market Governments not to have welcomed the idea of a pan-European summit. The block is the weapons with dual capability, conventional and nuclear, which the Government refuse to include in any conventional arms reduction talks. That is what is stopping NATO getting a mandate together and getting realistic talks started. Dual capability weapons should be part of the negotiations. Why should a whole category of weapons not be subject to arms control or even negotiations? In this area, as in any other, asymmetry can apply, with cuts in different types of weapons on each side. If such weapons are not included in conventional arms talks, they should be the subject of separate but simultaneous talks.

The Government must take up those initiatives in a big way. The right hon. and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan), who was recently appointed to a post in Europe, wrote a pamphlet supporting the idea of a demilitarised zone free from tanks, heavy artillery and nuclear weapons. That would create greater stability. Only the Government seem to believe the opposite. At Defence Question Time the Secretary of State spoke ominously of having nothing to do with demilitarised zones, but NATO must take up those initiatives as well as getting rid of all tactical nuclear weapons systems and limiting the total number of heavy battle tanks in Europe. Those initiatives could release money from defence to be used for social purposes.

I shall deal briefly with the nuclear aspects as others may wish to participate and I want to leave plenty of time for the Minister. The INF agreement is to be welcomed, although it represents only about 3 per cent. of the world nuclear stockpile, following a huge build-up of such weapons before the talks, so it is not such an amazing achievement. The Russians have issued a postage stamp commemorating it, and that is about what it amounts to proportionately in terms of the total number of nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, it is welcome.

Short-range nuclear weapons should have been included in that agreement. We should have had the triple zero. The West German Government wanted that because they realise that blowing up part of one's own territory is self-defeating. That should have been taken into account and we shall have to come back to it in future talks. Strategic arms reduction talks are going on for a 50 per cent. cut in strategic weapons, but I do not believe that it will really be 50 per cent. on a strict count. They are already fiddling with the arithmetic so that short-range attack missiles count as only one, and so on. Nevertheless, an agreement would be extremely welcome.

There are two blocks in the way of such a development. The major block is star wars, to which I shall come in a moment, but the other is the sea-launched nuclear weapons. It is shocking that the United Kingdom's Trident and Polaris missiles are not on the negotiating table. In my view, they should be in the negotiations. Sea-launched nuclear weapons could get in the way of strategic arms reduction talks. If they remain uncontrolled —there are now 16,000 weapons at sea—they could destroy a START agreement. They must be brought within the limitation and verification procedures. I appreciate that verification would be difficult, but the Government should insist that the super-powers start talking about sea-launched nuclear weapons and should put their own on the table, as it were.

Star wars—SDI—is a dangerous development. It is a first-strike capability and an enormous continuation of the arms race. It breaches the ABM treaty and it is a block to START. I have heard it said that the Russians are unlikely to agree to START while the star wars development remains in being. That could be the position. At Congress, the office of technical assessement has said that technically SDI is not feasible. It is wrong that the Government should be acquiescing to star wars. They are pursuing every contract that they can get and giving the impression, with the memorandum of understanding, that they are in favour of the project. They should come out against it so that we can secure a START treaty.

The Government seem still to take the view that a limited nuclear war could be fought and won. They are still wedded to the possibility of first use of nuclear weapons. They are still wedded to the modernisation of nuclear weapons when the world wants to see countries getting rid of these weapons. Modernisation would cheat on the INF and on a START.

The Government should be pressing for a comprehensive test ban treaty and a non-proliferation treaty. Unfortunately, the Government are still wedded to nuclear weapons for whatever and for ever. That seems to be their attitude, and that is a block to disarmament. They should wake up to the new world attitude. The peoples of the world are not interested in nuclear weapons and ever-increasing military spending. They are interested in life, health and the progress of mankind. They want more social spending. The Tory Government are a dinosaur. It seems that they are incapable of recognising world opinion. The British public want disarmament. They understand that world-wide agreements are necessary, and they will be angry when they realise that it is the British Government who are blocking these agreements at every turn.

7.38 am

Miss Ann Widdecombe (Maidstone): I am grateful for the opportunity to speak in the debate, especially as there is now litte chance that the debate in my name will be

reached. As I can find no way, even with the greatest ingenuinty, of introducing the financing of the University of London into a defence debate, I shall turn to what has been said by the hon. Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen).

Before taking up the remarks of the hon. Member for Leyton, I add my congratulations to those that have been offered to my hon. Friend the Minister. I wish him well in his new role, to which I am sure he will bring the distinction that he has brought to other roles in his career in government.

Before the hon. Member for Leyton commenced his oration, if it could be called that, we were all in great suspense waiting for him to wake up and get here. Having listened to his speech, I am still waiting for him to wake up. He appears to have no appreciation of the true state of affairs when it comes to arms negotiations and of who has been giving the lead in arms reductions.

The hon. Gentleman paints NATO as the dragon of the picture. He ignores the unilateral withdrawal of 1,400 warheads, the destruction of the United Kingdom's stocks of chemical weapons, President Reagan's initial zero-zero option, and the long lag before NATO introduced updated weapons to match the Russian SS20s in the form of cruise. None of those actions of restraint met with any reaction of equal restraint from the Soviet Union. Rather, they resulted in an escalation on the part of the Soviet Union. It is very much to the credit of the British Government and, indeed, the United States that they insisted on negotiating from a position of strength, which has brought about the very arms agreements that we have been seeking for so long.

Perhaps it is somewhat unfair to refer to the Soviet Union before the days of Mr. Gorbachev. Perhaps we should now try to look at the Soviets in a rather more trusting light. The position has changed, and we now have the prospect of major arms agreements. That, however, leaves us in a position completely ignored by the hon. Member for Leyton, in which we still face overwhelming conventional superiority on the part of the Soviet Union. We also face the prospect of severe cuts in land-based nuclear missiles.

Because the nuclear missile has always been designed to deter not only a nuclear but a conventional attack, it is doubly important for us to ensure, when reducing our nuclear stockpile and still facing conventional superiority, that we have the most modern and effective weapons in those categories that are still left to us. That is the purpose of the modernisation so derided by the hon. Gentleman. It should be seen not as an escalation, but rather as making effective what we have left and could use.

It is easy to say that we are wedded to first use. We are not, but it would be totally ineffective to set something up as a deterrent and say, "This is what we could use," and then deny that we would use it. The hon. Gentleman knows that as well as I do. He is well aware that for a deterrent to be effective a potential enemy must understand that we would actually use it. He is also well aware that nothing that NATO has done has met with much response from the Soviet Union, that the present cuts have been brought about as much from economic pressure within the Soviet Union as from some great enlightenment, that we are still faced with overwhelming conventional superiority and that we are pursuing an enlightened policy of gradual, verifiable and mutual arms reductions. That policy is the surest method of retaining peace, as it has done for the past 40 years.

7.43 am

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. William Waldegrave): I am grateful to the hon. Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) both for his kind words and for enabling me to address the House—although not a packed House—on such important matters so early after my new appointment. I am not sure that it is entirely truthful to say that I wished to speak about them first at this time of day, but one must not complain.

I am also grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Maidstone (Miss Widdecombe). It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that she has answered the debate very thoroughly herself, and she made a number of sensible points, some of which I shall echo.

I could not forbear from a wry internal smile when the hon. Member for Leyton teased NATO for not having got its mandate together. There may be clear mandates in some parts of his party's activities, but it must be said that, in whatever order I read the words in which the leader of his party expresses his mandate, they do not seem any clearer. I have tried the moving interview that he gave to my good friend John Mortimer, but I think that it must have been printed backwards, because it did not seem to make much sense. I had some difficulty in understanding the exact thrust of the right hon. Gentleman's mandate. I found the speech of the hon. Member for Leyton a great deal clearer and I pay tribute to him for that, but it is not a great competition to have won.

Within the first week of my appointment to an extremely important portfolio I am sure that the hon. Member for Leyton will not expect me to have sketched out any new directions or to say anything that will surprise him. However, I am grateful to him for allowing me the opportunity to put certain things on the record.

The range of the hon. Gentleman's speech was wide, and he covered the subject comprehensively. I shall try to cover some of that ground. The North Atlantic Council meeting in June 1987 at Reykjavik is a good place to start. At that meeting we and our allies set out our future arms control priorities. We strongly refute the idea that it is the Soviet Union that has set the agenda. To be fair, the hon. Gentleman should agree that it was the West that suggested the zero proposal on INF. I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for what he said about the contribution of the Foreign Office and its efforts to eliminate chemical weapons. The West also took the lead in that respect.

After Reykjavik, the agenda set out for the future meant 50 per cent. cuts in United States and Soviet strategic nuclear weapons, the global elimination of chemical weapons and the elimination of the imbalance in conventional forces in Europe. I shall survey the progress that has been made in each of those areas since last year.

It is worth considering the implications of the word "disarmament", which is the title of the debate. The Government consider that the agenda is about arms control. The Government support balanced and verifiable arms control agreements which are consistent with maintaining our security. We must beware of proposals for wholesale disarmament which see the reduction of weapons as an end in itself. That is not the end. The end is greater security, and that is an important distinction.

The Government believe that nuclear weapons will continue to be necessary for the foreseeable future for maintaining deterrence. We take a different view from the hon. Gentleman. We shall continue to support NATO's

[Mr. William Waldegrave]

policy of keeping only the minimum number of nuclear weapons necessary to achieve that. My hon. Friend the Member for Maidstone said that the Alliance has reduced its stockpile of nuclear warheads in Europe by 35 per cent. since 1979. However, we must record the fact that there has not been a comparable reduction in the Soviet Union.

Reducing the numbers of our weapons to the minimum necessary is one side of the coin: the other side is the requirement to keep them up to date. If they are to provide an effective deterrent, our nuclear weapons must be credible. So we firmly endorse the determination, expressed by NATO Heads of Government at their meeting in Brussels in March, to ensure that all the Alliance's forces, conventional and nuclear, are kept up to date.

Two of the arms control priorities I mentioned earlier related to nuclear weapons. Since Reykjavik, the INF agreement has been finally accepted by the Russians, and the INF treaty entered into force on 1 June 1988. That was a major step. The significance of the treaty and the credit which the achievement of it reflects on the Alliance have been, as my hon. Friend for Maidstone has said, fully discussed in this House on earlier occasions. I need not dwell further on it today.

As the hon. Member for Leyton said, the negotiations between the Americans and the Russians about reductions in their strategic nuclear weapons are continuing in Geneva. The Government warmly endorse the determination shown by the United States Administration to negotiate carefully on the many difficult areas still to be resolved. We are convinced that there should be no question of allowing political time tables to dictate our security requirements. If anyone is tempted to become impatient at what may seem slow progress in Geneva, he should consider—the hon. Gentleman has considered the subject in detail and is similarly aware—how complicated the issues are that are being discussed. The verification regime for a START agreement, for instance, would be far more complicated even than that established under the INF treaty, as the hon. Gentleman acknowledged. After the two nuclear parities are achieved, the nuclear situation in Europe will have received enough attention for the time being and the spotlight should focus on the conventional and chemical theatres.

Despite our welcome for the hope for the world that the regime of Mr. Gorbachev represents—and I would not underplay that—it is our duty to be careful about the security of our own peoples, and we must be on our guard against any attractively-packaged offers to denuclearise Europe. Whenever attention shifts to conventional forces, the Russians try to divert it back to denuclearisation. We must not let that ploy succeed, and it will not. History has shown that, tragically, even a complete balance of conventional forces has not been enough to guarantee peace.

The hon. Gentleman mentioned the shorter-range nuclear forces. NATO is united in rejecting a zero solution on SNF, which would be the third zero. We and our allies are currently engaged in considering what the Alliance's future SNF requirements will be. We are determined to keep our holdings to a minimum—again, in contrast to the Soviet Union which now has a 14 to one advantage in SNF missile launchers—but we are sure that NATO must retain an effective SNF capability.

Arms control is not just about nuclear weapons. Progress in the nuclear area increases the importance of improving conventional security. Britain and Europe have suffered dreadfully from conventional wars during this century, and modern conventional weapons are many times more destructive than those of 40 years ago. The present concentration of conventional forces in Europe of NATO and of the Warsaw pact comprises the greatest conventional destructive potential ever assembled. That is why we must insist that nuclear arms control must not make Europe safe for conventional war and why we attach so much importance to redressing the imbalances between NATO and Warsaw pact conventional forces.

In Europe, the Warsaw pact has three times as many tanks as NATO, more than three times as much artillery and nearly twice as many tactical aircraft. Furthermore, its forces are configured and deployed in ways which would permit them to initiate a surprise attack and to undertake large-scale offensive action.

That is why the elimination of that imbalance, which so favours the Warsaw pact, is the Government's major arms control priority, now that the INF treaty has been concluded and START negotiations are in train. To that end, we and our allies are discussing with representatives of the Warsaw pact in Vienna the terms of reference for new negotiations on conventional stability which would cover an area from the Atlantic to the Urals. The aim of the negotiations will be to establish a stable and secure balance of conventional forces at lower than the present levels. We shall also seek to eliminate disparities of forces which are prejudicial to stability and security. We want to eliminate the capacity to launch surprise attacks and initiate large-scale offensive action. That is very important. Mr. Gorbachev's proposals of 16 July are a welcome move towards the Western approach. We need more detail, but the proper place for the deployment of the detail is the conventional stability talks.

The Government hope that the negotiations will start during this year. They will take place within the framework of the CSCE process. The outcome of the current CSCE review meeting in Vienna must be balanced. We cannot conclude agreement on that section of the review without progress in other areas, notably in respect of human rights. Hence, our concern to make progress in all the sectors of the review.

I now turn to the hon. Gentleman's comments on chemical weapons. He was generous in saying that, over the years, the British Government have played a real part in the pursuit of a verifiable, comprehensive and global ban on all chemical weapons. We have submitted detailed technical papers to the conference on disarmament in Geneva. Two years ago we chaired the negotiations. Last year my predecessor set out in Geneva the detailed steps that remained to be taken to make the chemical weapons ban effective.

We are both pleased that during the past two years there have been some real signs of progress. The issues are complex, and much effort will be required if we are to develop effective solutions. We seek a convention that will enhance and will be seen to enhance security. To do that, once again there will be a need for reliable verification. I

assure the hon. Gentleman that there is no foot-dragging here. The nearer one gets to a substantive agreement, the more complex things become.

All countries must have confidence in such verification. There is still some way to go, because unless the small print of verification can be seen by all to work in practice countries will not sign an agreement, even if one can be reached. The urgency of achieving a meaningful treaty which we could press others to join is only re-emphasised by recent events of the Gulf war. The negotiations have not, therefore, been a matter only for East and West, as the latest tragic events have shown.

Proliferation underlines the vital need for the convention to be global, yet that raises is own problems. Even the modest provisions of the 1925 Geneva protocol have yet to be universally agreed to. At the United Nations special session in June, my hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary called for renewed impetus to be given to the 1925 protocol. Countries which have not yet signed it—50 in all—should now do so. He called also for prompt international investigation of allegations of the use of chemical weapons. When use had been demonstrated, he said that there should be effective action by the international community. We are working to build on that call.

Openness is crucial. The United Kingdom unilaterally gave up its chemical warfare capability in the 1950s, as the hon. Member for Leyton mentioned. The Soviet Union possesses a substantial chemical weapons capability—but it did not acknowledge that until last year. In fact, no more than three countries admit to possessing chemical weapons. That shows how far there is still to go. If all countries are committed to a ban, as they say they are, why are they so reluctant to come clean? How could we be confident that a ban would work unless there was certainty about what it covered?

The hon. Gentleman may be interested to hear that we have just conducted a significant experiment. In May this year a Soviet delegation visited the United Kingdom chemical defence establishment at Porton Down. There, chemical weapons experts discussed the full range of chemical weapons related activity. Many of these issues were directly related to the work of the conference on disarmament. Other discussions ranged more widely.

At the beginning of this month the Soviet Union reciprocated with an invitation to Britain to visit its chemical plant at Shikhany. We were pleased to have had that opportunity, but it was evident from the exchanges that attitudes to secrecy remain different in the Soviet Union. Glasnost has not yet reached all the parts of Soviet military thinking.

Many questions and concerns about Soviet capability remain. We have a long way to go in the chemical weapons negotiations. The Government are determined to continue to work energetically for the goal that we have set ourselves over many years. It is important to remember that that goal is a convention with robust verification which adds to our security, not a rushed, skimped exercise that would leave crucial problems unresolved.

A ban that works is a prize for which the world has striven ever since chemical weapons were first invented. The progress that we are making now must not cause us to rush in any way that would let that major prize slip from our grasp.

The hon. Member for Leyton repeated the argument, sometimes advanced, that the SDI breaches the ABM treaty. No doubt he has debated this subject often before and will know that we strongly believe that to be wrong. We think that SDI, as a research programme, is allowed under the ABM treaty. The Soviet Union has admitted that it is conducting similar types of research.

As for modernisation, NATO is not in the business of building up stocks of nuclear weapons for their own sake, but in order to deter, and our deterrent must be modern and known to be effective. A threadbare deterrent is perhaps the most dangerous thing of all.

The hon. Member for Leyton said that all the disarmament initiatives had come from the other side. That is not fair, and it is easy to refute by reference to the list that was given by my hon. Friend the Member for Maidstone. The arms control agenda has been set by the West and by the democracies, as one would expect. The INF zero proposal was made by the West, and Mr. Gorbachev is coming round to our conventional arms approach. The West is taking the lead in conventional arms reductions.

In the short time available, I have been able only to refer briefly to the Government's objectives in arms control, in which traditionally we have played a prominent role and will continue to do so. The problems are often intractable, partly because we are seeking not simply to reduce weapons but to improve security, which is not necessarily the same.

It being Eight o'clock, the motion for the Adjournment of the House lapsed, without Question put.

Warehouse Fires

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Durant.]*

8 am

Mr. Terry Fields (Liverpool, Broadgreen): I apologise in advance to the Minister if I do not allow him the customary amount of time to reply. My speech is so extensive that I could have done with an hour and a half. I hope that the Minister will understand that I do not expect a detailed reply. I shall give him a document and ask him or his Department to write to me about it.

The specific problems facing the fire service that I want to deal with concern warehousing. Uncharacteristically, perhaps, the only political statement I wish to make is that Britain used to be the workshop of the world, but we are fast becoming the warehouse of the world. The proliferation of warehouses up and down the country is there for all to see.

Warehouses, by the nature of their use, can pose extreme problems in the event of fire for the people working in them, the firefighters attending them and the population living around or working in them. There has been an upsurge in the warehouse industry in recent years. As the growth of imports has risen, so the number of warehouses has similarly increased.

The growth in the warehousing industry has led to an increase in large and costly fires in warehouses, many of which have been extremely costly—often more than £250,000 and, with increasing frequency, they are in the multi-million pound category.

The two fires at the Ministry of Defence establishment at Donnington in Shropshire are conservatively estimated to have cost £265 million. As that loss is borne by the taxpayer, central Government budgets must be cut and savings must be made in other expenditure. Fires in private warehousing mean an increase in insurance costs for all insurance customers. This scenario deals only with direct losses and takes no account of consequential losses, which often can be equal to the direct loss and, in certain circumstances when contracts are lost or default clauses operate, they exceed the direct loss. A company's long-term viability and profitability may also be affected. When foreign goods are lost, effectively imports are doubled, which may be reflected in the balance-of-trade figures.

The Fire Protection Association's figures for the period December 1986 to November 1987, which were published this year in its "Fire Prevention" magazine, show that of more than 250,000 fires, 20 occurred in warehouses totalling a direct loss of £25,269,000. That was 9 per cent. of the total for all fires in that cost bracket and accounted for 11·46 per cent. of total cost figures.

Another article published by the Fire Protection Association in 1985, "The Warehouse Fire Scandal", by Dr. R. B. Ward, showed that, between 1979 and 1984, 11 warehouse fires occurred in the £5 million cost bracket totalling £377 million, a rough average of £34·25 million per fire.

The same article shows that between July 1983 and June 1984 there were 213 fires, approximately 17 per month, in storage premises, which cost the country £137,302,000. In 20 fires in sprinklered warehouses, the cost was £12,981,000, and one fire alone cost £10 million because of inadequate provision of sprinklers. That means that the remaining 19 fires cost a total of £2,981,000, which is absolute peanuts compared to unsprinklered losses.

I shall deal with five particular fires. I will list them chronologically and explain the lack of control over the warehouse industry in the past decade.

In Braehead container depot in Renfrew on 4 January 1977 there was a fire in a warehouse used for transport and storage. The fire spread to a bonded warehouse and the fire and explosions caused by the storage of commercially pure sodium chlorate destroyed properties and caused widespread damage to domestic, commercial, industrial and public buildings within a one-mile radius. Twelve members of the public and one watchman were treated for shock and minor injuries. Burning debris from the explosion fell on fuel tanks at a nearby power station. Fortunately, they did not ignite. In that instance, no fire safety legislation was applicable on the site.

In February 1980, at the Permaflex company in Stoke-on-Trent, there was a fire and a series of explosions. The fire originated from arcing on a fork-lift truck in an area where flammable gas, LPG—liquefied petroleum gas —was present. The warehouse was used for storing cartridges and aerosols, containing 49 tonnes of LPG. The aerosol and butane fuel containers were exploding and being violently expelled from the building. Local residents and commercial and industrial premises were evacuated. Five hours later the fire seemed to be under control. Then, two massive explosions occurred causing damage to adjacent property. That led to a re-evacuation of the area. The fire burned for a further 60 hours—2·5 days. The local authority concluded that the Fire Precautions Act 1971 did not apply.

A fire at B and R Hauliers in Salford in 1982 involved a warehouse where some 2,000 tonnes of chemicals stored included 25 tonnes of sodium chlorate. Sixty people attended the local hospital after inhaling smoke and fumes and suffering from shock. One person was admitted with breathing difficulties, nine were treated for cuts and lacerations, one for eye injuries and four for nausea and vomiting. Later, 100 people attended the Salford Royal hospital with chest ailments, sore throats and so on. Surrounding properties suffered varying degrees of damage. Several hundred people were evacuated. A cloud of hydrogen chloride—hydrochloric acid—formed around the area but, because of the nature of the premises, the Fire Precautions Act did not apply yet again.

In 1982 there was a fire and explosions in Cary's warehouse in Ipswich. The warehouse stored wickerware, ammonium nitrate fertilisers, compound fertilisers and potassium nitrate. Between 750 and 1,000 people were evacuated from local housing estates, shops, old people's homes and a primary school in an area three quarters of a mile long and half a mile wide. Five people were rescued by firefighters. The explosions were so powerful that they ejected burning materials and lethal sized pieces of corrugated iron and glass into adjoining premises within 100 m of the incident. Again, the Fire Precautions Act did not apply.

In the Brightside lane warehouse in Sheffield in 1984 a fire started in a furniture repository. The repository formed one unit of a large building sub-divided into five smaller units. In two days the fire destroyed the whole warehouse complex with the exception of one unit. That survived due to the effectiveness of fire separation between it and the rest of the complex. The building was not

dissimilar to Braehead and the fire was similar to that which occurred there in 1977. It is obvious from the catalogue of fires I have listed that the lessons have not been learned. The Fire Precautions Act did apply in that case, but only to one of the units which was put to a "designated use".

The risks in all those cases are covered by many pieces of legislation and regulations. There is the Town and Country Planning Act 1971, the Building Act 1984, the Fire Certificate (Special Premises) Regulations 1976, the Notification of Installations (Handling of Hazardous Substances) Regulations 1982, the Control of Industrial Major Accident Hazards Regulations 1984, the Fire Precautions Act 1971, the Fire Services Act 1947, the Storage of Flammable Liquids Regulations, and the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974.

None of those pieces of legislation had any real effect on the control of what was stored in those premises, nor did they put any responsibility on the owner or occupier to take the course of action which the fire service would demand. For instance, should someone want to develop a new site or redevelop an existing building for warehousing, it seems politic to examine what controls the planners would or would not have over such a development. By virtue of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, the Town and Country Planning Act 1984 classifies warehouses as class B8 storage and distribution. That means that if the development of a site is new, planning permission would be required. If, however, the site is an existing one and is already classed as the same usage group, no planning permission is required.

However, nowhere in the planning legislation is there a requirement for the fire authorities to be consulted, nor is the fire authority given any power to act as an objector to a proposal. Hazardous sites which do not fall within the scope of the Health and Safety Executive Regulations 1982 and therefore the 1987 order can gain automatic planning permission where there is no change of use. The Fire Precautions Act 1971 and the 1987 order made by virtue of it have one serious failing. They fail to differentiate between risk, and nowhere more so than where a class B8 building or site is under consideration. In effect, that means that a low fire risk-load warehouse, for exampie, steel stockholders, can be transformed overnight into a high risk-load premises, for example, for the storage of foam plastics, without any requirement for any form of planning consent and, therefore, no facility for local population objections.

The Building Act 1984 and the regulations made by virtue of it deal with fire safety in two ways. One is life safety in the form of means of escape from fire, and the second is the ability of a building, structure or fabric to resist the effects of fire. I shall deal primarily with the second aspect. Warehouses, for the purpose of the building regulations, are classed in the purpose group identification system as "other non-residential". As with the planning controls, the building regulations fail to differentiate between user risk. The final anomaly with the building regulations is that there is no on-going control so that, as with the planning control, once a building is within a purpose group no account is taken of the risk that the building poses. Therefore, a change of occupier or risk causes no reassessment of the building.

There is no reason to believe that certain warehouses, used purely for the storage of agricultural products—for example, fertilisers—would be exempt from any building regulation control by virtue of definition as an agricultural building. Bearing in mind that fertilisers have played a significant part in some warehouse fires, that is not a happy scenario. The Fire Certificate (Special Premises) Regulations 1976 also apply to warehouses, but the quantities of hazardous substances to be specified are such that there would almost certainly be an overlap with the next two regulations with which I want to deal.

The first is the Notification of Installations Handling Hazardous Substances Regulations 1982. It should be noted that these regulations rely on notification being given to the Health and Safety Executive by a premises or site occupier. Of course, in many instances, such people can be shady characters who refuse or neglect to give information to the Health and Safety Executive and, as a consequence, stuff is stored there which should not be there. No controls or regulations cover that.

The second piece of legislation in that category is the Control of Industrial Major Accidents Hazards Regulations 1984, which rely for application on the storage or use of quantities of specified hazardous substances. There are certain areas of overlap so that both sets of regulations may apply simultaneously. In effect, that means that only specific commodities stored in a particular warehouse are covered by the legislation. The legislation would not apply to other goods which could be stored in the warehouses without any controls and as a consequence the warehouses would be a danger to the public and to the fire service.

The fire service prepared the Fire Precautions Act 1971 which is a major piece of legislation. Its main thrust is to provide for life safety for persons within premises to which the Act applies. Two separate premise types have been designated so far. The first covers hotels and boarding houses and the other covers places at work. However, the designated titles serve to deceive because under the heading of "places of work" only premises to which the definitions contained in the Factories Act 1961 and the Offices, Shops and Railway Premises Act 1963 are put to what is called a designated use.

The two definitions under the 1961 and the 1963 Acts apply only to certain types of warehouses. There is a range of warehouse types which do not fall neatly into definitions in the Factories Act 1961 or the Offices, Shops and Railway Premises Act 1963. Therefore, while certain provisions in the 1971 Act apply, the main fire safety sections do not simply because the building is not put to what is called a designated use.

Section 12 of the 1971 Act enables the Secretary of State to make regulations relating to any matter that appears to him to have an effect on fire safety. That power has been exercised only once to make certain regulations relating to fire safety in small places of work which, while they are put to a designated use, because of the small number of persons employed, do not require a fire certificate.

The 1971 Act is at present in the first phase of four-year alteration due to the provisions of the Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987. It is generally understood that in other areas the status quo could be maintained.

The Fire Services Act 1947 is rather important to firemen, particularly section 1(1)*(d)* which gives licence to fire authorities and requires that the fire authority make

[Mr. Terry Fields]

"efficient arrangements for obtaining, by inspection or otherwise, information required for fire-fighting purposes with respect to the character of the buildings and other property in the area of the fire authority".

However, even with those wide sweeping powers under the 1947 Act, the only restriction is that entry cannot be demanded unless 24-hour notice is given.

To the layman, quoting all this legislation is absolutely meaningless. My point is that there are warehouses that may be covered by specific areas in all the legislation to which I have referred, but without sufficient clarity to give the fire service any confidence that a proper job is being done, looking after the interests of the general public, of fire service personnel, and property in close proximity to some of the buildings that store these dangerous commodities.

There are regulations covering the storage of flammable liquids and the Petroleum (Regulations) Acts of 1928 and 1936 and the Highly Inflammable Liquids and Liquified Petroleum Gas Regulations 1972 apply. However, warehouses that store flammable liquids could fall within the arena of that legislation. However, it should be understood that the regulations are very specific in application and will apply only in certain specified conditions which are fairly detailed. They are beyond the scope of what I want to say.

If we compare the five warehouse sites to which I have referred with current legislation and assess the control of, planning and building regulations purposes, three of the sites would not require planning permission by virtue of the fact that the Notification of Installations Handling Hazardous Substances Regulations 1982 would apply. No building regulation application for three of the warehouses would be necessary. The Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974 would apply generally to all the sites and did at the time of the incidents. It is therefore a matter for anxiety that it appears to have failed, because, despite the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act, fires of a major magnitude did take place, with severe damage to property and with severe risk to people and firefighters in the area.

It must cause anxiety that in the majority of the cases that I have detailed, which are but the tip of a very big iceberg, there was fragmented control over the sites and little effort to deal with the risks that the sites posed. The dangers of the sites were very real. It could almost be said that it was by divine intervention that no one was killed in those incidents rather than by the efforts of those bodies charged with looking after the public good.

Even more worrying is the fact that in two of the instances—40 per cent. of the instances—analysed the sites would still be bereft of legislative control and could be in business today. There appears to be no common goal of the safety enforcers. The controls, such as they are, are not complementary and do not inspire confidence. There is no interplay between the enforcers who operate independently of each other and have very little input into each other's areas of control. The anomaly in the Fire Precautions Act 1971 whereby certain warehouses are classified as "designated" and others are not is indefensible, as is the anomaly that only factory buildings that store or use highly flammable or explosive materials require a fire certificate, irrespective of the numbers employed.

The fact that the public purse in the form of the fire authority must always pay the cost of the provision of adequate water supplies for fire-fighting purposes is an antiquated and dangerous precedent in times of restricted budgets.

The failure of both planning and building regulation controls to differentiate between the potential risk of a building or a site because of the use of blanket purpose group headings is worrying in the extreme. The hypothesis that a steel stock warehouse in the middle of a residential area could be changed overnight into a chemical storage depot without any form of control is worrying.

I shall provide the Minister with a list of 12 recommendations, but I shall briefly mention them now. I shall be demanding—and the fire service through the Fire Brigades Union will be demanding—the classification and grading of warehouses. There will need to be notification of change of storage and planning and building regulation consent will be required. There would be a need for designation of warehouses for the purposes of the Fire Precautions Act 1971. There would need to be fire protection measures for warehouses, because I believe I have demonstrated that a sprinkler at warehouses can give fire protection. There needs to be a draft marking of building regulations, which I believe that the Health and Safety Executive is circulating for discussion. On non-public sites, water supplies should be paid for by the developer or the user of the site, and not by the local authority whose finances are presently a little strapped. Fire certificates and annual inspections with reports should be mandatory, so too should be the keeping of an up-to-date list of all materials stored at a site, which should be accessible to firefighters.

I apologise for going on so long, but this is a detailed and complex matter which needs to go on record. I was a fire officer for 26 years. We must protect the firefighters who are entering unknown territory in certain factories. We must protect the general public and ensure that we make a contribution to fire safety and reduce fire losses.

8.23 am

The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. John Patten): I understand the wish of the hon. Member for Liverpool, Broadgreen (Mr. Fields) to set out his points in some detail. I know he will realise that, because of the lack of time, I shall not be able to go into all of his points in as much detail as I should have liked. I am sure the House will agree that we should listen with care to what the hon. Gentleman says about the fire service, because, as he said, he was a member of the fire service between 1957 and 1983. He has great experience in these matters and I am grateful to him for the way in which he has spoken this morning. I shall ensure that the document that he passes to me is examined in detail in the Home Office.

While I agree that we should listen carefully to the hon. Gentleman about firefighting, I am not sure that we should listen to him quite so carefully when it comes to the national economy. The country is certainly not one great warehouse now. It has a lot of warehouses, but it also has a lot of workshops, a lot of innovation, and a lot of technical expertise. There is much selling of that expertise and of financial services abroad, which makes Britain one of the economic leaders of the Western world. We have begun the eighth successive year of economic growth. That is an unparalleled record in recent history.

I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for giving me this opportunity, albeit briefly, to pay tribute to the fire service,

which frequently combines with other emergency services to provide an invaluable source of help and assurance for the public when disasters occur. It occasionally rescues people from terrible situations and deals with warehouse fires, which can sometimes be considerable conflagrations.

Firefighters are sometimes led into the unknown. It is a sad fact of life that the demand on their services shows no sign of diminishing. The hon. Gentleman has some detailed suggestions to make on how the work of the fire services in dealing with warehouse fires can be improved. It is perhaps appropriate, even at this early hour, to say something about finance as a background to my remarks about the fire service and warehousing.

The Government are committed to the maintenance of an efficient and effective fire service. They provide support through the block grant mechanism of the rate support grant settlement. Support will continue in the form of revenue support grant under the new local government finance system, which comes into operation in 1990. Since 1982-83 the Government have increased by 12 per cent. expenditure on the fire service. Some of the money and the effort of the fire service goes on fighting fires in warehouses. I agree that warehouse fires have often been a cause of concern, but, happily, the fire service has always risen to the occasion—as we have all grown to expect and appreciate.

All brigades take account of warehouses and other special risks, such as chemical plants and others that the hon. Member mentioned, when arranging fire cover in their areas. Fire service resources are also deployed to meet the risk categorisation of plants, factories and warehouses. Brigades ensure that they deploy appliances so that if some disaster should occur it is dealt with as quickly as possible.

The Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council keeps all new risks under review and gives operational advice to the fire service. It can also recommend to the Government any changes in law that are thought appropriate. The hon. Gentleman told the House about some of the 12 recommendations that he will let me have after the debate so that I can ensure that my noble Friend Lord Ferrers, who has ministerial responsibility for these matters in the Home Office, can consider them.

I expect that the Home Office and the Department of the Environment will examine the important matters that the hon. Gentleman has raised about building regulations and planning, as well as about the fire brigade, so that we can send him a consolidated reply as soon as possible. I do not know whether that reply will reach the hon. Gentleman before, or after, the summer holiday. I wish him well for the holiday, which I hope gives him rather less time for what "DOD's Parliamentary Companion" lists as his special interest, which is working-class struggle, and rather more for his recreation, which is wine making.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at twenty-nine minutes past Eight o'clock on Friday morning.

House of Commons

Friday 29 July 1988

The House met at half-past Nine o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PETITION

West London Hospitals (Closure)

9.35 am

Mr. Clive Soley (Hammersmith): With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I beg to ask leave to present a petition signed by no fewer than 50,000 people in the west London area complaining about the closure of four hospitals in west London.

The petition is organised by CAMDOR—the campaign for the defence of Riverside. Carol McDonagh was one of its organisers, and it reads:

"That we object to the plans by Riverside health authority to totally demolish St. Stephens hospital in order to make way for a new hospital which, if built, will lead to the permanent closure of Westminster hospital, West London hospital, St. Mary Abbots hospital and Westminster Children's hospital.

Wherefore our Petitioners pray that your honourable House will call upon members of Riverside health authority, North West Thames regional health authority and the Health Ministers to call a halt to these proposals and to argue that Riverside health authority be properly resourced to ensure a free and comprehensive Health Service, serving both the local community and the many visitors to the area."

It is estimated that £25 million would have prevented this proposal from going ahead. The petition shows the extent of the concern in my area.

To lie upon the Table.

South Yorkshire (Economic and Environmental Problems)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Neubert.]*

9.36 am

Mr. Peter Hardy (Wentworth): I am delighted to have this opportunity to raise the environmental and economic needs of south Yorkshire. It would be inappropriate to go into recess without the House having some idea of the grave problems and difficulties that my constituency and neighbouring constituencies face.

The matters that I seek to raise fall within the responsibility of three Government Departments. I suggested that it would be appropriate for three Ministers to be present this morning. The enormity of our difficulties would have justified their presence. Perhaps it would have been unrealistic to expect three Ministers to be here, but I am relieved that the Under-Secretary of State for the Environment, the hon. Member for Rossendale and Darwen (Mr. Trippier), is here. I intend to refer to a matter that I raised last week at Question Time and to the answer that he gave, which appeared to suggest that the door may not be firmly locked. That door needs to be opened rather wide and rather quickly.

The debate is about the economic and environmental problems of south Yorkshire. I shall deal with the problems in my own constituency, which is in the centre of the former metropolitan county. Barnsley is to the west, Doncaster is to the east and my constituency is largely to the north and east of Rotherham. Sheffield is to the south. I understand that Sheffield's case was presented yesterday at considerable length, so I shall not stray too far in that direction.

The northern part of my constituency includes part of the Dearne valley. It is a geographical area that, as its parliamentary representatives, I share with my hon. Friends the Members for Barnsley, East (Mr. Patchett) and for Don Valley (Mr. Redmond), who support the case that I shall be presenting today. I am grateful for their support and encouragement.

I welcome the debate. The scale of the problem and the intensity of the need that we face requires parliamentary attention and high ministerial priority. My constituency and several parts of south Yorkshire suffer from some of the worst unemployment problems that are to be found in England. I understand that of all the travel-to-work areas, the Rotherham and Mexborough travel-to-work area's unemployment ranks about seventh. Our unemployment levels are dreadful.

I do not propose to refer to precise figures because an obsession with detail may cloud the issue. There is also the suspicion that the official statistics are somewhat less than accurate. I believe that in areas of high unemployment the numbers that are excluded from the official figures are much higher than average.

One third of the unemployed in my constituency and in neighbouring areas are young people and 40 per cent. of the unemployed in the unemployment black spots in south Yorkshire have been out of work for over a year and, in many cases, for over three years. There are about 30 or 40 unemployed for each vacancy in most of the south Yorkshire area.

[Mr. Peter Hardy]

I suggested not long ago that the unemployment figures, grave as they are, do not represent fully the reality. It might be highly desirable to look not at the statistics for those who are unemployed, but at the statistics for those who are economically active, who are in full-time employment. Such statistics show that the position in south Yorkshire is grave. Unfortunately, the employment statistics are not available, apart from the 1981 census, which presents in detail the proportion of the population in full-time work. However, in south Yorkshire we have suffered many grave economic blows since 1981 and that census is not relevant to the present position. I should hate to have to wait until 1991 and then find that we have not made the progress that is so desperately needed.

The situation is deteriorating. The Minister may tell the House that, as a result of local and public and private initiatives, a number of jobs have been created. Indeed they have. Several part-time jobs and low-paid full-time jobs have been created, reducing the net disposable income of south Yorkshire because those part-time jobs are counted as having replaced full-time jobs in better-paid and traditional industry.

There has been a dreadful deterioration in my constituency this year. I have lost two collieries and the Canning Town glass works so far this year. That represents over 1,000 jobs. On several occasions in the House I have told the deplorable story of the closure of Canning Town Glass—a story of deceit which shows the integrity of British commerce in a poor light. Canning Town Glass was closed despite my constituents and me having been given firm assurances and although the local authority was persuaded properly and lawfully to make grants from the rate fund towards the maintenance of those works. Yet 500 jobs went. At the same time, Manvers colliery and shortly afterwards Kilnhurst colliery were closed. Those are not the only two collieries that have gone in south Yorkshire. Two or three months ago, in Prime Minister's Question Time, I recited a list of colliery closures in recent years.

I now have one colliery in my constituency, Silverwood, a successful colliery with a long and profitable record. It demonstrates what wise investment and good leadership can achieve. Although the prospects for that colliery, which has substantial reserves, should be satisfactory, the demoralisation in the industry leads some people to suspect that it may be in danger. Recently I looked at the plans for the colliery. I do not share that anxiety, although if the plans to develop ports on the Humber come to fruition successful and potentially profitable collieries are likely to be in peril.

That anxiety follows the rapid contraction of the coal industry in the central part of south Yorkshire and the Dearne valley. That valley was once green. As I have said before in the House, if one looks at the early ordnance survey maps published in the middle of the 19th century, one can detect the attractive quality of that valley, with osier beds, duck decoys and a fish population that included an abundance of salmon and trout. Although there have been modest attempts to improve the river Dearne, like the Rother and the Don, it is still more like an open sewer than a satisfactory water course. I am concerned about that because in the early 1970s, when I first became a Member of the House and campaigned to secure a much higher priority for the rivers of south Yorkshire, I was assured that I could expect them to be brought up to recreational standard by the mid-1980s. Last year I was told that they might reach that standard by the year 2000, so we seem to have made remarkably little progress.

As I live within my constituency, in the middle of south Yorkshire, and as I was a local representative in the Dearne valley area before I became a Member of Parliament, I have long been convinced of the fact that we need to ensure that our environment is properly protected and improved. I now believe it to be an urgent necessity. If we do not improve our environment, we shall not attract the incoming investment that is now an absolute necessity. For that reason, I was pleased when the planning department of Rotherham borough council, which is extremely competent, as the Minister may know, produced its concept for the improvement of derelict land in our part of the Dearne valley. The Minister has seen that plan and I believe it to be not merely desirable but absolutely essential.

As the Minister knows, there are 675 acres of land associated with Manvers and Wath collieries that are now derelict. Under the present rules governing the application of derelict land grant, there is no prospect whatever of one square inch of that land being improved. The land adjoins a substantial acreage occupied by the former railway marshalling yards close to Brampton Bierlow but within Wath-upon-Dearne. The area borders the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Barnsley, East (Mr. Patchett). It was a hive of activity when the coalfield was centred more towards the east. On several occasions during the war, the German English-language broadcasts promised to obliterate the Wath hump, as it was popularly called. It is now a wasteland.

Under the derelict land grant rules, it seems that the area would be unlikely to qualify for grant, although I was relieved to learn in a letter from the Prime Minister the other day—I shall refer to that correspondence—that the recent application from Rotherham borough council for derelict land grant to treat the Wath marshalling yards has not been absolutely rejected. Under the derelict land grant, I had thought that there was a possibility that the application would be approved because the council could demonstrate that some of the land at least would be subject to hard use after the dereliction had been cleared.

I understand that the Minister may tell the House that the Government have helped Rotherham by supporting the Temple borough project in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Rotherham (Mr. Crowther). I wholeheartedly support it because it will clear up some of the appalling dereliction between Sheffield and Rotherham. Once, 25,000 or 30,000 men worked in the steelworks area between Sheffield and Rotherham. Now there may be more estate agents' notices than jobs. It is an area which provided the sinews of material during the first and second world wars. We could certainly not have won those wars—if anyone can win a war—if we had not had the output from those plants. It is necessary for the project, of which the Minister is well aware, to go ahead, but it would not be helpful, for it to go ahead and other projects of equal necessity to be delayed.

People who read my speech may think that I am asking for a great deal, but I believe that we are one nation. That may not be a fashionable concept and Conservative Members may not endorse it entirely, but the country has a profound obligation to these areas.

I recall in the 1960s, when I was a young councillor, the chairman of my party in Wath-upon-Dearne and a schoolmaster, being extremely angry that the girls whom I taught and whom I represented had to travel by coach to work in the woollen mills in Bradford and Halifax. Girls who left school had to get up at 5 or 6 o'clock in the morning and would not get home until 8 or 9 o'clock at night. That was the only work available because there was a substantial lack of jobs for women in those days.

The local authority made efforts to stimulate and diversify the economy, but not enough was achieved, although we made some contribution. We were up against an almost structured disadvantage in that from the 1950s to the early 1970s the national strategy was that areas such as mine should not be encouraged to engage in economic diversification because the coal industry was far too important. The National Coal Board, as it was then known, built several housing estates in south Yorkshire to accommodate miners from other areas in order to guarantee south Yorkshire's coal output. We were up against objections and difficulties in seeking to ensure that we had rather more eggs in our economic basket, and we were prevented from doing so.

Then in the 1970s, when some of us were worried about the age of some of our collieries and saw how, as a result of investment, technological advance was demonstrably successful in the steel industry, although jobs were beginning to go, we pressed the case for greater economic assistance to stimulate the economy. We were told that the Department of Trade and Industry was absolutely confident that Yorkshire could generate its own prosperity from within, that we did not share the same economic difficulties as other parts, and that internal generation of wealth would meet the regional need. That was certainly not the case. With about 100,000 people unemployed on the Government's figures, the need is demonstrable.

Earlier I referred to correspondence with the Prime Minister. About four years ago I sent her a carefully considered assessment of the plight of my area. She dismissed it rather lightly and suggested that I should see about 2,800 new jobs in the mining industry. Far more jobs have gone in the period since that correspondence and we have had other blows and difficulties. About four months ago I again wrote to the Prime Minister urging her to pursue a multi-departmental study of the Dearne valley and the surrounding areas. Her letter in reply was somewhat careless—that may be a gentle word to use—and said that unemployment was falling. She was using the March rather than the April figures which was just before we lost jobs in the Canning Town Glass plant. She said that we were enjoying special priority under the urban programme. That was quickly checked and we discovered that we were not. I hope that the Minister is not unduly bored because he is aware of my point.

On balance, the three metropolitan districts of Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham are receiving about £6 a head in the current year under the urban programme, whereas other areas with less than half our unemployment are receiving urban programme funding twice or three times as much. If that is special priority, I would rather not have it. I do not mean that I would rather not have the fund—*[Laughter.]* The Minister must not misinterpret my comment. I would rather not have special priority if it will give us only a third as much as areas with a third or half our unemployment.

The Minister should also bear in mind that the value of our urban programme has been affected by inflation. Since inflation may be rising, albeit not vastly at this stage, the urban programme may not be as good as it should be. I was rather relieved last Wednesday when, in answer to my question, and without bidding, the Minister provided additional funding for a housing scheme in the Rawmarsh area of my constituency. If I have to ask a question a week to elicit that sort of response, I shall be happy to do so.

I am concerned about the need to enhance our environment because we shall not see economic recovery without that. My local authority, Rotherham, has not taken an absolutely hostile view to opencast mining. Several projects in Yorkshire are proceeding and some, such as the Rother valley country park, can make a useful contribution in the end. I am worried that the environmental problems are severe. We should not allow any opencast mining, whether for the benefit of British Coal or for the Government to pursue their reckless way of private profit, if it brings serious disturbance and environmental difficulties for my area.

To the north of the Wath-upon-Dearne-Rawmarsh-Swinton area we have the Dearne valley, with 1,000 acres of derelict land. If immediately to the south of Wath and Swinton and close by Rawmarsh we see the Warren House opencast site development, we would be placed between the upper and nether millstones of ugliness and squalor which would bring the population into a state of fury which I would certainly share. I hope that Conservative Members who are often concerned about the environment in the south-east—I sought to speak in a debate about housing development in the south-east merely to point out the environmental needs in other areas—will have some sympathy with the view that we should not be surrounded by dereliction from 19th century industry on one side and ill-considered insensitive development of opencast mining on the other.

In recent weeks my attention has been drawn to the case for a long-term study about the health effects of opencast mining. The other day I noticed an article in the *New Statesman* and correspondence in *The Times* which suggested that that study should begin without further delay.

Other urgent needs, which relate to environmental requirements, concern the infrastructure, and transport in particular. I know that the Minister is in the Department of the Environment, but I hope that the Department of Transport has provided him with some briefings on my next point. A new A1-M1 motorway link is needed to give the northern half of south Yorkshire a chance of achieving economic growth, development and, perhaps, eventual prosperity. I believe that it is not high enough in the programme and it does not command sufficient priority from central Government. However, I consider that that development is a necessity. I qualify that by saying that, if and when the road is built, it must be built in such a way that existing or potential railway lines are not rendered valueless by a failure to provide an adequate number of bridges. There is at least one potential railway line that would justify building a bridge where the road goes over the course of the proposed railway. We must maintain adequate rail and road networks. I hope that the Department of Transport will consider that point in due course and give it much higher priority.

[Mr. Peter Hardy]

The case for Sheffield was made at length in the House last night, so I shall not deal with that. However, the four local authorities in south Yorkshire—Barnsley, Rotherham, Sheffield and Doncaster metropolitan authorities—have together produced a document that I should like to draw to the Minister's attention, although it would not be appropriate to read out great chunks of it today. I hope that the Department of the Environment and any other relevant Departments are aware of the document, which was produced by the planning departments of the four local authorities and is entitled "Unitary Development Plans in South Yorkshire: Advice on Strategic Guidance from the the South Yorkshire Planning Conference". We have identified the needs of the area, which are acute, grave and vast.

I believe that we have at least begun to convince Ministers of the appalling conditions that face the area as a result of the movement of the coal industry to the east and the technological change—despite record-breaking achievement—within the steel industry. Our economy needs to be diversified if our environment is to be enormously improved. That improvement must be on a generous scale and it must be pursued with enthusiasm and without further delay.

10.3 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. David Trippier): I am delighted to respond to the matters raised by the hon. Member for Wentworth (Mr. Hardy), and I congratulate him sincerely on obtaining the opportunity to air again his concern about the economic and environmental problems suffered in south Yorkshire, particularly by his constituents and others living in the Dearne valley. I know that he is an able advocate for those whom he represents.

The hon Gentleman's concern is shared by the Government. We are, and shall remain, fully committed to helping local communities tackle the problems of unmployment and environmental deprivation by maximising whatever mechanisms are available—not only through measures targeted specifically at the area, but through policies being pursued generally throughout the United Kingdom, some of which I now intend to cover in more detail.

Before I move on to that detail, I must say that it occurred to me while the hon. Gentleman was speaking that it might be appropriate for me to pay yet another official visit to Rotherham or the nearby area, perhaps later in the year—if the hon. Gentleman would like that. Such a visit could be helpful for both of us and perhaps for the local authority. I visited the area about two months ago, as the hon. Gentleman knows. It is no great hardship for me because the journey only takes me an hour and a half from my home. I am a Lancastrian, but that does not seem to bother south Yorkshire people, and from my point of view I would see such a visit as missionary work.

Mr. Hardy: It was remiss of me not to have conveyed an invitation in my speech. I intended to do so and to ask the Minister to visit the site where we should like to see the garden festival held in the 1990s. My only reason for hesitating is that most of the Ministers in the Department of the Environment who have been up to see us seem to have lost their jobs shortly afterwards and I would not want that fate to befall this Minister.

Mr. Trippier: I have visited the area before and I am still in the same job after the recent reshuffle. I shall be delighted to respond to the invitation. Such a visit is no hardship to me and I should like the hon. Gentleman to be there as well as representatives of the local authorities.

The level of derelict land grant assistance is, I know, a subject that much concerns the hon. Gentleman and which I know more than a little about. At Question Time recently, I undertook to look agan at the criteria which govern the derelict land grant regime.

I fully appreciate, as the hon. Gentleman knows, that there will be cases where hard end use schemes are, for one reason or another, not appropriate to particular locations such as areas of colliery dereliction and areas where greening is considered essential to create the quality of environment to attract investment in development. I thought that what the hon. Gentleman said on that was right. I told the hon. Gentleman at Question Time that once I have the results of the derelict land survey which will come out after I visit his constituency, if it is appropriately timed I shall be in a much better position to undertake the review of the derelict land grant guidelines.

The local authorities are, as the hon. Gentleman knows, responsible for the collation of the derelict land information which, for the Yorkshire and Humberside authorities, is due back to my regional office in Leeds by 31 October 1988. It would therefore help if the hon. Gentleman could ensure that for the Dearne valley authorities, with whom he has close contact, these important survey returns are not delayed unnecessarily. The sooner I have the facts about the current state of dereliction the sooner my officials and I can begin to analyse them and consider whatever policy changes may be necessary.

The Yorkshire and Humberside region has received an initial public sector derelict land grant allocation of £7·2 million for 1988-89. Of this, almost £4 million has already been earmarked for the four south Yorkshire authorities. Rotherham alone has been granted rolling programme status for the Templeborough regeneration project, which the hon. Gentleman mentioned, and £2 million has been earmarked for this year and again for next. I hope, therefore, that the hon. Gentleman accepts that the area is receiving a very considerable level of financial assistance through DLG although, no doubt, he will press me for more when I visit him. I should also add that invitations to local authority chief executives to make their bids for DLG resources for 1988-90 schemes will go out shortly. I suggest that those bid documents might be a useful vehicle for putting the fullest possible case of increased DLG assistance.

There will, however, always be a limit on the amount of DLG resources. The hon. Gentleman would expect me to say that. He would say the same if he were standing here. It is important that other means of funding the reclamation of despoiled land should be fully explored. The private sector can help and is willing to help, often in partnership with central and local government. A number of major private sector schemes have had financial assistance from my Department, such as the Parkgate retail centre in Rotherham, and I recently announced a private sector derelict land grant of almost £3 million for

the Meadowhall retail complex in Sheffield, with which the hon. Gentleman is familiar. The Government have, moreover, recently simplified the grant assistance available to the private sector in the 57 programme authority areas.

It is important that I should stress that the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to the hon. Gentleman made the point that, of some 450 local authorities, only 57 attract the additional form of resource through the Department of the Environment's urban block. That was the special assistance that was made available to those areas—which is denied to the other areas. Four south Yorkshire local authorities are among the 57 authorities. Their inclusion must be justifiable otherwise they would not have been shortlisted in the first place.

City grant was introduced on 2 May this year and my officials are already dealing with several applications from south Yorkshire. This is a golden opportunity for me to suggest that the hon. Gentleman might try to act as a catalyst to attract interest from the private sector, with the support of the local authority, for city grant applications. Such an application would have to meet certain criteria, but I would consider it as favourably as possible. The hon. Gentleman will be aware that we have already approved a number of schemes for urban regeneration grant and city grant.

With regard to the urban programme, in 1987-88 the three authorities straddling the Dearne received £5·5 million, plus an end-of-year windfall of £210,000. Their initial allocation in 1988-89 is again £5·5 million. It is, of course, for the local authorities to decide where they wish to target those resources. The hon. Gentleman will be most concerned about his own constituency, which lies within the Dearne valley, and I leave it to him to press the authorities there.

Doncaster, in particular, has decided to focus on the Dearne, especially the towns of Mexborough and Conisbrough. These received considerable help last year and there are more good schemes in the pipeline which should greatly benefit the local economy. For example, in 1987-88, £200,000 was allocated to create a tourist centre at Conisbrough's impressive 12th century castle. Work there is now well under way and is complemented by English Heritage funding and a massive tree planting scheme undertaken by the Countryside Commission at the former Cadeby colliery.

This year, I approved more than £300,000 for the first stage of the conversion of the former Mexborough grammar school to workshop and business units. It is expected that this scheme will create some 250 jobs and help the local entrepreneurial talent to stimulate the economy. A recent small grant to a local business man under the urban programme is expected to create another 50 jobs in Mexborough as the former Royal Electric theatre is converted into a restaurant and leisure centre.

I am endeavouring to explain that the environment has not been neglected. Mexborough town centre will benefit greatly from a £250,000 pedestrianisation scheme. The urban programme also supports two members of staff co-ordinating British Trust for Conservation Volunteers initiatives in Mexborough and Conisbrough. This not only improves the local environment but offers useful training and experience to young people in the area.

Support for projects in Rotherham's part of the Dearne valley has been going on for some time as well, both under the urban programme and before, when Rotherham was classified as an ODD, or other designated district. Very substantial amounts of money have been put into large economic schemes. For example, £1 million went into the Swinton bridge at the edge of the Dearne which, with derelict land grant, opened up industrial land and safeguarded hundreds of jobs at Morphy Richards as well as allowing valuable new developments. Again, at Brampton Ellis, over the past two years well over £500,000 has gone into converting a former school into some 68 small and medium-sized units for new and expanding businesses which offer the hope of real jobs for hundreds of people in the area.

In Barnsley, the story is much the same, with particular emphasis being placed on the environmental schemes and with more than £200,000 in the past two years going into the Dearne valley park—a major project which has also received funding in previous years. The latest stage involves the landscaping of a former maggot farm, and applications for further schemes are still arriving in our regional office in Leeds.

I repeat that we can approve schemes within the Dearne only if they are submitted to us. It is up to local authorities to prioritise, but it is as well not to be too parochial as the Dearne will also gain from the the new initiatives in nearby Sheffield. The urban programme funded science park and new employment park, the improvements which will follow rapidly now that the urban development corporation has been established in the lower Don valley and private sector projects such as the one at Meadowhall will all improve the economy of the whole of south Yorkshire. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman accepts that there will be a knock-on effect. Especially heartening for me are the two major developments at either end of the lower Don valley, the urban development corporation giving the area a head start in the type of urban regeneration that we wish to see, with the physical transformation of the landscape and the reduction of the unacceptably high unemployment in the area. I genuinely hope that the hon. Gentleman's constituency will benefit as a result.

Although the hon. Gentleman asked for higher ministerial priorities, I have attempted to show that the area already receives high priority. As a result of the important oral answer that I gave last week and my offer to revisit the hon. Gentleman's constituency, I am endeavouring to meet his request.

Middle East

10.15 am

Mr. David Atkinson (Bournemouth, East): I am grateful for this opportunity to refer to the situation in Palestine and to congratulate my hon. Friend the Minister on his new appointment, which I know he will enjoy and in which he will certainly excel.

It is now eight months since the commencement of the current unrest in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza—the "intifada" as it is known by the Palestinians. The unrest in December was spontaneous, but it had been long predicted. Since Israel replaced Jordan and Egypt as the occupying power in 1967, the Palestinians have become increasingly frustrated by the lack of any prospect of a settlement which would respect their right to self-determination. Demonstrations, the detention of young Palestinians and curfews in the refugee camps were nothing new, but when last year's Arab summit in Amman and the super-power summit in Washington appeared totally to ignore the Palestinian cause, the situation was ripe to explode.

Today, following 200 deaths, thousands of injuries and thousands more people detained without trial, the uprising is becoming organised—by Palestinians internally, by the Palestine Liberation Organisation externally, but more worrying in terms of the future stability of the middle east, by Islamic fundamentalist groups for whom this is the beginning of a long overdue Jihad, or holy war, inspired by the Ayatollah and aimed at the destruction not just of the Jewish state of Israel but of King Hussein, President Mubarak and the Arab kings, most of whom were touring the capitals of the world earlier this year urging a settlement. The need for a settlement has never been greater. Ironically, despite the failure of the Shultz initiative, the prospects for success has never been greater because it is in everyone's interests.

While the intifada has kept Palestinian demands in the forefront of the world media, as it is designed to do, the situation of the real, innocent victims of the Arab-Israeli conflict—the 2·2 million registered refugees—has remained much the same for the past 40 years. These are the families who were first displaced in 1948. Some of them have been displaced several times since. They inhabit the most basic accommodation—shelters which can be regarded only as temporary—and are therefore homeless and stateless. They are denied effective freedom of travel, to the continuing distress of families who remain divided. Their situation can be described only as a continuing international scandal and immediate responsibility lies with the countries involved which have failed to make a settlement possible.

Last year, the Council of Europe committee for migration, refugees and demography appointed me its rapporteur on the subject of the Palestinian refugees and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. In March this year I visited 10 refugee camps in Syria, Jordan, the West Bank and Gaza. A visit to Lebanon was clearly impossible at that time. I had meetings with Israeli and Jordanian Ministers and officials, the International Committee of the Red Cross, officers of the Israeli defence forces, who are the civil administration in the occupied territories, the PLO representative in Amman, as well as numerous briefings from UNRWA staff in the host countries and later at its headquarters in Vienna. I also had informal meetings with other Israelis and Palestinians and with the Latin Patriarch in Jerusalem. I visited the Maqassed hospital on the mount of olives in east Jerusalem and the Ahli Arab hospital in Gaza, where the victims of the violence are being treated. Earlier this month, I presented my report to the committee. My hon. Friend the Minister has a copy of it. Its recommendations will be discussed in September and put to the parliamentary assembly of the Council of Europe in October.

Needless to say, during my visit to Palestine I was able to see at first hand the results of the uprising in the occupied territories, and I did not like what I saw. I saw the hardship experienced by refugee families. The curfews are causing unemployment, loss of income, shortages of food and acute pressure on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency's relief services. The prevention of out-patient services leads, for example, to the denial of medical treatment for diabetics, or psychiatric services or other social support for families who are suffering from understandable anxiety and depression. The breakdown of municipal services in the camps, such as refuse and sewage collection, is leading to growing squalor, and that is threatening hygiene.

The schools on the West Bank were closed in February and opened briefly in June, only to be closed again. The closure is keeping children at home, and anyone seen looking out of a window at curfew risks a beating or worse. In the hospitals, there are patients with broken arms and other limbs as a result of beatings. The victims include young children. In the hospitals one sees the effects of rubber bullets with metal cores that have disfigured babies. There are shattered limbs and paralysed bodies of young men who have been struck by high-velocity M16 bullets. One sees the effects of CS gas on mothers, such as premature births or abortions. For babies there is death by asphyxiation or the longer term fear of paralysis.

Many of the victims are people who have chosen to demonstrate or who are being exploited to demonstrate and who know what they risk. I am aware of that. The others are innocents who merely got in the way. I saw for myself how quickly a demonstration could explode into violence, but for the prompt action of UNRWA officials. It was an extremely frightening experience, and it is one that is happening every day. I have some sympathy for the Israeli soldiers who face these conditions. Soldiers in that sort of environment require proper training in riot control and the right equipment. It requires immense discipline and self-control. As we know, that is not always evident.

In my report, I have no hesitation in paying tribute to the professionalism and dedication of UNRWA, without which the situation for the refugees would undoubtedly be many times worse. Without its stabilising influence, the presence of so many Palestinians in the host countries would be the cause of even greater tension and confrontation, especially in the Lebanon and the occupied territories. I look forward to learning whether my hon. Friend the Member for Bexleyheath (Mr. Townsend) shares my views, should he catch your eye during the debate, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

There are four other observations that are highly relevant to any political solution to the Palestinian problem but which appear to be overlooked. First, in the occupied territories and in Jordan, 40 per cent. of the population is under 20 years of age. Unemployment is rising and job opportunities are falling. This is caused in

the West Bank and Gaza by the unrest, and in Jordan by the effects of the recession in neighbouring Arab oil-producing countries. Moreover, the Arab birth rate is 3·5 per cent. That means that there is a demographic time-bomb ticking away, which Israel especially ignores at its peril. Thus, there is an immediate need for international economic aid and initiatives for the area.

Secondly, I was extremely impressed by the experience and professionalism of UNRWA's Palestinian staff, which represents by far the majority of its work force. These are the administrators, teachers, doctors, nurses, medical officers, social workers and engineers. Thus, there exist, together with those Palestinians who operate the Israeli agriculture and rural development services, and those Palestinians who undertake the non-military activities of the PLO, such as education and health programmes, and others who run the factories in the Lebanon, many thousands of experienced personnel who would be available immediately to run the civil services and local government services of any new Palestinian state, autonomous, demilitarised or otherwise, that arises from a settlement.

Thirdly, during the past 20 years of occupation, Israel has improved the education, health and employment opportunities of the Palestinians which it had inherited from Jordan and Egypt. Israel has encouraged the Palestinians to administer the municipalities. It has pursued, without much recognition, a programme of resettlement for refugees with the aim of replacing the camps. However, I could not fail to note the stark contrast between the affluence of the recently established Jewish settlements and the poverty of the refugee camps nearby. To me, that was not acceptable. I look forward to hearing my hon. Friend the Member for Bosworth (Mr. Tredinnick), who has visited the area, should he catch your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Finally, I cannot ignore what I have heard from every Palestinian whom I have met, refugee or resident, or UNRWA official in Syria, Jordan, Gaza and the West Bank. It is said that the PLO, for all its faults, speaks for them, and that only the PLO will be allowed to speak for them and to represent them at any attempt to produce a settlement. In other words, the PLO is the key to any settlement; and, if it is sincere, it should publicly abandon its covenant and commitment to terrorism and accept Israel's right to exist, from which so much can follow. I shall be glad to learn the views of the hon. and learned Member for Leicester, West (Mr. Janner) on this issue, should he catch your eye during the debate, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

What now are the prospects for a settlement? Regrettably, it appears that the Shultz initiative has failed. We should pay tribute to the dogged refusal of the American Secretary of State to accept defeat, and the tireless energy and diplomacy he has displayed during his many visits between Amman, Cairo, Damascus and Jerusalem. It would seem now that there can be no progress until Israel's general election in November, following which a new American Administration will be elected, which is bound to have other priorities next year. The immediate humanitarian problem cannot wait that long. There are initiatives that can be taken now to relieve the situation for the refugees, which my report recommends.

First, there should be immediate support for UNRWA's plans to improve infrastructure, such as drains, roads, health services and relief for hardship families in the camps in the Lebanon, the West Bank and Gaza, which the United Nations Secretary-General urged on 21 January.

Secondly, there should be an immediate response to the Secretary-General's request for a commitment on the part of United Nations member states to a small but regular increase in their contributions to UNRWA's budget so that it can plan ahead more effectively. Council of Europe member states, the United States and Canada contribute almost 70 per cent. of UNRWA's budget. We should be urging the Arab oil-producing states to increase their contributions, which now total 2 per cent., and appeal to the Soviet Union, to Eastern Europe and to all the other industrial states which contribute nothing to recognise the current situation and to reverse their policy on humanitarian grounds.

Thirdly, we should urge Israel to accept the de jure applicability of the Geneva convention of 12 August 1949, to which it is a high contracting party, fully to comply with its obligations to ensure the protection of civilians, including UNRWA staff, in the occupied territories.

None of this, of course, can be any substitute for that comprehensive and lasting political judgment that is necessary for a just resolution of the refugee problem, or, indeed, for peace, security, stability and co-operation to be established in Palestine for the first time.

Earlier this year, the standing committee of the Council of Europe agreed to the holding of a parliamentary conference in Strasbourg early next year, with representatives of all the countries that would be participating in a possible middle east peace conference. Employing as it would the Council of Europe's own special parliamentary relations with the Knesset, the United States Congress, its long established contacts with Arab states and organisations and its recently established relationship with the supreme Soviet, it was felt that such a European initiative could overcome existing reservations and help to create a climate of confidence necessary for talks to convene.

It is the policy of all parties in this House that such talks should take place within the context of an international conference, but, of course, for that to take place the presence of Israel is required. We should not ignore the reasons for the Israeli Prime Minister's refusal to put his country in such a dock of world opinion or not even to contemplate the withdrawal from the occupied territories. After all, he may well remain Israel's Prime Minister after November.

We should not ignore that what the Camp David process achieved before, when it brought peace between Israel and Egypt and withdrawal from Sinai, can be achieved again as it already provides for peace with Jordan and an autonomous state of Palestine.

If an international conference proves impossible, let us recognise that a prospect for success exists through lower profile, low-level negotiations between Isreal, Jordan and Palestinians, acceptable to Israel and the PLO—such people exist—to produce a programme of measures to bring the present unrest to an end. Such a programme would restore Palestinian administration to the area and replace the present Israeli civil administration—the Israeli defence forces—with a United Nations one. We should remember that the UN is already present in the area because of UNRWA. The negotiations should seek to establish an economic development area with international aid and support from which a confederation of states

[Mr. David Atkinson]

could be built. I believe that that may well prove to be the practical way forward to restore confidence between Arab and Jew which will, in due course, lead to a lasting peace in the middle east.

10.31 am

Mr. Greville Janner (Leicester, West): I extend my thanks to the hon. Member for Bournemouth, East (Mr. Atkinson) not only for raising this matter, but especially for kindly sparing me a little of his time to put a case that might otherwise not be heard and to raise a voice from the Labour Benches.

First, I join the hon. Member for Bournemouth, East in welcoming the appointment of the new Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office. I, too, believe that he will approach middle east problems with the recognition that they are complex, difficult and anxious. At the same time, I express my unreserved delight at the departure of the hon. and learned Member for Putney (Mr. Mellor) from the same job. His going is greatly welcomed by all who are friends of Israel. If a Minister wishes to contribute to diplomacy, he must do so with understanding, with tact and even with a little affection for the country and for the area. When dealing with Israel, the hon. and learned Member for Putney showed that he had none of those qualities.

I join the hon. Member for Bournemouth, East in expressing my anguish at the misery of the people who live on the West Bank and in Gaza. I am glad that the hon. Gentleman recognises that the refugee camps in which Palestinians are condemned to be born, to live and often to die, were not the creation of Israel. The continuation of the camps is not the wish of Israel and their operation is not in Israel's hands. I wish that something had been said about the absorption of many thousands of Jewish refugees from Arab countries by and in Israel. I echo his call for Arab nations to provide far more aid for their own brethren than they have seen fit to do in the past. I share the hon. Gentleman's concern at the riots that have taken place, but I am sure that, in fairness, he would recognise that no country, including our own, could allow unbridled riots to continue within any country, area, or territory under its control, for whatever reason. Certainly, we are not in a good position to preach to others about the control of riots and death when we have signally failed to do so in Northern Ireland, part of our own United Kingdom.

I agree with the hon. Gentleman that it is right to seek for peace in the region and to do what we can to contribute towards it. As the hon. Gentleman hinted, he understands that one needs partners to a peace process, that all must be prepared to speak to the others. As the hon. Gentleman has said, the PLO can expect to be a partner in the peace process only if it is prepared to recognise the right of Israel to exist in security and if it will renounce violence against civilians as part of its policy. No country, including our own, would negotiate with any organisation which was not prepared to behave in that way. We will not negotiate with the IRA for precisely that reason.

The hon. Member for Bournemouth, East was right to point out the problems created in any country by elections and, not least, by the forthcoming ones in Israel. Elections produce results that a nation must accept, even if—in common with the British Labour party—we do not like what we have got.

I am aware that Conservative Members in the Chamber have visited the West Bank. When the House rises, I shall go to Jerusalem to the wedding of my daughter to a young Israeli. They and all who live there want peace more than anyone else. They, as much as anyone else, are anguished by the miseries of those who live on the West Bank and in Gaza. But they, as well as myself and the rest of the House, wish that an understanding of the complexity of the position should permeate our debates. In that way an understanding of the problems of Israel should follow in the speeches made in this House as it did not do in the speeches or in the behaviour of the previous Minister of State when he visited that area.

10.36 am

Mr. Cyril D. Townsend (Bexleyheath): How singularly appropriate that the House of Commons should have this chance to debate this grave issue before rising for the long summer recess, and how appropriate it is that my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, West (Mr. Waldegrave) should have an early chance to sample the flavour of the biggest problem that faces him at the Foreign Office. His Conservative predecessors were noted for the clarity of their perception and the boldness of their speech regarding intolerance, oppression and injustice. I have faith that my hon. Friend will follow that admirable tradition.

I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth, East (Mr. Atkinson) for kindly giving me a few moments in this debate. I congratulate him on the rational, sensible way in which he set about preparing his report. It was no easy task, as some of us know. I also congratulate him on the admirable way in which he addressed the House this morning, and I agreed with so much of what he said.

Edmund Burke wrote:

"The use of force alone is but temporary. It may subdue for a moment; but it does not remove the necessity of subduing again; and a nation is not governed, which is perpetually to be conquered."

I believe that, at this time, Palestine is perpetually being reconquered. The House is aware that Britain has a special responsibility in this matter because our predecessors twice promised the land. We are now faced with a double tragedy—the plight of the Palestinians and the present enormous damage being done to the reputation of the Jewish people.

I visited the West Bank and Gaza two years ago. The despair and degradation, mud and misery, and the loss of hope amid those sorry shacks of exile, made a very deep impression on me, particularly when I spoke to the extremely well-educated people I met there. UNRWA has done a marvellous job in that direction. The people there did not believe that they or their contemporaries had any future, apart from following the sorry path of violence.

I cannot claim to be surprised at recent events on the West Bank and Gaza where 270 people have been killed. The explosion had become inevitable. It so happened that the year I visited the West Bank and Gaza I also visited South Africa. In both countries there was dreadful repression of one community by another, the laws were framed to discriminate and that discrimination was backed with brutal force. I commend the work of UNRWA to the new Minister. Britain has a good record

of supporting it financially. We supply many of its staff, some in high places. I hope that we will continue to fund it, perhaps on an increased basis.

I wish my hon. Friend the Minister good luck in achieving a slightly more realistic attitude towards the PLO. I blame the politicians, not the Foreign Office. I know that one of my hon. Friend's predecessors actually met the so-called Foreign Minister of the PLO. But whether I, my hon. Friend or the House like it or not, nine out of 10 Palestinians look to the PLO for support. If Britain is to play a serious part in the peace process, we must understand the arguments put forward by the representatives of the Palestinian people.

We would be wise to distance ourselves further from the United States in this matter. I am a great supporter of the United States, but its record on Palestine is most unfortunate. Without the vast sums of money which it gives to the state of Israel, particularly in regard to defence, that country would have had to design a foreign policy that encouraged it to talk to the Arabs on a proper and peaceful basis.

Finally, this seems to be a year in which peace is breaking out in Afghanistan and hopefully in the Gulf and in southern Africa. I hope that Britain will play a part in encouraging peace to break out in this area and that a Palestinian homeland will be created.

10.42 am

Mr. David Tredinnick (Bosworth): I join other hon. Members in thanking my hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth, East (Mr. Atkinson) for allowing me some time. I am very grateful to him. I also extend my congratulations to my hon. Friend the Minister, with whom I spent 175 hours on the Housing Bill Committee earlier this year. I am delighted to see him on the Front Bench.

My interest in the problems of Palestine began soon after my election. Before then I had very little interest in the matter, and I have tried to approach it in an objective way. I went to the occupied territory in February and saw things there that I did not like. When I came back I went to the Israeli embassy and said to the deputy ambassador that I would be happy to go out to Israel and see things from Israel's point of view. I am very disappointed that he did not take up my offer.

During my trip to the occupied territories I saw a great deal of misery. I cannot report anything else. The group of hon. Members from both sides of the House with whom I travelled were attacked and stoned in Gaza when we were mistaken for Israelis. A rock smashed against the windscreen, and I believe that had the window been open one of us easily could have been killed. We were held up by road blocks, and the general feeling in the occupied territories was of repression and fear. It was a most unpleasant experience.

I am delighted to hear that the daughter of the hon. and learned Member for Leicester, West (Mr. Janner) is getting married in Jerusalem. I extend congratulations to a colleague from Leicestershire. I fear that he will not be able to take his daughter to many parts of Jerusalem. Because of the situation there, Israelis fear to venture into some parts of the city.

Many comparisons have been made. The hon. and learned Member for Leicester, West made a comparison with the situaton in Northern Ireland. I served in Northern Ireland in the late 1960s and I was there a few weeks ago. The situation there is entirely different. The community is basically peaceful, with a few exceptions. The cities are beautiful and people can move around freely. In Northern Ireland there are local elections and hon. Members represent Northern Ireland in the House. That is more than can be said for the occupied territories. Hon. Members may recall that the last elections held in Gaza were in 1945 under the British mandate.

I was in East Germany last year. One could draw a comparison there, but I found the movement of personnel around East Germany a great deal easier than it was in the occupied territories. The predecessor of my hon. Friend the Minister referred to South Africa and drew some comparison there. I thought that that was misguided. I went to university in South Africa. I was at business school there in the 1970s, and my friends there tell me that the situation has eased enormously. Hillbrow district in Johannesburg and parts of Cape Town are now multi-racial. That is in stark contrast to the situation in Israel and the occupied territories, where the demarcation lines are tighter than ever. When I was there, the demarcation line was rigidly enforced and only so called "settlers" from Israel crossed into the occupied territories.

Does the occupation make any sense for Israel? It costs a fortune and it stretches Israeli forces. The military increasingly believe that it is unnecessary. Indeed, 75 to 80 per cent. of the present general staff believe "that the danger to Israel from maintaining control of the territories and their population is much greater than the risk involved in surrendering them." The long-term implications are disastrous for Israel. Demographically, if Israel hangs on to greater Israel it will be outnumbered and, of course, that will create a very serious problem for it. If it reduces that demographic imbalance it will have to "transfer" Palestinians. "Transfer" is a euphemism for transportation, and I should have thought that that was deeply repugnant to anyone with any Jewish sympathies.

Altogether, the negative impact on Israel at home is far outweighed by the negative impact that has been created for Israel abroad. Never mind what is happening in the occupied territories; consider what it has done to Israel's reputation abroad. I am told that at Foreign Office Question Time in the House Israel used to make all the running, but now most Members believe that Israel is wrong.

The British press is respected worldwide and its attitude permeates across the world. I spoke to a senior British diplomat serving in our Washington embassy and asked him about the state of opinion in the Jewish community in America. He said that it was one of "anguish."

I believe that a Right-wing Government will be elected in Israel. In the short term that will be bad for the occupied territory, but in the long term it may be for the best. Only a Right-wing Government can commit the disastrous policies necessary to generate the kind of change of American public opinion that is needed to force a solution for the West Bank. That has to be the withdrawal of Israeli forces.

10.47 am

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. William Waldegrave): I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth, East (Mr. Atkinson) for initiating the debate and giving me such an

[Mr. William Waldegrave]

early opportunity to join this passionate discussion. I must be forgiven just a touch of nostalgia as I listened to my hon. Friend the Member for Rossendale and Darwen (Mr. Trippier) winding-up the previous debate for the Department in which I served for five years, and expatiating on the redevelopment of maggot farms in Wakefield—a very different matter from the debate to which I now have the privilege to contribute.

My Department greatly values the work of my hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth, East in the Council of Europe. The debate will be a very useful part of my education in these matters, and I warmly commend it to the House. I am grateful for his careful and constructive analysis. My hon. Friends and the hon. and learned Member for Leicester, West (Mr. Janner), have with admirable brevity, outlined the underlying issues and the passions that lie behind them. I cannot yet match their knowledge and experience, but I look forward to visiting the region before too long.

All right hon. and hon. Members who visited the occupied territories—the hon. and learned Member for Leicester, West will not disagree with this—were shocked by the conditions there, especially on the Gaza strip and in the camps. The Government share the concerns that have been expressed.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth, East was right to acknowledge that matters have improved in some respects since the Israeli occupation began in 1967. Universities have been established on the West Bank and health services have been extended. Despite the evident need and misery in the occupied territories, the Israeli authorities have allocated land—including one third of the area of the Gaza strip—and immense resources to the establishment and expansion of illegal settlements. My hon. Friend referred to the stark contrast between the Israelis' affluence and the neighbouring camps' poverty.

I join hon. Members in paying tribute to the vital work done by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency in providing services—mainly health and education—to the 2 million registered refugees and the professionalism and dedication of its staff, which includes, as my hon. Friend the Member for Bexleyheath (Mr. Townsend) said, many Britons. They have carried out their duties faithfully in extremely difficult and often dangerous conditions, notably in Lebanon and more recently in Gaza and the West Bank.

We fully support the recommendation of the United Nations Secretary-General for an expansion of UNRWA's work, and we shall be establishing a new unit in UNRWA to assess that requirement. New resources will be required. We have increased our direct contribution to UNRWA's annual budget to £5·25 million, in addition to our contribution of almost £5 million through the European Community.

Our main objective, during our presidency of the UNRWA Advisory Commission, which began this month, will be to encourage others to contribute generously and to support the efforts of the commissioner-general to persuade those who do not contribute to do so.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth, East knows, we are already giving bilateral aid, which last year amounted to about £840,000, to the occupied territories through non-governmental organisations of one kind or another, and we are contributing to European Community programmes. Our focus has been on the training of Palestinians and health and welfare projects in co-operation with NGOs. My hon. Friend the Minister for Overseas Development has announced a new grant of £100,000 to the St. John's eye hospital, to which my hon. Friend referred. That has been made for outreach services in Gaza.

We are encouraging Palestinian businesses by supporting a programme run by the non-governmental organisation, Cooperation for Development, to provide loans for small businesses. The organisers report that demand for loans has increased as conventional commercial sources of finance have dried up.

We should, however, like to do more. The disturbances in the occupied territories have delayed our plans to disburse additional aid through Jordanian institutions. We are reviewing how that aid can be effectively disbursed.

We played a leading role in promoting preferential access to the European Community for Palestinian producers. We welcome the assurances that Mr. Peres gave at the Europan Co-operation Council in May that the remaining difficulties have been resolved. Some contracts have been signed to supply produce from the occupied territories to outlets in Europe. We shall monitor closely how these arrangements work in practice.

Although those improvements in economic conditions are important, they will not reduce the deep despair and frustration of Palestinians in the occupied territories, which led to the present disturbances. No one doubts that the stifling of economic activity, to protect Israeli industry, and the innumerable restrictions and petty humiliations —which my hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth, East said were being inflicted on people who are regarded as second class; in short, the occupation itself—provoked the inevitable reaction. We do not believe that the uprising was organised from the outside, and the extent of outside influence should not be exaggerated. It was a spontaneous and inevitable upsurge of protest aganst the occupation. Its momentum is maintaned primarily by young people in the occupied territories. This problem has been compounded by Israeli tactics, such as excessive use of force by soldiers who are not trained for such tasks and deportations and collective punishment contrary to international law. We surely all condemn such measures.

We acknowledge Israel's responsibility, pending its withdrawal, to maintain order in the occupied territories, but the responsibility must be discharged in accordance with international law and human rights standards. The Geneva convention applies to the occupied territories, and Israel should observe its provisions. I assure my hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth, East that we have raised these problems with the Israelis on many occasions and they are well aware of our views. It is ironic that the Israelis should campaign, with our full support, for the human rights of Soviet Jews—I am aware of the honourable role that the hon. and learned Member for Leicester, West has played in the campaign—but Israel must surely apply the same criteria to its treatment of Palestinians.

The suffering must be ended. Over 230 Palestinians and three Israelis have been killed since the uprising began. Many more have been injured, and my hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth, East gave a graphic account of the horrors that he saw.

Thousands of Palestinians have been detained without trial. Personal grievances and hatreds are multiplying; violence breeds violence. If the extremists have their way, violence will continue. Violence and repression will never solve the underlying problems of the region.

The uprising has surely forced all concerned to accept that the status quo is unsustainable. Israelis and Palestinians are fated by history and geography to live together. If they are to do so in peace, it will have to be on a basis of mutual recognition and respect. Each side must be prepared to accord the other the rights that it claims for itself.

Nothing could make a greater contribution at this stage —I agree with the hon. and learned Member for Leicester, West about this—than unambiguous acceptance by the PLO leadership of Israel's right to a secure existence, of Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, and of the renunciation of violence. We welcome the recent paper by Bassam Abu Sherif, who is a PLO spokesman, as a constructive move in the right direction, especially its acceptance of Israel's right to exist and, conditionally, the Security Council's resolutions. We regret that it has not yet been endorsed.

We hope that the PLO and the leaders of the uprising will grasp the nettle and commit themselves wholeheartedly to the search for a negotiated solution. We recognise that the PLO commands widespread suppport among Palestinians, and we said in the Venice declaration that it should be associated with the peace negotiations. The Israelis cannot be expected to accept the PLO as a negotiating partner while the PLO's policies on the key issues of violence and Israel's right to a secure existence remain ambiguous.

We look to the Israeli leadership to develop forward-looking and constructive policies that will lay the foundations for a proper and peaceful relationship between the people of the region. The electorate will shortly have an opportunity to signal a clear interest in peace; it is vital that they take it.

Our own views are well known. A just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israel conflict must be based on the right of all states in the region, including Israel, to a secure existence within recognised borders and of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. We continue to believe that the best way forward is an international conference, under United Nations auspices, as a framework for the necessary negotiations between the parties directly concerned. It should not have the power to impose solutions or to veto agreements between the parties. Such a conference would offer an opportunity to negotiate a just and lasting settlement. It is not a trap and no man of good will need fear it.

The understanding last year between Mr. Peres and King Hussein offers a good foundation. The need is to build on that and to persuade others in Israel and the Arab world not to squander the opportunity. King Hussein's commitment to the search for peace is not in doubt and Jordan's role, given the length of her border with Israel, will remain crucial. A lasting peace will require Palestinian and Syrian participation. The time has come for both to accept the challenge of making peace.

Israelis must be prepared to make some concession and accept the principle of territory for peace. Peace will require compromise from both sides, and both will have to give up long-cherished but unattainable objectives. Neither historical Palestine nor Eretz Israel can be the basis of a modern state, except at the price of perpetual conflict.

The American role—in this context, I disagree with my hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth, East to some extent—is clearly vital. We warmly welcomed its active re-engagement in the peace process earlier this year. There are many constructive elements in Mr. Schultz's proposals, including a commitment to an international conference and proposals for early elections in the occupied territories. His proposed timetable for negotiations was rightly ambitious, and has not been implemented.

I welcome the initiative by the Council of Europe to hold a parliamentary conference in Strasbourg next year. Such contacts between parties can only be helpful. We affirmed as long ago as the Venice declaration in June 1980 our willingness to participate in guaranteeing an eventual settlement. We stand by that commitment. In the last resort, peace must be made by those directly involved. They will have our full support as they face that challenge. We know how difficult it will be, but that difficulty is no reason to postpone the necessary action.

Mr. Janner: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Have you received notification of an application for a statement from the Secretary of State for Employment concerning the employment implications of the announcement made this morning of further redundancies and closures at Corah plc, which is a major employer in my constituency? Corah announced 750 redundancies just a short time ago, it has announced 200 more today, and there is no guarantee that there will not be further redundancies in the future. As that major company, which was once a great and stable family company, is suffering in a way that is symptomatic of the general misery and continued recession in the hosiery and knitwear trades and industries in the east midlands, surely there must be some statement from the Government before the House rises.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Mr. Speaker has received no application for a statement to be made. However, I have no doubt that the hon. and learned Gentleman's points will be noted.

Mr. Tredinnick: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I should like to draw your attention to the fact that employees at Corah in Leicestershire come from areas beyond Leicester city. My constituency of Bosworth, with its principal town of Hinckley, has many hosiery and knitwear workers who share the concern about circumstances at Corah. I am concerned that there may be a disturbing ripple effect in Hinckley.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am sure that the hon. Gentleman's points will be noted.

Philosophy (University Teaching)

11.1 am

Mr. Kevin McNamara (Kingston upon Hull, North): It is with regret that, as a graduate of Hull university, I am raising this subject today. It is also a matter of regret for my hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, North-East (Mr. Barnes). It is a duty imposed upon me by virtue of the fact that Hull university is in my constituency and that one of the characters involved in the tragedy is one of my constituents.

It has been a feature of British universities for many years that each institution is able to offer its students a wide choice of major academic disciplines. From the time of Socrates and Plato one of those major disciplines has been the study of philosophy, and it is natural to expect each university to have a philosophy department that offers teaching and research to the highest levels.

The Government's successive cuts in university funding began in 1981 and have continued, regrettably, ever since. They have taken a heavy toll of such academic traditions. Several universities have lost their philosophy departments. Most universities have lost eminent philosophers, and many degree programmes have been curtailed or closed completely.

That situation is duplicated in many other academic disciplines, particularly the humanities, but also, to some extent, in the sciences. For example, the department of earth sciences at Hull university is about to close. That has forced the University Grants Committee to undertake far-reaching national reviews of many subject areas. In all cases, that has led to departmental closures and a reduction in the choice of courses for students.

The UGC has pursued a policy of "concentration" of resources. More often than not that has worked to the detriment of smaller universities, which have lost one department after another. It has also frequently accelerated early retirement among academic staff in those departments, and for many younger staff the reviews have produced virtually enforced transfers between institutions.

Earlier this year the UGC instituted a national review of the teaching of philosophy, led by Professor Hepburn of Edinburgh university. The review committee is due to report by the end of the year. Professor Hepburn has already expressed his concern that because so many philosophers have retired early or left the country his review will suffer from a lack of "spare bodies" available for transfer between universities, which would help to facilitate the closure of some departments in order to strengthen others.

Professor Hepburn's comment is particularly ironic, since it is a philosopher who has recently become the first tenured academic in the United Kingdom to be given notice of dismissal because he has been declared compulsorily redundant. It appears that, in universities with serious financial problems the imminence of UGC reviews can place staff, particularly the older ones, in a form of double jeopardy. They are not allowed to remain in their posts and, while the review is in progress, they cannot transfer to another university.

The present case, which occurred on 30 June at Hull university, has attracted wide attention and carries grave implications for the future of contracts of employment for many academics and also for reviews of courses by UGC committees. In its action, Hull university goes even further in its attack on academic tenure than the Government have gone in the Education Reform Bill, which regrettably receives its Royal Assent today. The council of Hull university is attempting, retrospectively, to deny tenure to its existing staff.

The need for academic tenure as the most effective means of protecting academic freedom in our institutions of higher learning is recognised in all civilised countries. That is apparent from the horror and amazement with which overseas academics have reacted to the Government's proposals to abolish tenure in the United Kingdom. Academics representing professional organisations in the United States, Canada, Germany and the Scandinavian countries have filled the letter columns of the press with their anxious protests. The president of the Canadian Association of University Teachers said in *The Times* on 16 May that his members

"can see no good reason why our British colleagues should have any less protection"

than Canadian academics. He said that Canada found it easy to provide contracts that contain a legal definition of academic freedom—something that the Secretary of State conceded only when beaten in the other place.

The president of the American Association of University Professors went further. On 27 June Professor Julius Getman, a distinguished labour lawyer, contrasted the curtailment of academic freedom inherent in the Education Reform Bill with the extension of freedom now apparent in the Soviet Union and called tenure

"an important safeguard of the integrity of the academic profession."

He said that it remains the best protection of the academic freedom so eloquently described by Lord Jenkins's successful amendment of the Bill. That is one of the few words of praise that I shall ever have for the Chancellor of Oxford university. He warns of a renewed brain drain that could result from the destruction of tenure and from the

"cavalier attitude to higher education exhibited by the British Government."

He insists that

"neither Britain nor the global university community can easily afford the losses this entails."

The Government have certainly been cavalier in their treatment of the anxieties of many of the groups that have warned of the damage that the Education Reform Bill will do, and of the organisations that represent academic staff in particular. They have even ignored the UGC's concern that the removal of tenure from staff who transfer between universities under the committee's various subject "rationalisation" schemes would seriously threaten the planned restructuring of our universities, to which the Government are supposedly committed. They were deaf to the arguments from the Association of University Teachers, which said that to remove tenure from staff when they are promoted would lead only to bitterness and frustration and would further encourage able staff to leave Britain.

None the less, despite their determination to end tenure as rapidly as possible, the Government stopped short of attacking the tenure granted to academics under existing contracts. Among those who called for retroactive legislation to wipe out all job security for all existing academics were several university vice-chancellors. No doubt they needed to out-Thatcher the Secretary of State and were eager to use the opportunity to restructure their institutions in their own images or that of the Prime Minister.

The vice-chancellor of Hull university, Professor William Taylor, has now persuaded Hull university council to act as if tenure never existed at Hull, despite the provisions of the charter and statutes of that university. The council decided, that the staff of the department of philosophy had to be reduced by one during 1987-88 while the UGC review was taking place. The only sin that the unfortunate philosopher lecturer concerned, Mr. Edgar Page, had committed was to be 57 years old. That is a sin which some of us may yet hope to commit, and which some of us may have already committed. One wonders how Socrates or Plato would have fared if they had been teaching in the department of philosophy at Hull university in their advanced years.

Mr. Page was singled out in what is euphemistically called an academic plan designed by the vice-chancellor, who at the age of 58 is at the peak of his career. Mr. Page was told to take early retirement by the end of the current academic year or be dismissed. It would appear that the vice-chancellor has committed the same offence of being over 50.

Mr. Page made it clear that he would not consider early retirement under the threat of dismissal. Professor Taylor then persuaded Hull university council, at a special meeting hastily convened on 29 June, to authorise Mr. Page's dismissal. At a meeting of the committee of vice-chancellors and principals on 1 July, the implication of Professor Taylor's actions were not lost on his colleagues, who were all anxious to shed staff at minimal cost.

The continued decline of university funding by the Government has driven vice-chancellors to the point where they are willing to renege on binding contracts made with their staff many years ago. None of them wanted to be the first over the brink; one might even say over the cliff edge. However, many are now watching the position at Hull very closely, hoping that Hull will suffer all the damage, ignominy and shame that comes from being the first to remove tenure from existing staff while others reap the benefits of Professor Taylor's foolish and precipitate action.

Professor Taylor's action is foolish, because it is clearly quite unnecessary. While Hull university, like other universities, has had financial problems, the sacrifices of a great number of staff who have retired early since 1981 have considerably eased the problem. Under the previous vice-chancellor, Sir Roy Marshall, well over 100 academics retired early. From 1985, under Professor Taylor, the academic plan called for a further 139 staff losses, most of them academic, by 1989. At the same time, Professor Taylor is now actively recruiting new staff. Nine new professors are currently being appointed and several lectureships are being filled. More than 60 academics aged over 50 were individually targeted last year to lose their jobs under the Taylor plan because they were in subject areas which he wished to contract. Most of them retired early, though many would have preferred to stay.

Professor Taylor's hire-and-fire policy has caused great unease and bitterness among the staff at Hull. In the case of Mr. Page, it reached a logical conclusion. Mr. Page was sacked, not because Hull could not afford to keep him, but because the managerial style with which Professor Taylor expects to impress the Prime Minister demanded it. In fact, Hull university seemed to be keen to keep Mr. Page's expertise in his field of medical ethics and offered to re-employ him after compulsorily retiring him, with the proviso that he would develop money-spinning courses from which the university would pay his salary. It wanted to sack him today and re-employ him tomorrow. Mr. Page argued that he was pleased, delighted, happy, ecstatic to develop such courses, but while in his present permanent post, not on a basis where the university had transferred the cost of his salary to his pension fund and the UGC restructuring scheme.

It is clear that Mr. Page's expertise is highly sought after. The University of Bradford, which has suffered as badly as Hull under the Government's cuts, was nevertheless keen that Mr. Page should be transferred to Bradford to develop new courses. Here Mr. Page became the victim of Professor Taylor's rigidity and the chaotic state of our university system which the Government have managed to create. Because of the current UGC review of provision in philosphy, no UGC-funded transfers can take place. Therefore, an immediate transfer was impossible to arrange. On the other hand, Professor Taylor insisted that Mr. Page be off the pay roll by the end of the session. There was a stalemate, or "Catch-22."

Through his Association of University Teachers representatives, Mr. Page sought to persuade Professor Taylor that no final decision should be made until after the review of the provision of philosophy at universities had been conducted by Professor Hepburn. That should be completed at the end of year. Professor Taylor would agree only to defer the implementation of an application —if such it might be called—for early retirement until that date. He insisted that Mr. Page had to sign for early retirement there and then, at the last meeting, and that the university should have total discretion whether it would accept any transfer proposal after the review. The only parliamentary parallel to that would be members of the old Irish party who, when they were elected, gave their dated application for the Chiltern Hundreds to Parnell.

Mr. Page declined Professor Taylor's proposal because it constituted a second "Catch-22". He knew that Hull, among all United Kingdom universities, operates a curious form of age discrimination. Any staff over 50 who wish to transfer can do so only if the transfer results in the full saving of the salary costs. Transfers between institutions, so vital for the UGC's restructuring plans, cannot take place on that basis if the member of staff to be transferred is over 50. That is a new academic criterion for appointments on an age basis.

A member of staff from a university normally takes eight funded students with him or her on transfer, that being the unit of currency in the UGC funding formula. Because of Mr. Page's eminence in his field, Bradford was willing to accept Mr. Page with fewer funded students, since it hoped for income-generating forces arising from the appointment of Mr. Page at Bradford. Professor Taylor's insistence that no funded student numbers could be afforded would therefore probably scupper any future transfers. There is a precedent involving not only the removal of tenure, but the transfer at an age over 50 and the removal of the UGC currency formula of funded students places with the transfer.

Professor Taylor's reasons for his actions are simple. He calculates that the UGC currently pays the full cost of early retirement of all staff who leave under approved academic plans. It therefore costs Hull university nothing to sack such staff or to pressure them to leave voluntarily, as Mr. Page's colleagues have done at Hull.

[Mr. Kevin McNamara]

It therefore benefits Hull university to sack staff rather than to transfer them, as the latter involves the notional loss of students. It is easy to see the origins of this distorted logic in the Government's efficiency drive in the universities. It is equally clear that such a policy leads to needless conflict and serious losses of experienced academics—losses that Hull university and the rest of the country can ill-afford.

The conflict which this managerial disaster has caused in Hull and in the universities generally is considerable. Mr. Page has referred the matter to the University Visitor, the Lord President of the Council, as the civil courts are still barred to academics in such disputes. Mr. Page expects to be reinstated, and he is represented in his petition by the solicitors acting for the Association of University Teachers.

The association has also called for an effective academic boycott of Hull university until the university council decision is reversed. Already serious damage has been done to Hull's academic reputation by the Council's action. Several external examiners have resigned, at least one national conference due in Septermber has been cancelled, public lectures may need to be cancelled and several job applicants who were shortlisted have withdrawn. The boycott will be taken seriously by the many academics who are appalled at Professor Taylor's action and who recognise that their own job security is now threatened by this case. Hull academics are planning prolonged industrial action to persuade the council to change its mind.

Academics do not take such action lightly. Indeed, it is difficult in any university common room to get them all to agree on one set course of action, without the writing of half a dozen theses and about 500 footnotes. Nevertheless, they are united in their action in Hull on this matter. They are concerned at the damage that their students will suffer, but they are determined that the Government's dirty work will not be executed by hyperactive vice-chancellors, who seem unconcerned at the damage to academic standards that such heavy handed management will cause.

National officers and officials of the Association of University Teachers met the university management on 20 July in a last effort to avoid this confrontation, but Professor Taylor's position remains unchanged. It now looks as if Hull university will damage itself quite needlessly, because of a combination of managerial inflexibility and the constraints imposed by UGC reviews and Government under-funding.

I am sure that Socrates would have had scathing words to describe the harsh treatment that his fellow philosopher has received. As Professor Getman of the American Association of Professors has pointed out, Britain and the world academic community are the losers from this Government's careless stewardship of our intellectual heritage.

I should therefore like to put the following proposals to the Minister. First, he should write to all universities where subject provision is the subject of UGC decisions and review, saying that nothing should be done to prejudice those subject departments or people in post until the completion of such a review. That already meets the problems that Professor Hepburn has identified in his review of the teaching of philosophy in these islands. That would ensure that Mr. Page's position was protected until the end of the review, and the argument over tenure could then be overcome if there were a satisfactory resolution of the matter by Professor Taylor, the university council altering its decision or by a transfer to Bradford university.

Secondly, the UGC should look at the arbitrary insistence on the age limit concerning transfer between universities' staff proposed by Professor Taylor, to consider whether it is both a restraint on trade and a breach of normal good practice between universities. It is certainly an amazing decision for a university to take that the age of 50 prevents transfers between universities if one is teaching, but if one is a vice-chancellor, such as Professor Taylor, one can transfer willingly to another position as vice chancellor above that age.

Thirdly, if the Minister is not prepared to take any of those courses of action, he should write to the UGC and Hull university pointing out that Mr. Page's case is now before the University Visitor and no action should be taken by the university until the University Visitor has made a judgment on the issue.

I was lucky enough to be awarded the Adjournment debate, but it is with great sorrow that I raise this issue. I never thought that a university which had been a place of great academic freedom, which had a great reputation among universities in this country, and which has sent many of its members to grace the Benches of the House —quite amazing in number compared with the age of the university—should be the first university to deal with a member of its staff, guaranteed by contract tenure, by dismissing him in such an arbitrary and high-handed fashion because of one single error on his part—his age of 57.

11.23 am

Mr. Harry Barnes (Derbyshire, North-East): I declare an interest in the debate, especially relating to tenure, as, before coming to Parliament, just over a year ago, I was a lecturer at Sheffield university, and have just under two years before I may return to the university if I wish. At that time I will be almost 54, so the points that have been made about Hull's policy, if transferred to Sheffield, would affect me.

My university branch, which is the academic section of MFS, is also a body that fights to preserve tenure, as does the Association of University Teachers. Furthermore, as my hon. Friend the Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara) said, I studied at Hull university in the politics and philosophy departments. Part of my teaching on access courses at Sheffield university was in philosophy, and one of the last students that I taught attained a place at Hull university as an adult student to study in its philosophy department.

Tenure is not the same thing as a sinecure. There are high standards of research, publication, administration and teaching that need to be met by university lecturers to comply and continue with their contracts. Those standards are supervised by university authorities and they are seriously examined. It is a life that calls for people who have a commitment to intellectual pursuits and, who, unless they come to Parliament, normally devote their lives to such activities. The atmosphere of the market place and of the stock exchange is quite inappropriate to such a lifestyle of study. The pressures of one's peer group are

also considerable in an academic institution and mean that standards are maintained collectively by members of the academic community.

It is especially typical of our enterprise culture—a culture of Philistines—that the first move against tenure is to take place in a philosophy department. Philosophy is not some esoteric activity. It is not a matter of people contemplating their intellectual navels. Modern philosophy is about the development of reasoning skills. It concerns areas such as logic, the implication of arguments and consistency between arguments. It is concerned with crucial distinctions between analytic, empirical and evaluative forms of reasoning. It investigates and, above all, questions those distinctions.

Philosophy is the antithesis of teaching by rote, by dogma and by pre-packaged building blocks of information. Unfortunately, the Government in their education plans and their attitudes towards universities advance exactly those dogmatic pre-packaged positions that philosophy asks us to question and challenge. Philosophy is needed in society generally, so that it can develop its educational skills.

Those with a philosophical bent are less likely to make dogmatic, all-or-nothing statements about the characteristics of nations, races and social classes. The making of qualified statements is easier to defend in argument than absolute claims, unless those absolute claims are in the sphere of mathematics or the physical sciences.

Politicians would benefit from regular acquaintance with the modern philosophical techniques of language analysis. So, for that matter, could university students and other academics. Rather than cutting back on philosophy, it should be our major intellectual growth industry. I suggest that all students should come into contact with some of the language analysis techniques of modern philosophy within foundation courses. Whichever area of study people are engaged in—history, the sciences, religion or mathematics—there is a philosophy that is appropriate for the language, the skills and the arguments that are used in those areas.

11.29 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. Robert Jackson): I congratulate the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara) on raising this important and interesting subject on the Adjournment. I also congratulate the hon. Member for Derbyshire, North-East (Mr. Barnes) on his thoughtful contribution to the debate.

I shall start by emphasising the importance of the study of philosophy. I draw the attention of the House to a speech that the Secretary of State recently made to the British Academy on the subject of the humanities. It was a speech which, unlike so many of our orations, really deserves reading, because in that speech he set out the grounds for his personal belief, and the Government's belief, in the importance of this branch of study.

Philosophy is an important intellectual discipline in its own right. It is fundamental to the higher level study of all disciplines, because the role of philosophy, as described by the hon. Member for Derbyshire, North-East, is identifying and analysing presuppositions of all forms of knowledge.

Philosophy is, or at least ought to be, a valuable training for life and work. The achievement of intellectual coherence should lead to that coherence and integration of personality and judgment which is the highest fruit of high culture and high learning. I hope that that is a consideration that modern philosophers have well in mind. At a more mundane level, philosophy gives rise, as the hon. Member for Derbyshire, North-East said, to skills in analysis and argument which are necessary in many areas of work.

Strictly speaking, however, none of this is the Government's business, and rightly so. The hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North, will find, and I hope he appreciates, that it is this conviction, and the constitutional conventions associated with it, that will prevent me from giving him full satisfaction on some of the points that he has raised.

We are living in the tercentenary of the so-called Glorious Revolution of 1688. It was an event in which philosophers played an eminent part in every party and on every side. One of the chief consequences of 1688 was the replacement in Britain of a form of state associated, as we can see from the continent, with an ambitious and wide-ranging concept of the role of the state in controlling and determining the life of the arts and the intellect.

In 1688, we in Britain rejected absolutism in the political and cultural spheres, whether in the form of Catholic integralism or in the form of Protestant Faustianism. The concept of the state which prevailed in 1688, and which established the British tradition in these matters—which happily continues to reign—was that of a limited state with a limited role in relation to great institutions of civil society, not last in relation to those associated with the life of culture and of the intellect.

We have inherited, and will continue to live within, a tradition in which, apart from generalised good will and respect for the plurality of ideas, the Government have no especially strong view about philosophy and its study. Rather, in our tradition, these are matters for civil society, for our autonomous culture and especially for our autonomous institutions of higher learning.

I am arguing that responsibility for the pursuit and development of philosophical studies in Britain has been, and should remain, with the academic community and the republic of letters. The role and responsibility of the Government is rightly very limited. In essence, in this century, that role has been to levy the taxpayer to provide public support for the work of our universities and colleges. That support is not, and I hope never will be, directed by the Government in such a highly specific way as will require the Government to develop their own policy about, for example, the academic study of philosophy.

It would not be appropriate for the Government, in the light of what I am saying, to take up a position on the case of an individual such as has been raised by the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North. Our role is simply to provide financial support for the republic of letters on whatever scale seems appropriate and within the limits of affordability—a central matter of political argument. We do that. After the Netherlands Britain spends the highest proportion in Western Europe of national product on higher education. Conditions in our universities and colleges in terms of, for example, the staff-student ratio are among the most generous in the world.

I recognise the force of what the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North, is saying—that all is not well today in the study of philosophy in Britain. We recognise

[Mr. Robert Jackson]

that. On the credit side, however, it is worth observing that the number of students who study philosophy as their main subject has risen from 1,296 in 1979 to 1,349 in 1986. The number of new entrants to philosophy courses has increased by 9·3 per cent. during the same period. That is an impressive increase.

I suppose it could be said that there is a debit side, in that the number of academics who teach philosophy has dropped from 425 in 1981-82 to about 374 in 1986. It would be fair for me to say, however, that there are probably about as many full-time philosophers practising in 1988 as there were during the whole of the 17th and 18th centuries, when Britain made her greatest contribution so far in this branch of study.

At the same time as the quite small, but nevertheless significant, reduction in the number of staff who are teaching philosophy, accompanied by a substantial increase in the number of students of philosophy—what in industry would be regarded as an improvement in efficiency—there has been a weakening in the processes of academic renewal. This is the most important problem. There has been a steady rise in the average age of our academic philosophers, and there have been few opportunities for new entrants to bring new blood and, perhaps, we hope, new ideas to the study of the subject.

There has been a tendency, from which I do not think the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North escaped, to approach this problem mainly in terms of blaming. There are those who say, and I think that the hon. Gentleman said it, that the problem would never have arisen if the Government had poured in the money—taxpayers' money—to keep everything going at its highest possible level to enable people to recruit their successors at the highest possible level.

I have to reply, quite smartly, that resources have always been limited—even when the hon. Gentleman supported a Government of his own persuasion. I have already demonstrated that resources continue to be generously provided, but the central point of my speech is that matters remain as they always have been. It is the responsibility of the academic community to sustain and carry forward the disciplines it professes, of which it is the custodian and with which it has been charged.

In short, responsibility for the effective management of the resources that are available for higher study cannot be evaded. It is not for me, a member of the Government, to specify the measures of which more effective management will consist. These matters are the responsibility of our autonomous, self-governing and self-directing academic institutions.

I should like to say something about some of the features which, happily, are emerging and to which the hon. Gentleman referred. First, there is a recognition that the more effective stewardship of the public resources provided for scholarship require a reduction in the job protections that have built up excessively—notably during the 1960s, when too little regard was paid to these matters.

I must say in response to the hon. Gentleman's quotations of overseas critics of our abolition of strict academic tenure—I say it charitably—that they struck me as typically ill-informed. Recognition of the need to reduce the level of job protections is reflected in the Education Reform Act, as I think I may now call it. It is this morning that Her Majesty signs it or, rather, I believe, taps it with a wand saying, "La Reine le veult." That need is also reflected in the policies that are now being pursued by universities and colleges, which are seeking greater flexibility. They are reviewing the quality of their academic staff. I hope the hon. Gentleman was not suggesting that that is not a relevant consideration. They are also reviewing their priorities in teaching and research.

I should like to offer my congratulations to the University of Hull and its vice-chancellor on the determined and effective way in which they are attempting to tackle their problems.

A second feature of this more effective stewardship by the academic community has been the recognition that the health of certain branches of study depends not only on institutional pluralism and initiative—these are important considerations, to which I fear the hon. Gentleman's proposals pay too little regard—but on such features as the size of academic departments, or what might be called their critical mass, their relationship with other departments, and the condition of a branch of study when viewed in a national perspective. That is the basis of the series of subject reviews that have been launched by the University Grants Committee. Those reviews are being carried out by the academic community, as is appropriate to the philosophy that I have set out, and they aim at the nationwide redeployment of resources between institutions, to enhance the overall quality of our national contributions to each subject.

The hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North told the House that it had recently been decided that philosophy should be the subject of one of the reviews. It was set up in March under the chairmanship of Professor Hepburn of the University of Edinburgh. The House and the Government will want to wish Professor Hepburn and his colleagues well in their sensitive and important task. We look forward to their considered conclusions.

It has sometimes been said that the Government have an exclusively utilitarian and materialistic approach to higher education. There was more than a hint of that in the speeches of the hon. Members for Kingston upon Hull, North and for Derbyshire, North-East. That accusation is often associated with a good deal of muddled thinking. Do those who make that accusation think that considerations of utility and return on investment should have no place in the Government's thinking about how to make best use of taxpayers' money?

If it is accepted that such considerations are appropriate and relevant, on what principles would those who assail us propose to establish a balance between the values of utility and other values that we all agree to be important? As one who has tried to think as deeply as I can about these matters, I do not believe that our critics could do better than we have done, but I have an interest in making that assertion. Perhaps the most convincing statement that I can make in the Government's defence is that for my part I should be happy to remit the question to the highest court of philosophy.

Soviet Union (Prisoners of Conscience)

11.40 am

Mr. David Ames (Basildon): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, West (Mr. Waldegrave) on his promotion to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. He deployed considerable skills when he was responsible for housing matters in the Department of the Environment and I have no doubt that he will bring his many fine qualities to his new post. I am also pleased that my hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth, East (Mr. Atkinson) is to join us shortly. I hope that he and my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, North-East (Mr. Kirkhope) and the hon. and learned Member for Leicester, West (Mr. Janner) will catch your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker, later in the debate.

Last week I took part in a joint Anglo-American delegation to the Soviet Union, with the express purpose of trying to persuade the Government and officials to release religious prisoners of conscience. The trip was organised by that most excellent organisation, Christian Solidarity International, under the United Kingdom chairmanship of Mr. Mervyn Thomas and the American chairmanship of Mr. Stephen Snyder. The American delegation was superbly led by Congressman Frank Wolf and his wife. We were joined by Robert Pittenger, Michael Farris and Scott Flipsy.

I had never visted the Soviety Union, and Moscow came as a great culture shock to me. That feeling was heightened when I learned from what I believe to be a reliable source that the Soviets spend on average 70 billion hours a year queueing and that—again on average—every woman in the Soviet Union has three abortions.

One of the longest queues was for Lenin's mausoleum, a queue that I joined. I shall always remember seeing the never-ending queue of people waiting to see the wax figure of a man who died in 1924. Many brides and bridegrooms found time during their wedding day to take flowers to his tomb. That picture was often in my mind during our many meetings with Soviet Ministers and officials, since I believe that life for the average citizen in the Soviet Union is very tough. It struck me as extraordinary that people could so easily be pleased. Also, I did not forget that during the last war the Russian nation lost about 20 million people, a most terrible price to pay.

I shall give the House some details of the various meetings that we had during our week in Moscow and what we asked the Soviet authorities to do—and what I shall now ask my hon. Friend the Minister to do. We were given great assistance by both the American and British embassies. Unfortunately, our ambassador was in London that week, but his staff were extremely helpful to us during our stay. The American ambassador, Mr. Matlock, who I believe speaks better Russian than the Russians themselves, gave a dinner party for Soviet Ministers and officials, at which a number of very important, hard-hitting speeches were made. However, I felt at the end of the evening that the thoughts of all three parties had drawn much closer together.

At our meeting I stressed that we had absolutely no right to interfere in the internal affairs of the Soviet Union. However, we had come on a special mission to express the concern of Christians about the plight of fellow Christians who are being held in prison. I argued that Christianity transcends international boundaries. I believe that that point was accepted. A number of attacks were made on the Americans' record in that area. From the British point of view, I was quick to point out that we long to solve the problems in Ireland and that the British Government would welcome any sensible, practical suggestions that might help us to solve that difficult problem.

Our delegation was invited to the Soviet Union by Mr. Burlatsky. He is the vice-president of the Soviet Political Sciences Association and chairman of the Commission on Humanitarian Co-operation and Human Rights. He is one of the key figures in the glasnost process. Our meeting with him was one of the highlights of our week in Moscow. We wanted to obtain information about certain prisoners of conscience and we presented him with a list of approximately 200 prisoners of conscience whom we believe are being detained in the Soviet Union. We also wanted to obtain information about new laws that are being introduced by the Soviet Government for the protection of individual human rights. We wanted information, too, about the functioning and the property of churches and religious associations.

On 15 June, Mr. Burlatsky made an important speech in which he said that, 70 years after the revolution, there is a need to establish a stable constitutional order. He said that there was a need to reconstruct the political system so as to set up reliable guarantees against the revival of

"an authoritarian regime of personal power and the mass reprisals which would follow it."

Mr. Burlatsky went on to say that to make the state an efficient instrument of accelerated development is to overcome what Lenin called the bureaucratic distortion of Soviet power. He said that it was important to guarantee not only socio-economic but human and political rights and freedoms. Mr. Burlatsky sympathised with many of the points that we made about prisoners of conscience and suggested that we should take up our points with the Ministers whom we were to meet during our week in Moscow.

Our list of prisoners was disputed at practically every meeting that we attended. The point was made that many prisoners had already been released and that a number of those who remained in prison were there for charges unconnected with their religious beliefs. I made a commitment that I would publicly apologise if, after consultation with Keston college, the Soviets verified that the prisoners in the list that we gave them were not being detained in prison as a result of their religious beliefs.

However, there was one prisoner about whom there was no controversy—I refer to Deacon Vladimir Rusak, who graduated from the Moscow Theological Academy and became a deacon in the Russian Orthodox Church. He worked for many years in the editorial office of the *Journal of the Patriarchate of Moscow*, the official journal of the Russian Orthodox Church in the Soviet Union. In 1982, Rusak was removed from the clergy list by the Council for Religious Affairs for preaching a sermon analysing the Russian Orthodox Church before and after the revolution, mentioning the heavy losses that the Church sustained in the 1920s and 1930s. Deacon Rusak had already been removed from his place of work when it was discovered that he was writing a three-volume history of the Orthodox Church in the Soviet Union.

In 1983, Rusak entered Western consciousness with an open letter to the assembly of the World Council of Churches, which was meeting in Vancouver. On 22 April 1986, Vladimir Rusak was arrested. He was tried on 27

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September and sentenced to seven years' strict regime camp followed by five years of internal exile, the maximum sentence possible under article 70 of the criminal code of the Russian republic, for allegedly distributing anti-Soviet religious literature in the Belorussian town of Gomel. Rusak was sent to a Labour camp for political prisoners in the Perm region of the Ural mountains. He is frequently put under intense pressure to renounce his Christian faith. In 1987, when partial amnesty was announced for those sentenced under article 70, Rusak was pressurised by the authorities to sign a statement of recantation to secure his release. He refused.

We raised Father Rusak's case at subsequent discussions with Konstantin Kharchev, the chairman of the Soviet Council for Religious Affairs, with Boris Kravtsov, the Soviet Minister of Justice and with Alexander Vlasov, the Soviet Minister of the Interior. We were led to believe by all those to whom we spoke that shortly we could look forward to a positive outcome concerning Father Rusak.

I was especially pleased to meet Alexander Ogorodnikov because I and other hon. Members had an Adjournment debate on his imprisonment only last year and we had adopted him as a prisoner of faith. The Under-Secretary of State, my hon. Friend the Member for Enfield, North (Mr. Eggar), responded to the debate. Many Christians throughout the country prayed for his release. In late 1987 I visited someone who had been fasting in a London church for Alexander's release.

Alexander became a member of the Russian Orthodox Church. He was arrested in 1978 because he participated in the publication of a religious journal and in organising a religious philosophical seminar. He was re-arrested in 1979. He was sentenced to six years in a Labour camp and to five years in exile. He was re-arrested in 1985 and became a prisoner in the notorious camp 36. Alexander, who, when I met him, did not look in the best of health, described terrible conditions in camp 36. It is a great wonder that any of those prisoners survive the severe climatic conditions in the winter.

We all celebrated Alexander's release in February 1987. Hon. Members can imagine my slight amusement when I sat with Alexander in a KGB car which was doubling up as a taxi to earn a little bit of money on the side.

We also had the pleasure of meeting Father Gleb Yakunin, a Russian Orthodox priest, who was suspended in 1966. In 1975, he appealed to EEC delegates in Nairobi, giving details of the situation faced by the Russian Orthodox Church and the believers. In 1976 he founded the unofficial Christian Committee for the Defence of Believers' Rights in the Soviet Union. He was arrested in 1979 and sentenced in 1980 to five years in labour camps and five years in exile. I am delighted to say that he was released in 1987, reinstated and given a parish in a Moscow region in August 1987. Father Yakunin was absolutely overjoyed when we met him in a tiny apartment and he was presented with a Bible. It is a miracle that he survived his time in camp and I am delighted to say that his spirit has certainly not been destroyed.

The case which I particularly want to bring to the attention of the House is that of Vasili and Galina Barats. I had adopted them as prisoners of faith and with my constituents celebrated their release. The House can imagine my horror when I arrived in Moscow and found I had been given inaccurate information. Vasili had been sent into exile and Galina was being held under house arrest. I have photographic proof that on 4 July, pentecostal emigration activist Vasili Barats was removed from a train bound for Moscow and detained for several hours. Barats who was forcibly taken from Moscow to the western Ukrainian Trans-Carpathian region on 8 May, was attempting to rejoin his wife in Moscow. Although she was also ordered to leave Moscow, she has refused to leave the flat there she is staying with friends and so far the militia has not attempted to remove her by force, although the flat is under constant surveillance. The ticket to Moscow was confiscated from Vasili and the KGB told him that he would be prevented from leaving, although there was no legal ground for his enforced exile in the western Ukraine. He is now under 24-hour surveillance by the militia and the KGB and he is unable to make even the shortest telephone call to his wife.

Barats has appealed to Mikhail Gorbachev to allow him to return to his wife in Moscow and for both to emigrate. In the late 1970s, Vasili and Galina were prevented from emigrating, on the grounds that they had no close relatives in the West. Now it is said that Vasili is party to military secrets which he acquired in the early 1970s when he was an army officer. Vasili denies that he has any knowledge that would be of any use whatever to a foreign power as all the equipment he used is now obsolete. Vasili was invited to petition for release from his labour camp sentence early in 1987 and he specifically stated that he was asking to be released to emigrate and Galina signed a similar statement, but all their attempts to emigrate have been frustrated and they have remained in an extremely precarious position ever since.

On 27 May, the United States Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, Richard Shifter, was able to visit Galina, who handed him a statement for President Reagan containing the list of 4,000 pentecostals who wish to emigrate from the Soviet Union. When Congressman Frank Wolf visited Galina, the KGB scattered from outside her flat. I visited her separately and found her in a highly emotional state. She has not been out of her flat, which is on the 25th floor of a depressing tower block, for two and a half months.

Galina is under virtual house arrest. Crazy as it seems, on many occasions food has to be raised in a bucket up to the 25th floor of the tower block. She is staying with a young couple whose 10-month-old child died last year. They have one remaining child, a five-year-old daughter named Lisa, who has a heart complaint, and the operation to rectify that can be carried out only in the West.

At every meeting we attended, we put the Barats's case. The American delegation wanted to take Galina home with them when we left last Friday. Unfortunately, we were not given entirely satisfactory answers to the questions that we posed about the plight of the Barats family. The other members of the delegation and I are determined to obtain the release of the couple and ensure that they should be allowed to emigrate. We had a meeting with several pentecostals who—except for one person—are all emigrating to America. That one person needs all our help and support in the West.

During our first visit, we were taken to the Danolov monastery, where President Reagan gave his now-famous address. We were warmly welcomed by the clergy, but I

must tell the House that I left with the feeling that the monks were overdependent on the state and that the monastery had somehow been compromised.

Most prisoners are detained under article 70, which concerns anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda, or article 190. Soviet law states that sentences are not only imposed as chastisement for the crime but are a time for correction and re-education in which the state will try to alter the moral outlook of the prisoner and his or her attitude to society and to work.

We are told that glasnost has resulted in a reduction in the number of religious prisoners from 380 in January 1987 to 177 today. However, it is suspected that many of the prisoners are re-arrested on various civilian charges. The number of new arrests on religious grounds has, I am pleased to say, been reduced to five this year. According to Soviet law, all religious groups must be registered with the state. The only type of actitivity that is officially allowed is the holding of services of worship in a building that must be registered officially for that purpose. Other activities are generally forbidden, such as Sunday schools, bible classes and evangelical events. It is hardly surprising that many Christians feel unable to abide by such restrictive practices.

At meetings with Ministers and officials, we emphasised the Helsinki accord and said that they should comply with it. We asked for bibles to be made freely available, and the Americans have offered to send 1 million bibles. We also asked that religious education be given to young people because there is a marked absence of children in the churches that we visited.

Keston college has done excellent work in supplying information about prisoners of conscience in the Soviet Union. We are also indebted to Hans Stuckelberger the president of Christian Solidarity International, who was, unfortunately, refused a visa to join us on the delegation. I also pay a warm tribute to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, which has worked so very hard for human rights in the past few years.

It was clear to me that the Prime Minister's stand on these matters has produced positive results and is widely respected in the Soviet Union. I met Mr. Gorbachev when he visited the United Kingdom three years ago. I was impressed by him; to echo the words of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, he is someone with whom we feel we could do business.

I want finally to quote the words of four people whom we met during that week.

Father Gleb Yakunin said:

"This improved situation for believers in the Soviet Union is due to continuous prayers and protests of Western Christians over the last 10 years."

Alexander Ogorodnikov said:

"please keep the pressure up it is definitely working."

Mrs. Barats said:

"Yes there is glasnost, yes there is perestroika, yes there is democratisation, but only for a few."

Perhaps the most telling remark of all was made by Mr. Bulabsky, who said:

"we are continually looking in the mirror of our conscience, and that mirror is the West."

I hope that the Soviets will read and act upon the remarks that I and other colleagues make.

12.5 pm

Mr. Greville Janner (Leicester, West): With the leave of the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I congratulate the hon. Member for Basildon (Mr. Amess) on raising this matter in the House and on his very moving speech. I hope that what he has said will be heard and acted upon. I know that the families whom he has mentioned will find out that he has done so, and what he has said will perhaps help to assure and reassure them, which is our common purpose.

I thank the hon. Gentleman for raising during his visit to Moscow the Soviet authorities' refusal to allow me and other hon. Members on both sides of the House to enter the Soviet Union. I am a frequent refusenik—they will not let me in because they say that I interfere in their affairs, so glasnost and perestroika have not reached me. I regret that, but at least last week I achieved the next best thing to getting to Moscow. After 18 years in the House, I actually received a letter from the Soviet ambassador. Unfortunately, it contained an implied refusal to see me for a private chat, but perhaps even that attitude may melt in due course. Meanwhile, as a founder member of the Commission for Human Rights in the USSR I associate myself with the campaign for freedom of people of all religions and for the rights of the dissidents.

I begin by quoting from a marvellous book called "Fear No Evil" by Natan Sharansky, in the front of which I have written a dedication to the Minister, expressing my congratulations to him and the wish that he should read the book during the recess as it will interest him. It is gripping and it will do him good, as it did me.

In the preface, the recently released Mr. Sharansky says:

"During the long months of interrogation and isolation before my trial and for all the years that followed, my captors were determined to break me—to make me confess to crimes I had never committed and then to parade me before the world. They wanted to use me to destroy the two groups I worked for—Jews who hoped to leave for Israel and dissidents who spoke out on behalf of human rights."

I, too, work for both groups. The campaigns are separate because the Jews who wish to leave are not trying to change the regime in the Soviet Union but simply to get out. Sharansky, however, provides a magnificent bridge both in his work and now in his book, which I hope many hon. Members will read. Speaking of his time in prison, he says that there are many people of all religions in prison today for having said yesterday what Mikhail Gorbachev is saying today. All of them should be released—and they should be released now.

The all-party parliamentary committee for the release of Soviet Jewry was established some 17 years ago and I pay tribute to Members of all parties and to all Governments since then for the kindly, humanitarian help and co-operation that they have given us, not least on behalf of the three categories of people with whom we are concerned today—first, those still in prison; secondly, those who have been released but are still being harassed and persecuted; thirdly, those who dwell on the dangerous edge of imprisonment in the Soviet Union.

Sharansky refers in his book to a man called Leonid Lubman, who has been seeking to leave the Soviet Union for many years but who in August 1977 was sentenced to 13 years' imprisonment, just as Sharansky was, for writings critical of the Soviet Union. In his book, Mr. Sharansky describes him as

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"another imprisoned Jew who was picked on at every opportunity and literally never left the punishment cell along with his neighbours Vazif Meilanov and others."

So he, Leonid Lubman, is still in prison as a Jewish prisoner of conscience.

There are other ex-prisoners, prisoners who have not been allowed out of the Soviet Union. For example, Rowald Zelichenok has been waiting to leave for about 20 years. Like the man referred to by the hon. Member for Basildon (Mr. Amess), he is accused of having secrets. That is a travesty and a poor excuse. He was told only three or four days ago not to re-apply for a visa until 1999. There is Yeugeny Lein, Lein Kislik and Chernobilski. There is Kosharowsky, who has been enduring great perils. He has been refused leave to apply for a visa until 1992, again on the spurious ground of secrecy. He left his job 20 years ago. There are split families such as the Luries. There are those who are being kept from leaving because of spurious financial dependencies. All this in a country where it is alleged that freedom has re-emerged.

In June 1979, 4,350 Jewish people were allowed to leave the Soviet Union. In June of this year, 1,493 left that country—in other words, far fewer than half of those who left in June 1979. In 1979, 51,300 Jews were allowed to leave. So far this year, only 6,188 have left the country.

From this House, we appeal to the Soviet Union to release prisoners and to allow those who wish to leave, to join their families, and to do so in accordance with their own constitution, with the universal declaration of human rights and with the Helsinki declaration.

Finally, I mention with appreciation a statement made only yesterday by the Prime Minister concerning Raoul Wallenberg, the most noble prisoner of all time. He was a non-Jewish diplomat who single-handed, saved over 100,000 Jewish lives in Hungary, and to whom, I pay my tribute. He disappeared after going to the Soviet authorities after the liberation, to explain what had happened in Hungary and to seek the help of Soviet officials. The Soviets say that he was not in the Soviet Union, but left and was sighted. His family have been pleading and campaigning for true information, and for his release, if he lived. The statement by the Soviets that they had held him in their hands and that he had died of a heart attack in prison was patently untrue.

We appeal for Wallenberg and for all those referred to by the hon. Member for Basildon. We appeal for all those who have been campaigned for by hon. Members on both sides of the House and who are currently suffering in the Soviet Union. These are prisoners, ex-prisoners and those who wish to be free but are not permitted their freedom.

12.13 pm

Mr. David Atkinson (Bournemouth, East) *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: (Sir Paul Dean): Order. Does the hon. Gentleman have the leave of the House?

Mr. Atkinson: I have, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Basildon (Mr. Amess) for offering me this opportunity to participate in an important debate. I am pleased to congratulate him on initiating it. It must be right for the House to remind itself as we depart for a period of relaxation that, despite glasnost, there remain in the gulag hundreds of prisoners of conscience who deserve our attention for as long as they remain there.

I was extremely interested in the visit of my hon. Friend the Member for Basildon to Moscow last week, which was organised by Christian Solidarity International. As he knows, I have the honour to be the president of the CSI in the United Kingdom. I had hoped to join my hon. Friend's group, but I was unable to go.

I was especially interested to learn of my hon. Friend's meeting with Father Gleb Yakunin. I met him when I was in Moscow in 1979 researching for a report on freedom of religion for the Council of Europe. I shall never forget meeting with him and his colleagues on the Committee for Defence of Believers' Rights.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Basildon has reported, Father Gleb Yakunin was released last year. He was one of the three former dissidents who addressed President Reagan at the American embassy in Moscow on 30 May. He used that opportunity in front of the world's press to remind us, as my hon. Friend the Member for Basildon (Mr. Amess) has done, that there remain many prisoners of conscience. In particular he referred, like my hon. Friend, to Deacon Vladimir Rusak. Those people are still languishing in prison, labour camps, in exile and in psychiatric hospitals because of their religious activities. They have been convicted under the infamous article 70 of the Soviet criminal code, which is Orwellian.

As Father Gleb has testified the reason why he was released and the reason why Georgie Vins, the Siberian seven, Shcharansky, Orlov, Ratushinskaya, Senderov, Ognorodnikov—whom my hon. Friend met—Yevdokimov, Anna Chertkova, and, most recently, Vasili Shipilov, have all been released is that we in the West made them household names as a result of our campaigns on their behalf. We demonstrated outside Soviet embassies, we held vigils and encouraged mountains of mail urging their release. As a result, they became a continual embarrassment to the Kremlin. Thus they were released as an indicator of Soviet foreign policy like the number of visas issued to Jewish refuseniks—a measure for detente.

What a callous way of using people in response to the efforts and perseverance of the thousands of campaigners all over the world. However, there remains no alternative for us while hundreds more remain in prison. I draw the attention of the House to early-day motions 1415 and 1416, which list the names of 175 Soviet Christians who remain in prison for religious reasons.

What we all want in this House is a time in the Soviet Union when to be an active Christian, Jew or Moslem does not risk intimidation, bureaucratic harassment, discrimination or persecution, which has happened many times in post-revolutionary Russia.

We must be encouraged by what my hon. Friend learned from those he met in Moscow—that the reform movement is leading to greater openness, tolerance and respect for human rights, including freedom of religion. Such changes must not be cosmetic changes merely to encourage a reduction in arms or more western trade, technology and credits to improve the Soviet economy and to support perestroika. That would mean that we have learned nothing from the lessons of detente of the 1970s, when we gave much but received so little in return.

I urge upon my hon. Friend the Minister, whose responsibilities include the conference on security and co-operation in Europe, those recommendations for which

I am seeking support from the Council of Europe in October as the result of my report on Freedom of Religion in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, of which he has a copy and which is to be debated by the parliamentary assembly in October.

12.17 pm

Mr. Timothy Kirkhope (Leeds, North-East): I also congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Basildon (Mr. Amess) on raising this important matter. I have not had the advantage of visiting the Soviet Union, although since I came to the House last year I have been involved, in common with many other hon. Members, in the causes of a number of families who wish to obtain visas and who wish to leave the Soviet Union.

What has impressed me most is the new cosmetic approach adopted by the Soviet Authorities towards such activities. Nearly a year ago, I wrote to the Soviet ambassador, Mr. Zamyatin, about one particular family. The letter that I received in reply was starchy and in some respects offensive, as it sought to remind me of the human rights record of my country. One had to assume from that that the Soviets were talking about Ireland, Scotland or Wales or even the entire north of England. It was a curt and unhelpful letter. Since that time, however, glasnost and perestroika have developed.

Only recently I took up the cause of the Chernobilsky family in Moscow. About two weeks ago I led a small delegation to the Soviet embassy. This time we had an appointment at the embassy and we did not have to poke a letter through the box at the gates. This time, we were invited in and given half an hour of the first secretary's time. We were treated with great courtesy and sympathy. That is not enough, but it is a suggestion of the public image that the Soviet Union is now trying to put across.

We do not want the respective Foreign Offices to exchange lists; what we want is action. We want to see many people, not just the names that we select, and important though they may be, obtain the visas that they wish. The Chernobilskys and all the other Jewish families who want the freedom to practise their religion in Israel should be afforded that right. Those who are in prison because of religious beliefs, or in mental institutions because their beliefs do not comply precisely with the state's, should be released and given freedom.

The public face that I and other colleagues are now experiencing—the friendly, courteous and even generous attitude—must be changed into the reality of the release of people and the increase of freedom in the Soviet Union. Mr. Zamyatin and his colleagues know that. They know that we are watching carefully the development of glasnost and perestroika and that we want to see those results. I am very grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Basildon for raising the issue. He has given us an invaluable opportunity to discuss a matter which is of great importance to everyone.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): With the leave of the House, Mr. Waldegrave.

12.20 pm

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. William Waldegrave): I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Basildon (Mr. Amess) for giving me an opportunity, very early in my responsibility, to put some words on record about the third of the three great areas of which my portfolio consists. I have had the privilege today of answering a debate on each of those issues.

I was very interested to hear about my hon. Friend's visit to the Soviet Union, and I shall pass on his kind remarks to our embassy staff there. Many of the words spoken across the Chamber have a ritual quality. In other debates we know that we have to play our parts, but in debates such as this, in the activities represented in this House and by voluntary organisations outside such as PEN and Amnesty International, it is more than words. We know that the concentration on particular families and the publicity that they receive has a particular effect in the real world and can be a powerful weapon for protection. Therefore, occasions such as today are important.

However optimistic we are about the changes which are affecting the Soviet Union, had it not been for the efforts of people such as my hon. Friend and the hon. and learned Member for Leicester, West (Mr. Janner) during the years when the atmosphere was not so favourable, it would not now be so near the top of the list of priorities that progress should be made on these issues. We must be vigilant, because we are aware that there are elements of public relations in some of the things being said at the moment. As my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, North-East (Mr. Kirkhope) said, we are seeking the actuality and not the words.

I have not long to speak and I cannot refer to all the cases which hon. Members have raised. I welcome the way in which the debate has extended beyond prisoners of conscience in a narrow sense to wider human rights issues in the Soviet Union. I shall say just one word about a figure in a very different category—Wallenberg, members of whose family I know. I can say to the hon. and learned Member for Leicester, West that many unresolved questions remain about that case, and we hope that the spirit of glasnost will reach into that tragic story, which is a major one in the history of the 20th century.

I have a particular family reason for welcoming my hon. Friend's introduction of the subject. He may not be aware that a very major figure in the carrying of evangelical Christianity to the Soviet Union in the 19th century was a member of my family, Lord Radstock. Occasionally, I receive letters from the descendants of those whom he introduced to his particular strand of Christianity in the Soviet Union. Investigations would show that some of those whom my hon. Friend met would be able to trace their roots back to the missions that he established in the 1850s and 1860s.

The horror with which we in the western world regard any attempt to limit religious freedom has been expressed on all sides of the House today, and it is intolerable that those pressures and persecution should still exist.

The Soviet Union, like the United Kingdom, is a signatory of the United Nations covenant on civil and political rights, and of the Helsinki Final Act. In signing those documents, it accepted certain responsibilities concerning the attitude of a state to its citizens. Among them is a pledge to respect

"human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief".

Yet experience has shown that the Soviet authorities have failed lamentably to observe this pledge in practice.

We have every right to be concerned about that. The Final Act was agreed by states working together as equals, and it has equal significance for each of them; there is no

[Mr. William Waldegrave]

escaping this fact. When we deal with the Soviet Union as an equal, we expect it to honour commitments freely entered into, as we do.

The Soviet Union has no grounds for special pleading. It cannot claim that the commitment to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms somehow applies less to it than to others. Article 52 of the Soviet constitution guarantees freedom of conscience to Soviet citizens. If the Soviet Union wants to be taken seriously as a responsible interlocutor in the community of nations, it must be prepared to behave like one, and to face criticism if it does not.

All the names mentioned by the hon. and learned Member for Leicester, West are on the list of cases that we are pressing. Several of my hon. Friends mentioned Vladimir Rusak, who has been imprisoned since 1986. He had the temerity to write a book on Church history since the revolution—a subject which is now being openly discussed in the Soviet press. He was sentenced for anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda. How depressingly familiar that meaningless phrase must be to students of Soviet human rights abuse. Deacon Rusak has displayed courage and fortitude throughout his ordeal. The House expects the Soviet Union to bring that ordeal to a speedy conclusion.

Another prisoner of conscience is not, however, imprisoned for religious reasons. Mykola Horbal, who is a Ukrainian, dared to join a group of Soviet citizens monitoring the Soviet Union's adherence to its commitments under the Helsinki Final Act. For this, and his samizdat writings, he was arrested in 1979 and sentenced to five years' imprisonment. Without being released, he was charged again at the expiry of this period and sentenced further to eight years' imprisonment and three years' exile for, to use that phrase again, "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda". He, too, is in poor health. There is no justification for failing to restore Mykola Horbal's freedom. His crime was to seek to monitor the commitments into which his Government had freely entered.

Vladimir Korfidov is a victim of the most chilling of human rights abuses—the detention of a sane person in a psychiatric hospital. Mr. Korfidov was a factory worker and was arrested in 1979 after trying to cross the border into Finland without permission. He was sentenced to be detained indefinitely. We understand that his case may have been reviewed recently, but we have no firm news of his present circumstances. The abuse of psychiatric hospitals has improved, which is welcome, and I shall press his case further.

The hon. and learned Member for Leicester, West mentioned a further category of prisoner—those for whom the Soviet Union itself is a prison, such as Jewish refuseniks, Germans, Armenians and others. We shall strongly press the cases of those people.

The Government are aware of the case of the Barats family, whom my hon. Friend the Member for Basildon mentioned so eloquently. I understand that the Netherlands and Canada have offered them entry visas. We very much hope that they will be allowed to emigrate, and we shall add their case to the list of those on which we shall press.

I recently received details of the harrowing case of the Vais family of Leningrad. Semian and Sara, 21-year-old son Dima and grandmother Galina have been trying to emigrate to Israel since 1978. Permission has been consistently refused, for the catch-all reason that it would be prejudicial to state interests. Both parents have lost their jobs and Mrs. Vais supports the family by working in a boiler house. Mr. Vais has had a series of strokes and is very ill. His most recent stroke was on 23 June, he having again been refused exit permission on 29 May. The authorities have called up Dima for military service, but his mother and grandmother badly need his support. That is perhaps not a typical catalogue of the distress that can be involved. We recognise that Mr. Gorbachev seems to be making changes but we focus still on those for whom the changes are not coming speedily enough.

As I have said, it is the deeds and not merely the words that we want. We lose no opportunity to bring individual names and the principles behind what I am saying to the attention of those at the highest level. My right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary and my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister have pressed the cases of many of those I have mentioned. Within the context of the CSCE and elsewhere, we miss no opportunity to press towards the release of many from the remains of the gulag and many who wish to rejoin their families or simply to exercise their basic human right of free exit from one country to live in another country of their choice.

Royal Assent

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): I have to notify the House, in accordance with the Royal Assent Act 1967, that the Queen has signified her Royal Assent to the following Acts and measure:

Appropriation Act 1988
Finance Act 1988
Community Health Councils (Access to Information) Act 1988
Licensing (Retail Sales) Act 1988
Landlord and Tenant Act 1988
Malicious Communications Act 1988
Access to Medical Reports Act 1988
Protection of Animals (Amendment) Act 1988
Environment and Safety Information Act 1988
Protection against Cruel Tethering Act 1988
Civil Evidence (Scotland) Act 1988
Criminal Justice Act 1988
Legal Aid Act 1988
British Steel Act 1988
Court of Session Act 1988
Electricity (Financial Provisions) (Scotland) Act 1988
Education Reform Act 1988
Local Government Finance Act 1988
Solicitors (Scotland) Act 1988
Bredero (Bon Accord Centre, Aberdeen) Order Confirmation Act 1988
Highland Region (Lochiniver Harbour) Order Confirmation Act 1988
Eastbourne Harbour Act 1988
Tor Bay Harbour (Oxen Cove and Coastal Footpath, Brixham) Act 1988
University of Wales College of Cardiff Act 1988
Imperial College Act 1988
British Waterways Act 1988
County of South Glamorgan (Taff Crossing) Act 1988
Church of England (Ecumenical Relations) Measure 1988

Housing (Waltham Forest)

12.32 pm

Mr. Harry Cohen (Leyton): This debate is about public housing in Waltham Forest. I have to confirm that it is public housing in which people live, not public houses where drinks are consumed.

I congratulate the Minister on his new role. I assume that it is a promotion. I wish him success, not least because we wish to see decent housing in Britain. I shall draw to his attention a comment made by the previous Under-Secretary of State before she was given the chop by the Prime Minister. In a letter to me dated 21 July she said:

> "I do appreciate the housing problems in Waltham Forest, and in particular I applaud the efforts of the Council to avoid use of bed and breakfast in meeting their obligation towards those who are homeless."

There are severe housing problems in my area. Many local people are in desperate need of proper housing. They face immense overcrowding and stress and that is reflected in the high figures for homelessness, the housing waiting list and the transfer list. I have to deal with innumerable cases in my advice surgery. I receive many letters and telephone calls, and if I went through them all we would be here all day.

I want to deal with the issues in general. In 1987-88, 2,201 households presented themselves to the local authority as homeless, 801 of which were regarded as priority need. That was a 33 per cent. increase on the year before. The trend this year is still substantially upwards. I have some of the latest figures. They show that 520 families out of a total of 828 allocations were rehoused in July. Of those 826 dwellings, 386, were one-bedroomed properties which are not suitable for families. Four hundred and forty two were two-bedroom or larger properties. Therefore, 91 per cent. of the available family homes went to homeless families. The projection is that 950 dwellings this year will go to homeless cases. On a projection of 1,400 allocations, 600 are likely to be one-bedroomed and 700 to be family units. There will be a shortfall of between 200 and 250 family homes for 1988-89 for the homeless.

The council has avoided using bed-and-breakfast accommodation, and should be praised for that, despite the huge increase in homelessness at a time when many other councils have been forced into using it. As I have said, nearly 90 per cent. of all lettings go to priority homeless families. This year, for the first time, the council has had to put 100 families into one-bedroomed, high-rise tower block flats. That is not satisfactory. The council has also reduced its voids enormously. The empty properties have been reduced to only 337 as at 25 July. That represents 1·6 per cent. of the total council stock, an incredibly low proportion.

There will always be some void dwellings as properties stand empty for minor or major repairs. However, if we compare that level of vacancies with the private housing association sectors in Waltham Forest, we find that the council figure is an efficient one. As I have said, council vacancies are 1.6 per cent. of total stock. Housing association empties are 3·9 per cent., while in the private sector nearly 3,000 properties are empty, and that is 4·6 per cent. of the total stock.

That burden of homelessness eating up the available dwellings means that the current waiting list and transfer list are effectively frozen. Only 15 families were housed from the housing waiting list over last year's figure and

[Mr. Harry Cohen]

every one of those families was extreme in the extreme. The 10,362 families on the waiting list and the 4,000 plus families on the transfer list are bearing the brunt. They are in a trap of misery. In addition, 1,500 elderly people need special housing in the area and we have only 600 sheltered homes in Waltham Forest. That is one of the lowest figures in London.

We have a large number of low-income families for whom owner-occupation is not an option. We also have many serious harassment cases, including racial harassment, and many families need rehousing. There are road decants in the area. The M11 link road has caused 270 families to need rehousing. Seventy of the best family homes had to come down during the construction of the north circular road. There are system-built homes on the large estates and 3,500 of them need improvement and redevelopment. The previous Minister visited those estates and acknowledged that there was a case.

More than 16,000 houses need repair and improvement at a cost of £180 million over 10 years. Even the Audit Commission said:

"Put simply, a further £10 million is required in each of the next 10 years if the council is to carry out its traditional housing elemental repair plan. Moreover, the cost of future maintenance and work revealed by the outstanding surveys will add further to the shortfall . . . Waltham Forest has all the information needed to put forward a reasoned argument in support of a request for a supplementary allocation."

There is also disrepair in the private sector where more than 22,000 homes are considered to be in need of substantial repair. Many of them need some local authority assistance. However, improvement grants have been stopped in my area because of the cut in the housing investment programme.

The borough's strategy is to spend more to provide new homes for the homeless and to repair and redevelop its homes and those homes in the private sector. It has calculated its HIP bid at £63 million, which is based on accurately costed figures from private consultants. However, last year the council received only £7 million. That was topped up by allocations and £15·3 million of its capital receipts to £24 million, which was for this year's programme. Even that has been hindered by the Government. For example, the Secretary of State's statement in March blocked a lot of schemes, including schemes involving the private sector.

The council had a deal with the Samuel Lewis housing trust to provide 32 homes for the homeless. They were to be built by a private contractor, Hastingwood Estates, on private land, funded by a private merchant bank, Brown Shipley and Co. Ltd. That was in my constituency at the old Leytonstone football ground. With other schemes, that would have provided 200 homes for the homeless. The scheme was shot down when the Secretary of State announced his restrictions on leaseback deals on 9 March.

The Government have realised that it was wrong to pull the rug from under the feet of many local authorities in regard to such schemes without announcement. They have invited bids for additional applications to cover the cost of some of those schemes. Waltham Forest has made an application, and I hope that the Minister will take its application seriously and will provide the supplementary allocation.

It was deeply unjust that those schemes were stopped, especially the one on the Leytonstone site, because the housing association was already fully committed. It had signed contracts, it had borrowed the money from the bank, and it had even handed over 10 of the properties before 9 March. Twenty-two of the 32 properties have been counted as prescribed expenditure for the local authority, despite there being no prior notice and the fact that the local authority processing levels were within the rules at that time. That denied the local authority the opportunity to spend the money on other homes, as it had intended to do. I hope that the Government will reconsider that aspect of their policy.

On transforming the estates, the council has a major programme which affects many of my constituents living in Cathall Road, Oliver Close and Beaumont road. Many of those properties have major structural problems that need repairing. Reports have gone to the Government Building Research Establishment and to the Department of the Environment, whose surveyors have looked at them. However, for just a little more than it would cost to repair those blocks—which would even then leave a lot of problems—we could have new homes and flats, virtually all of which would be low-rise and many of which would have gardens.

The Government should give additional support to those schemes. Because of the enormous sums involved and the void rate being so low, it cannot be done privately without throwing out the tenants, but they have nowhere to go. Only the council can do that, and it should be supported by the Government. The Government should start by giving sufficient Estate Action funding for those specific schemes. I hope that the Minister will look at that, too.

I want to refer to the subject of disabled people's homes, because the way in which the Government have dealt with the Suffield Hatch site in Waltham Forest raises questions about how serious the Secretary of State is about providing such homes. It is a council-owned site which the council wanted to sell to a housing association called Habinteg, to build 18 units for the physically disabled, including wheelchair-bound people. The housing association agreed the funds. The council needed approval from the Secretary of State to sell it at below market value. It submitted its application for approval in 1987, and in November approval was given but was based on the wrong figures.

In February 1988 approval was based on the right figures, but in that year the property value had virtually doubled and by the time the authority went back to the housing association—it resubmitted the figures in April this year—it was told that it had to go through the whole process again. The Secretary of State's delay in giving approval has put a block on those disabled people's homes because of the price rise since. It is a Catch-22 situation —land prices rise while the Secretary of State delays.

The Government's proposals seem to be for a strict financial regime with no flexibility or room for the local authority to deal with its housing problems. People's misery will be made worse as the borough's problems are worsened. The Government recently produced their consultation paper, "Capital Expenditure and Finance" which will force local authorities to direct 75 per cent. of their capital receipts to pay off historical loan charges. That would be disastrous for Waltham Forest—it would mean a 40 per cent. cut and bed-and-breakfast accommodation on an enormous scale immediately. The borough has tried hard to avoid that option.

Just the other day the Government produced another consultation paper, "The New Financial Regime for Local Authority Housing", which says that housing revenue accounts will have to be self-financing. That proposal takes absolutely no account of the poor quality of housing which many people have to live with and for which the council has to pay out of the housing revenue account because of its duty as a landlord. It also takes no account of high debt charges, which are running at £20 million a year for my borough. If the Government's suggestions were put into effect, there would be a £6 a week rent increase. There would be a 30 per cent. increase for no improvement in services in 1990—exactly the same time as the poll tax hits local families.

The Housing Bill is no answer. More than 2,000 tenants have inundated the town hall and been to public meetings saying that they do not want private landlords. I have a letter from the Leyton Grange community association, which polled its estate and found that 85 per cent. of tenants wanted to remain council tenants. People want the council to be their landlord, and forcing tenants out seems to be the Government's alternative. That is not right.

I urge the Minister to give the local authority the supplementary approvals that it needs and a bigger housing investment programme allocation to help house my local people decently.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. David Trippier) *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. Does the hon. Gentleman have the leave of the House to speak again?

Hon. Members: Yes.

12.47 pm

Mr. Trippier: I congratulate the hon. Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) on securing this debate on so important a topic, and thank him for his kind comments about my new responsibilities for housing. His remarks were typical of him. Although we do not share many political views, it is established fact that the hon. Gentleman is a very popular hon. Member. I do not say that to damage his chances of reselection—I say it sincerely.

The hon. Gentleman has described in great detail the problems that confront his borough. I assure him that neither my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State nor I underestimate their scale. My hon. Friend the Member for Broxbourne (Mrs. Roe) visited the borough earlier this year—as the hon. Gentleman suggested, to get first-hand knowledge of local housing conditions. I know that she had a most useful discussion with representatives of the council and had a tour of the borough.

What the hon. Gentleman said about the delay in the housing scheme for the disabled worried me, and I should like to examine the matter and write to him.

Mr. Cohen: I am grateful.

Mr. Trippier: I shall summarise the main features of housing conditions in Waltham Forest. Nearly one quarter of the housing stock is owned by the council. The remainder is in private ownership. The council's stock includes many flats—about 3,500—in large panel concrete construction. The problems found in buildings of that type are well known. As well as having structural defects, they are badly laid out and unattractively designed. I shall return to what can be done about that.

The council owns a lot of houses that were built before the war. They are now showing signs of age. New roofs and windows are often needed and heating and kitchen equipment need to be brought up to date. There are also problems with many of the post-war flats and houses. Many of the problems are structural and extensive remedial work is required.

Demand in the borough comes from those who are registered on the council's waiting list and from those who are accepted by the council as homeless and in priority need. In 1986-87, 586 homeless families were accepted by the council. I echo the tribute that has been paid to the council for avoiding the use of bed-and-breakfast hotels to accommodate homeless families. That is an extravagant use of resources. Bed-and-breakfast hotels provide unsuitable accommodation for families, except for short periods in an emergency. The council has managed to avoid using bed and breakfast by reducing the number of empty dwellings in its housing stock. Its efforts and resourcefulness deserve credit. I am happy to put that on record.

Overcrowding is a problem, especially where there are insufficient larger dwellings in the existing housing stock. Further demands arise both from decanting families to allow improvement work to be done on housing estates and from road works. The hon. Gentleman mentioned that work on the A406 is to start soon. He also referred to the M11 extension.

Capital expenditure for local authority housing is based on the council's housing investment programme. Every local authority makes a bid for its share of the national allocation for expenditure on housing. The total amount available is always over-subscribed, and bids from local authorities have to be considered very carefully. We have already received Waltham Forest's housing investment programme bid and its housing investment strategy statement. Every year we have meetings with each of the local authorities to discuss their programmes. This year's round of meetings will start in about a couple of months.

I can understand that, with so much work needing to be done to the housing stock, the borough may think that allocations in past years have not been large enough. I reassert that they have been made as carefully as possible and that they have been dealt with as fairly as is humanly possible. We shall study its new statement with close interest and we shall listen to what the council has to say to us when it comes to see us.

I understand that the council is disappointed that the borough is included in group B for the admissible cost limits in the tables used to calculate housing subsidy entitlement. Group A includes mainly inner London boroughs where land and property values and works costs are highest. These groupings were made on the basis of available cost data and they will be reviewed annually. Any representations that the council may care to make will certainly be taken into account in the next review.

Waltham Forest's allocation for 1988-89 was increased from that for the previous year. It was one of only eight London boroughs whose allocation was increased. It also received two supplementary allocations. The first is to help it to meet its obligations to the owners of pre-cast reinforced concrete houses that were originally owned by the council. They were then bought by the tenants. If

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defects occur in these houses, the council is required either to pay a grant towards the cost of reinstatement or, in extreme cases, to buy them back. The other supplementary allocation is to help the council with the cost of meeting its obligations towards the homeless. The allocation should enable the council to make some of its empty houses fit for use, as well as providing a hostel.

The housing investment programme allocation can be augmented by other resources—for example, capital receipts, including the sale of council houses and flats where the tenants have exercised their right to buy. We have received no recent figures from the council regarding its progress in dealing with right-to-buy applications, but anecdotal evidence suggests that that work is in arrears. If that were so, we should take a very serious view of it. It is frustrating the tenants' right, conferred by law, to become the owners of their own homes. Furthermore, it means that the council does not have the benefit of those capital receipts.

Many local authorities enter into leasing arrangements with housing associations and other bodies. There is no fundamental objection to that practice, provided that it helps authorities to meet their needs and represents good value for money. For example, it may make sense to take a two or three year lease of a house while the owner is abroad and to use it as temporary accommodation for homeless families. However, it has recently become apparent that the arrangement whereby leasing costs do not count as prescribed expenditure is being abused by certain authorities, who have signed lease and lease-back deals for 20 years that amount to new build council estates by the back door.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State therefore announced on 9 March that leases for longer than three years would, in general, count as prescribed expenditure. A later announcement provided that authorities could apply for additional allocations of prescribed expenditure for schemes that were both genuinely in the pipeline and did not result in an overall increase in the housing stock controlled by the council. Applications are due for that by the end of this month. I understand that the London borough of Waltham Forest has submitted applications in respect of schemes at Trinity close, Larkswood mews and Cogan avenue. I received them only very recently. They will be considered carefully and a decision will be conveyed to the council in due course.

I suggest that the council should think seriously about selling any surplus land so that it can be developed without the use of public funds and create a receipt for the council. The council has disposed of some 60 acres of surplus land entered on the Land Register, which is reasonable progress. Those registers were set up to ensure that unused public sector land that has a potential use is made available for development. That is most important in areas such as greater London where land for development is at a premium.

The Secretary of State has powers to give directions to authorities to dispose of Land Register sites where they could reasonably have put them on the market. Some directions have already been given. I understand that Waltham Forest still has sites on the register amounting to some 45 acres, so I urge the council to review those sites to see which of them can now be released. The council may also find that when tenant's choice comes into effect the tenants may wish their estates to be transferred to other ownership. The council would then be relieved of the burden of having to manage and renovate those estates.

Another way in which the council can increase its spending power is by bringing forward projects as part of the Department's Estate Action initiative. It has completed or is working on four projects which, together, have earned special allocations of about £350,000. The schemes include a controlled access system at All Saints tower on the Beaumont road estate. That is successful and has been well received by the tenants. It is no exaggeration to say that their lives have been transformed by the sense of security that it has brought about.

Mr. Cohen *indicated assent.*

Mr. Trippier: I am glad to see the hon. Gentleman nodding assent. The project is one of those listed in our booklet "Better Reception". We were delighted to include it.

That type of entry is being or will be provided for the other tower blocks at Beaumont road. No doubt the council will extend it to other estates. Other projects include new or relocated estate offices. They may be more mundane, but local management on estates is a key part of the Estate Action approach and fundamental to revitalising estates that have become run down.

We are now looking at four further projects from the council with a potential Estate Action allocation of £1·5 million. I emphasise that Estate Action is not just a way of getting extra spending. Successful projects are a balanced package of proposals that embrace all aspects of the management of the housing estates. We usually expect them to include an innovative feature that would not have been provided otherwise. I do not have to tell Waltham Forest that because it knows it already. I am glad to say that we have a good working relationship with the council on Estate Action.

The hon. Member for Leyton referred in general to public housing in Waltham Forest, but the council's responsibilities also involve it with the private sector. That will happen increasingly as councils move from being major providers of housing to enablers working with other agencies. One of the main ways in which councils are at present involved with the private sector is in making grants for the improvement of older houses. They may be given on application, although some types of grants are made at the council's discretion. However, sometimes it is more effective to target assistance on defined areas. I see that the council has adopted that strategy. With Circle 33 and Nationwide, it has also been working to provide a neighbourhood home improvement agency, to help those who might not understand the improvement grant system or who may not have funds available to pay for their share of the cost of the work.

It may interest the hon. Gentleman to know that I dealt in Standing Committee earlier this week with proposals for changing the improvement grant structure. I gave an undertaking that when parliamentary time allows, it is our intention to repackage the number of grants that are available. I am the first to admit, having taken on these new responsibilities only recently, that perhaps we are in danger of confusing the very people whom we are seeking to encourage, with a catalogue of improvement grants. We are determined to repackage them.

One aspect of management where the council could do better is in reducing rent arrears. The latest figure put them at £2·7 million, or 14·1 per cent. of the rent roll, which is the eighth highest in London and the tenth highest in the country.

Mr. Cohen: That figure has come down from £5 million.

Mr. Trippier: That certainly is progress, and I do not ignore it, but much more could be done. We know that the council has problems and, obviously, these are not unique to Waltham Forest. It could adopt further initiatives to its advantage and I have outlined some of them today. I hope that the council will heed seriously what has been said this afternoon.

Search and Rescue Services (South-west England)

1 pm

Mr. Tony Speller (Devon, North): Today, as the Session ends and the holiday season in the south-west gets into full swing—I am not looking forward to the drive back to north Devon this afternoon—I have secured this debate to talk about the cost of the search and rescue services in the south-west. The matter concerns costs as well as services. The services are superb and the cost is high.

I am delighted to see on the Government Front Bench my good Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces, who has a special place of respect in north Devon for the interest he has taken in our helicopter service and the work of RAF Chivenor. I am surprised to see him since the thrust of my argument is more suitable for reply by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport, but he may well be on the sands at his Southend constituency. I know that my hon. Friend's chieftan has departed for Ayr, which is good news for him, but I am somewhat worried that I shall not be answered by a Minister from the Department of Transport.

While the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy helicopters play a most effective role in search and rescue, most of their work involves saving our civilian population, which means tourists and natives of the west country. Inevitably, if 90 per cent. of the work is carried out for civilians, it is unreasonable that the defence budget should stand all the strain. I am well aware that if nine out of 10 rescue missions are not related to the services they could manage with fewer helicopters in the south-west than we have at present.

While I fully accept the problem, I wish to bring to the attention of the House some of the problems that we see in the south-west as our roads improve, tourist numbers increase, more footpaths open—often along the coasts and shores, for example, the south-western coastal footpath —and more and more people walk or ride on Exmoor, Bodmin moor and Dartmoor, and play in boats or along the beaches. Wherever one is in this world there is always a risk, and at present we are superbly served by so many organisations.

We have the coastguard—a professional body of full-time officers run and controlled by the Department of Transport who operate a good and satisfactory service. We have the auxiliary coastguards—a voluntary body of hourly-paid civilians who are trained to a high standard and who provide help under the instruction of the coastguard. We have the cliff rescue teams and beach patrols, which are paid for by local authorities, and mountain rescue teams, some of which are funded by the services but many of whom are civilians and volunteers. We have the Royal National Lifeboat Institution on the coast, a professional body of full-time and part-time experts, funded by voluntary contribution. I have already talked about funding from the state, local authorities, volunteers and from the private as opposed to the public purse. Other voluntary agencies include pot-holers and first-aiders; and then we come to the big stuff—the expensive matter of helicopters, which are mainly provided by the Royal Air Force, Royal Navy and civilian

[Mr. Tony Speller]

contractors. Heavier still are the long-range maritime search and rescue fixed-wing aircraft funded by the RAF and operating far from our shores. All these work via the rescue co-ordinating centres at Plymouth and Pitreavie, which are manned by RAF personnel who co-ordinate the search and rescue requirements for all the agencies I have listed. But here we have the problem. Surely the time has come to study this hotchpotch of finance and control, and I am not using the word "hotchpotch" pejoratively. There is nothing wrong with a good stew or casserole but the ingredients in terms of cost and control are so mixed that we have a genuine problem. I speak for the south-west, but I am sure it is true for the rest of the country. Clearly there is a problem for the taxpayer, who is paying a great deal out of a tax pocket and he or she cares not which pocket it is. All we care about is that the excellent service continues. I realise that the defence budget is stretched and I do not blame the Ministry of Defence for looking to the Department of Transport and saying, "As we are dealing mostly with civilian transport responsibilities, the Department of Transport should bear some of the costs." To me, as an hon. Member representing the west country, the question of where the money comes from is irrelevant, as long as we keep our service.

We have had the most amazing public response to the suggestion—or fear—that the RAF Chivenor helicopters might be moved to Brawdy. I fully understand the reasons behind that concern and I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will be able to reassure me that no precipitate announcement is likely.

The best announcement would be an announcement that there is to be no change in the system, and I look to my hon. Friend to tell me how things will go. There is much concern locally. District and parish councils, the Ilfracombe round table and our local press have all done wonders in alerting the community. Many who enjoy their surfing know Georgeham, a lovely village down on the sands by Saunton, and Woolacombe and Croyde bay. Vast numbers of tourists come there each year. A tourist is at risk every time he goes on a cliff path, tries to climb down a cliff or floats out to sea on his air bed. I know that accidents should be prevented, but they will and do happen. Georgeham parish council wrote to the Home Office about the closure of the coastguard station at Hartland in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Torridge and Devon, West (Miss Nicholson). The council received a remarkable reply from Her Majesty's coastguard at the Department of Transport.

It described the excellent system that operates and said that there would be little change when the service was transferred from Hartland, in my hon. Friend's constituency, across the water to Swansea. There was a sting in the tail. The letter said:

"Regarding helicopter coverage, about which there has been much speculation, I can offer you some reassurance."

The House must listen on:

"Specific criteria have been agreed for provision for civil maritime use"—

nine out of 10 are civil cases.

"By day, it should be possible to reach any point within 40 nautical miles of the coast within one hour of alert".

If one is clinging to the cliffs or swimming for one's life, an hour is not a great deal of help. Perhaps we could fire a rocket with a message attached saying, "Don't worry. Another 58 minutes and you'll be all right." I found the letter from the chief coastguard very depressing. It continued:

"At night or in thick weather it should be possible to reach any point . . . within two hours."

That I understand; it is a totally different matter at night for obvious reasons.

Georgeham council had asked the simple question, what will happen if the coastguard station is moved and, incidentally, what of the helicopters? The answer was that a person could still be reached within an hour. In the past few weeks, we have had cases in which people have been saved when within minutes of losing their lives. The Royal Air Force at RAF Chivenor can get to most areas of north Devon in four, 10 or 12 minutes. If the service were located across the water at RAF Brawdy—I do not seek in any way to reduce coverage there—an extra 35 minutes' flying time would be involved. In other words, the chief coastguard's one hour criterion will be followed, and it is an unacceptable criterion. It is said that there is no intention of departing from the standards in the Bristol channel. I do not suppose that anyone who is floating in a small boat or on something solid will worry about the hour. People may survive this hour but not in rough seas, not if they are on the rocks and certainly not if they are clinging to the cliffs.

My constituents find it hard to accept this kind of change when for years we have had a 10 to 15 minute service, given gladly, highly efficiently and commanding great respect from the community.

Worrying about the future of the service, I spoke to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport and later met my noble Friend Lord Brabazon of Tara to draw attention to the problem about which a lady constituent wrote:

"It has shocked me too, at the thought of helicopters being transferred to Wales."

We are all shocked. I do not know whether the chief coastguard in question is in the House, but my constituent continued:

"I would like to throw Captain Harris into the sea off Baggy Point in bad weather, without a life belt or raft and say, 'Will be back for you in an hour, old boy.' Lord Brabazon —put him on the rocks off Hangman, with the tide coming in plus lashing wind and rain."

The lady asks simply:

"Has he no idea of the vicious weather we get here?"

I appreciate that no one wishes to reduce the quality of service, but the reference to 60 minutes means that the quality of service will be reduced by about three quarters of an hour.

Since the flight at RAF Chivenor was established in November 1958, about 4,000 searches and 2,000 rescues have been carried out. Many sorties are false alarms, or the people manage to save themselves. Nevertheless, those figures are impressive. The *Western Morning News* yesterday reported two cases in my constituency of people who had got into trouble and fortunately got out of it before the helicopters arrived, but what a reassurance it was for all of us to know that the helicopters were coming. People often do not appreciate how many brave folk there are who will risk their lives trying to help. With the helicopter service, we know that by the time we attempt the dangerous or the impossible, the professionals will be there to help—and I hope that they always will be. Scramble time is about four minutes to my coastline from RAF Chivenor compared with 35 minutes from Brawdy.

I emphasise that we in the west country are proud of everything in our area. We know that it is beautiful and a part of the country to which tourists wise enough to holiday in Britain will always come. But we cannot always guarantee the weather, and when the weather is bad there is danger. There can also be danger when the weather is good if people take a windsurfer too far out or go fishing from a dinghy. It is one of the oddities of our society that one may not take a car or motorcycle on the road without a licence and then a test but anyone can take out a boat, which is far more dangerous. The many boats for hire rightly contain life preservers, but danger is still obvious and inevitable. Our rescue services are thus not something added on but an integral part of the tourist season, and people expect and deserve those services.

Thanks to the Government, to whom I pay tribute, we have a good new road—the north Devon link road—which will be open from the Tiverton M5 up to South Molton in a couple of months and from South Molton up to Barnstaple and on to Bideford by this time next year. The purpose of good roads is to make travel safer and to carry more traffic. There will be more tourists, and that is good. There will be more people coming to live with us. That is excellent. We welcome all of them, but we cannot accept a lowering of safety standards at the very time when improved facilities to reach north Devon become available.

West country Members do not feel neglected. We are well looked after and kindly spoken to, but then these little points are thrown in showing that, although we are to have good roads—the excellent Okehampton bypass is being opened—and all the other good things that will make us more viable commercially, the dangers will remain and may even get worse.

I therefore put three main points to my hon. Friend the Minister. First, I accept that the purpose of Ministry of Defence helicopters is defence and their priority must be to help service men in difficulty. I suppose that their origins lie with the launches that used to go out into the Channel to pick up aircraft crew who had ditched during the second world war.

Modern aircraft are safe and modern flyers are excellent, so, happily, we have few defence emergencies. Unfortunately, we have many civilian emergencies. I ask for an assurance that there will be no danger of change in the immediate future, by which I mean this year or next year, of anything happening to the defence helicopters that look after us so well.

Secondly, if the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy, for their own logical reasons, have to reduce their commitment, will there be an overlapping of rescue services? I believe that an interdepartmental committee is currently examining these issues. If the Royal Air Force had to diminish or dilute its support for whatever reason, would another organisation take its place? I understand that that could be a civil operation, and I am neither for nor against that. All that I want is protection for our people. If the Ministry of Defence cannot continue to meet its commitment, then my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport must take the next step.

Children, my own have been among them, take part each year in what is called the 10 tors competition. It is an exercise that is organised extremely well by the forces. Sometimes the youngsters suffer heatstroke. Sometimes a youngster will break his ankle or leg. In the past we have always had the support of the services to get any injured competitor off the moor. There are other things that go wrong on the moors and problems are not confined to the 10 tors competition. When the weather is bad—it can be extraordinarily bad on occasions—we have always had the support of the services. The Royal Air Force has flown in food for families and fodder for beasts. Without that support we would be extremely hard put. It is not just a matter of providing an extra helicopter for the four, five or six months of summer. There must be a total commitment year round.

I have figures that show how many people are carried from accidents by helicopter. Many of those who are injured in road accidents are motor cyclists. When youngsters damage their head or their legs, they are lifted from north Devon to the hospital at Barnstaple, which has a helicopter pad, or might be taken on to Plymouth. We are not dealing with the odd occasion when an injury takes place or when an idiot takes out a boat in dangerous conditions with a lack of experience. There is a day-to-day need to supplement the wonderful service of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution and the superb service that is provided by our coastguards. These services must be co-ordinated. All the individual bits and pieces are working wonderfully well, but more and more demands will be placed upon them as the years pass. There are times when we cannot rely entirely on the voluntary sector and the time is coming when there will have to be some form of service that goes beyond the central co-ordinating centres, which we already have and which work well. We shall have to co-ordinate the cash wihin the public purse so that the public are protected, our services continue and we can continue as happily and as fruitfully as in the past.

It is a great pleasure to represent a part of the west country which so many people visit and it gives great satisfaction to read so often in the press that someone has been saved. I know that everyone is grateful to the services but the need will always be present, and it is our job in Parliament to ensure that the means are available as well.

1.18 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces (Mr. Roger Freeman): I apologise to my hon. Friend the Member for Devon, North (Mr. Speller) for the fact that a humble Defence Minister rather than a Transport Minister is standing at the Dispatch Box to answer the questions that he has put. I read the Prime Minister's reshuffle list carefully and I am not aware that I have been moved. I am sure that he will accept that any comments that are made in this debate will be conveyed to my colleagues not only at the Ministry of Defence, but at the Department of Transport.

May I also congratulate my hon. Friend on securing this debate. He has been a valiant champion of his constituents' interests concerning not only RAF Chivenor, but the search and rescue service provided from that RAF base. He has written to me on numerous occasions about this matter and has brought delegations from the North Devon district council to visit me. I was thus able to hear at first hand their views about the future of the search and rescue services in the south-west. I have also visited RAF Chivenor with my hon. Friend.

I have been extremely impressed by the response from the community, including the Ilfracombe Round Table, the local Royal National Lifeboat Institution and the local press—if one can pay a tribute to the press gallery—

[Mr. Roger Freeman]

especially the *North Devon Gazette*. All my hon. Friend's constituents have adopted a positive and responsible attitude to campaigning and have drawn the attention of the Ministry to local concerns about the search and rescue services.

Many people in this country have good reason to be grateful for the excellence of the search and rescue service—for them it has made literally the difference between life and death. It is understandable, therefore, that when there is any prospect of change in any part of that service it arouses strong feelings among those who believe that they may be affected.

I should like to state at the outset, therefore, that in considering any changes that are within the province of Government we have had the interests of all users of the services in mind. We would not contemplate changes which we believed would not continue to provide a level of service across the country acceptable to the Government.

The search and rescue service is provided by the Government and other agencies and it is a matter of teamwork. The Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy provide helicopters; the RAF also provides long-range maritime patrol aircraft and mountain rescue teams and rescue co-ordination centres, which co-ordinate all air search and rescue assets. Her Majesty's coastguard co-ordinates civil maritime search and rescue operations within the United Kingdom's search and rescue region and provides boats and helicopters of its own. The Royal National Lifeboat Institution provides a whole range of rescue boats and, of course, the extremely brave men who crew them—I pay particular tribute to them.

My hon. Friend has drawn attention to the wide range of agencies that contribute to search and rescue. When we pay tribute to the skills of RAF and Royal Navy pilots of the search and rescue helicopters we should remember that many other agencies assist. I join my hon. Friend in paying tribute to their bravery. Together, the services give a comprehensive range of cover enabling them to assist at the multiplicity of emergencies that arise around our coastline and in our mountains—emergencies which range from the massive tragedy of the Piper Alpha oil rig to the plight of civilians cut off by the tide, or the pregnant woman who needs emergency evacuation to hospital.

The spread of the search and rescue assets is reflected in the division of departmental responsibilities, and perhaps it would be helpful if I explained those briefly to the House—not least because the perception of many is that search and rescue is wholly provided by the Ministry of Defence. For example my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport is responsible for civil maritime and aviation rescue, whilst the Ministry of Defence is responsible for military rescue. Naturally, departments work closely together, and Ministry of Defence assets are available to assist civilians in distress in peace time. It follows, however that some of the issues raised today by my hon. Friend fall within the purview of the Department of Transport, and I know that my hon. Friend understands that and has expressed his anxieties to Ministers in that Department. I will convey his remarks to those Ministers.

In the past 12 months, we have undertaken a review of the deployment of RAF and Royal Navy helicopters around our coastline with a view to deploying those assets as effectively as possible. It has been a major undertaking. I have already told my hon. Friend that decisions on the remaining parts of the study, including those that affect the south-west, have not yet been taken and we shall not make an announcement on those aspects until after the summer recess. I assure my hon. Friend that no precipitous decision or announcement will be made. The Ministry of Defence will take all the time necessary to consider representations made to it when examining the complicated issues involving inter-departmental co-ordination and other considerations.

The primary purpose of the search and rescue service provided by the Royal Navy and the RAF is the rescue of military personnel in peacetime and war. That is why a military service was established and that remains its raison d'etre. Therefore, I must be certain that our military search and rescue needs are met and continue to be met as effectively and efficiently as possible.

We have also taken account of the recommendations of the helicopter coverage group set up by the United Kingdom search and rescue committee, which reports to the Department of Transport. It is our aim significantly to improve the national coverage we shall provide against helicopter coverage group criteria and I can assure the House that final decisions on the deployment of our assets will not be taken without the concurrence of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport.

Of course, I recognise that it is in the area of civil needs that the most public concern is felt, particularly in my hon. Friend's constituency, with its large number of holiday-makers—a number likely to increase, as my hon. Friend has reminded the House this afternoon, with the building of the new road into north Devon. I am well aware of the extensive leisure pursuits undertaken by holidaymakers and residents in the area, particularly with the ever-increasing popularity of sailing and windsurfing, and the scope for people to get into difficulties while undertaking such pursuits. Nor do we forget that people get into difficulties on land as well—in this area Exmoor and Dartmoor spring naturally to mind—and I remind the House that the RAF has a mountain rescue team stationed at St. Athan whose area of cover includes south-west England. I pay particular tribute to them; they work very closely with the police.

I emphasise that the Government are paying close attention to the needs of civilians who undertake enjoyable but potentially dangerous leisure pursuits. We will take the fullest account of the representations we have received concerning the future deployment of search and rescue helicopters.

My hon. Friend has suggested that we consider setting up a single comprehensive agency to meet our search and rescue needs. It is not for the Ministry of Defence alone to comment on that idea. However, there already exists a United Kingdom search and rescue committee advising the Department of Transport on which all the principal contributors to, and many of the users of, the search and rescue services are represented. It includes representatives of the Department of Transport, Her Majesty's coastguard, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution and such users as the Cornish fish producers organisation and the Royal Yachting Association. The members of that committee agree to support the collective effort by contributing in ways most appropriate to them.

The United Kingdom search and rescue operation has developed from precedents which we still believe are valid on the basis of contributions from various authorities,

which my hon. Friend has mentioned. By concentrating on developing teamwork, we believe that we have a greater capacity than would be the case if one single body attempted to provide everything. A single body might inevitably find itself aiming only to meet the minimum requirements, as can be seen in other countries with such a system. Continued reliance on the many agencies, all of which take pride in their contribution, produces a service that is second to none in the world.

Our review of military helicopter search and rescue services is designed to ensure that they are deployed as effectively as possible. This is not a penny-pinching exercise, designed to save a few pounds here or a few pounds there. But we have to be certain in this area, as in any other, that we are obtaining the best value for money whilst meeting our military requirements and, as I have explained, taking account of civil needs. If we were to deploy search and rescue helicopters every 25 miles around the coast we could ensure that delays in reaching any incident would be minimal, but such an organisation would be neither financially practicable nor necessary. Equally, if we were to base helicopters at only, say, four sites around the country we could not provide a service which would be adequate to meet either military or civil needs. Our aim is therefore to ensure that our basing policy strikes the right balance between the available resources and the tasks to be undertaken.

I have explained that decisions about helicopter search and rescue deployment as it affects the west country have not yet been taken, and will not be taken until the autumn. I undertake to consider again the points made in this debate when reaching those decisions. I assure the House that the Government would not contemplate any changes to the present deployment if it was not convinced that anything other than a service which met the needs of the military and civil communities would result.

I hope that I have covered most of the questions that my hon. Friend has asked me. He asked for three assurances, and I hope that I have covered them. The first was that no precipitous decision will be taken and no announcement will be made on defence helicopter deployment. I hope that I have convinced him that, following our very full representations, we will take all the necessary time to review those and reach a conclusion.

Secondly, my hon. Friend asked whether, if the Royal Air Force did not provide a service at Chivenor or at any other station, his constituents would not be left in the lurch. The Government intend to ensure that the national criteria for search and rescue and cover for those in difficulties at sea are met. I assure my hon. Friend that the Government will ensure that those criteria are met.

Thirdly, my hon. Friend mentioned those who are caught in the open or suffer injury on Exmoor during the winter. They will not be forgotten, as the House should not foreget the men of the search and rescue service.

Community programme schemes

1.30 pm

Mr. Graham Allen (Nottingham, North): It is wholly inappropriate for the House to adjourn for three months while the massive and crushing problem of the long-term unemployed remains. That problem becomes worse as every day goes by, particularly in the context of the economic crisis facing the Government. Halfway through the year, there is already a massive trade deficit that is far higher than the Chancellor predicted for the whole year. Interest rates are increasing almost by the day. Investment in manufacturing industry still has not returned to the levels that were enjoyed a number of years ago, and inflation is rising, as the Chancellor said in his goodbye letter for the recess to his colleagues.

Those appear to be problems of success, without defining clearly what that success is. They have a considerable knock-on effect on the long-term unemployed. Unemployment has been used as an economic philisophy and tool by the Government to drive down wages and to constrain and repress trade union organisation. The Government refuse, even today, to set a target date for when unemployment will return to the levels of 1979. Instead, there has been manipulating and massaging of the figures. We are now on the 20th adulteration of the unemployment figures since the Government came to power; job creation and other schemes are included in the calculation of the number of people enjoying employment.

In the latest finesse, the community programme is to be jettisoned and replaced by employment training. This will have a profound effect on my constituency, Nottingham in general, and the rest of the country. Almost every good aspect of the CP is under threat. In Nottingham, not only do hundreds of CP workers face a return to the dole queue, but the failure to replace the work done by CP schemes will hit hard the elderly, the disabled and other needy groups.

The penny-pinching Tory council in Nottingham has a particularly appalling record and is copping out of its local responsibilities by refusing to become a training manager. A revealing report to the Tory city council in June stated:

> "Many of the Council's current CP placements are project based, for example those on environmental works. The new emphasis on vocational training together with the individual action plan approach is likely to make it impractical for all of the current CP projects to continue in their current form. Furthermore the Training Commission has indicated a wish to phase out such project-based placements."

In correspondence with myself, the Under-Secretary of State for Employment stated

> "that community benefit will not be a main priority of the new programme."

Glib phrases are used by Tories locally and nationally, but I shall explain what they mean. The following schemes will be affected in Nottingham, North. The Nottingham women's centre will lose two centre co-ordinators and two play scheme co-ordinators. The Nottingham centre for the unemployed will lose two welfare workers, two outreach workers, one clerk typist, a warden and a manager. The Rainbow centre will lose a librarian and an information officer, an exhibition organiser and the development worker for recycling. The voluntary projects programme based in Bulwell in my constituency, will lose two full-timers and one part-timer who work with the long-term unemployed and the rehabilitated mentally ill.

[Mr. Graham Allen]

The Nottingham community arts project will lose a printer, reducing the number of courses for printing, photography and arts. MIND will lose one activities organiser. Even Bulwell toy library looks forward to an uncertain future.

One of the worst features is the attack upon the elderly and disabled. The dial-a-ride scheme in Nottingham, along with community transport, will lose 14 drivers and workers. It will be decimated and wholly dependent for a much reduced service on volunteers.

Perhaps many of those projects should enjoy permanent employment and should not have been dependent on the schemes. However, there was not permanent employment and to a large extent those caring projects were filled through the community programme. I hold out little prospect of real investment by the Government to replace the jobs that will disappear with real jobs, perhaps with the local authority or through other auspices.

The list continues. At the Norwich gardens community centre for the elderly, the warden feels that there is insufficient time to undertake what the Government call "training" for the workers. The nature conservancy programme in Nottingham will be severely affected. Brilliant local initiatives such as those taking place at the Bestwood advice centre will be crushed. A total of 39 community programme workers attached to that centre will no longer be in place under employment training. Those workers do the gardening and painting for elderly people, assist with welfare rights, produce community newsletters and so on.

The Top Valley community centre is equally threatened. Shelter, an organisation with a high reputation in the city and nationally will lose three workers in the city. The Broxtowe advice centre will lose welfare and advice workers. The list goes on.

The areas in which there is high social need and where the indicators of deprivation are among the highest in my constituency are those where we will lose extra pairs of hands and extra skills that are essential if the people who benefit from the community based schemes are still to help that community.

The training burden placed upon senior people in the establishments I have mentioned means that they cannot fulfil the needs outlined under employment training. An advice worker, under stress and working hard, cannot put aside the time to take 40 per cent. of a trainee's time under direct supervision. It is impossible to imagine that people under such stress will be able to put aside such time. That is one reason why the schemes cannot work and the numbers will go down.

Adventure playgrounds, tutors for creches and keep fit classes will be hit. In addition, the skilled team of community programme administrators and supervisors who run the city council's community programme schemes face an uncertain future and will perhaps be out of work. That is the profit in one constituency from the change from the community programme to employment training. I am afraid that that profit is repeated in constituencies throughout the land. The unseen and unheard-of problems will hit voluntary organisations in particular over the next few weeks.

How could there be other than massive consequences when £500 million, which is effectively earmarked under the community programme for community-based schemes and projects, is suddenly turned off? There are bound to be massive detrimental effects. In addition, the £86 million taken from schemes associated with and related to disabled people will obviously have a major effect. According to the Spastics Society, that is equivalent to 10 per cent. of the whole community care budget being taken from the disabled in one fell swoop.

Who will fill the gaps? In many ways, the CP has been used to paper over the cracks. The Department of Health and Social Security and local authorities have not been able to fulfil all the social needs that are laid upon them and the CP has very often filled the gap. Will the burdens fall ever more on social service departments at council level and on the new Department of Social Security? Who will look after and make good the shortfalls? I suspect that the answer is no one. In the free enterprise culture, the old lady who cannot get her hedge cut or her garden dug will just have to go and whistle. I suspect that the disabled person who relies on the dial-a-ride scheme to get out and do some shopping will just have to hope that somehow a good neighbour will fill in and do right by him.

The community programme scheme has also enabled voluntary work to be initiated in response to local demands and needs. One of the problems about ET—employment training—is that there must be a position of strength before it can begin. There must be workers and a training infrastructure to kick off the new schemes, not least because money is not provided to meet the running costs of the schemes. The small-scale local initiative arising from local demand will find it harder to surface and meet that local demand.

Even those employment training schemes that go ahead will average just six months per person instead of the one year per person under CP schemes. After six months' training, the trainee can put back into the scheme a degree of skill and experience. However, that is exactly when the training period is likely to cease. That effective contribution will cease.

All that I have outlined in one particular constituency flies in the face of the Government's assurances to voluntary organisations. After meeting representatives of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, the Secretary of State, who I can only assume regards ET as his child—the organ grinder rather than the monkey—said:

> "Every existing Community Programme provider who wishes to offer to provide employment training opportunities of a comparable quality will be able to do so . . . all projects could move into employment training."

That point has since been repeated by the Secretary of State's officials.

Those statements are at total variance with the experience of the schemes in Nottingham, which help the elderly and the disabled and offer advice and support which will now close because of the change. The Government's promises and statements are nothing less than downright lies which are hurting some of the most vulnerable people in my constituency.

The lack of seriousness about training is also shown by the amount of money allocated to training managers. The White Paper announced that, in addition to the basic grant, the average supplementary grant would be £20 a week. In fact, it is nearer £15 per trainee. That is leading

training managers to cut their schemes to reduce the quality of training and the number of trainees. In many cases, ET will give substantially less than was available under the community programme. If the Government are serious about training, the training costs in a training programme must be higher than in a programme which allegedly did very little training. As a result, with just four weeks to the launch of ET, many voluntary organisations are desperate and uncertain about the future.

That leaves aside those people who are being trained. If the Government were serious about training the long-term unemployed, the trainees would receive a decent wage which should attract trainees, rather than one on which they can barely exist. Also the threat which still hangs over them would be lifted—they may lose their dole money, or people coming on the schemes at a later point may lose their dole money, if they come off scheme. Proper training is about high-quality programmes—not threats. Intimidation is no answer to the long-term unemployment problem. All that the people on employment training will receive is their benefit, plus £10 on their Giro. Some may receive a top-up or have their travel and meal costs met by some training managers. Rather than serious training, that still resembles the latest in a long line of attempts to massage and manipulate the unemployment figures and to keep down wage costs.

In my constituency, the real level of unemployment is calculated not by the Department, with its 20 additions, but by the unemployment unit. Unemployment is still around 16 per cent. in real terms—16 out of every 100 people in Nottingham, North are without work.

While the number of wages inspectors—whose regional office is in my constituency—has been reduced, and while employers who are discovered to be paying low wages are rarely prosecuted, we heard this morning that the clerical and manual grades in the east midlands have received the lowest increase in wages in the United Kingdom this year.

The employment training programme does nothing to assist those individuals who are so desperate to return to work, to make a contribution, and to be constructive rather than hopeless at home. It merely aggravates the position of the long-term unemployed.

For all its faults, the community programme will be desperately missed by those individuals who have been on its schemes and, even more so, by the needy, the vulnerable, the elderly, the disabled, the welfare advice seekers and all those who have benefited from many of the community programme schemes. In my opinion, ET should go home.

1.48 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. Patrick Nicholls): I do not entirely agree with the analysis by the hon. Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Allen) of the economic situation; nor do I agree with his analysis of the prospects for ET. I would probably embarrass the hon. Gentleman if I did agree with that analysis. He has put this debate firmly in the context of the plight of the long-term unemployed, and I am sure that he is right to do that. Even at this late stage in this Session of Parliament, in doing so he performs a valuable service, both to the House and to the country, in giving us the opportunity to debate this issue, for which I am grateful.

I am anxious in the time available to try to respond to the hon. Gentleman's specific points, but I should like to say the briefest of words about the economic situation. The hon. Gentleman is right that in time of recession it is the vulnerable who will suffer most. Certainly in a time of recession, it will be the long-term unemployed who will suffer from that vulnerability.

The hon. Gentleman is worried about inflation, but I advise him—because of the respect that we have for him, I warn him that it is a trick question—to name one month under the last Labour Government when inflation was as low as its present relatively high level under this Government. Dealing with problems as they arise and counting inflation and the threat posed by it is preferable to Secretaries of State being turned around in their motor cars on the way to the airport and having to take a begging bowl to the International Monetary Fund. History, which I am sure will take great account of the hon. Gentleman's speeches and mine, will have to make up its mind about that.

The hon. Gentleman mentioned schemes in his constituency which he feels are under threat. I am sure that he will not take it amiss if I say that it would be better if we could follow this debate up by the hon. Gentleman writing to me about his worries so that I can consider them.

It is sometimes assumed that community programme providers who are not in the business of training cannot function under the new scheme. We plan to have about 194,000 project places under the new adult training programme, which is broadly what already exists. It is somewhat ironic to hear the praise that has recently been heaped on the community programme, as, when the Government introduced it in 1983, Opposition Members universally derided it. One of the constant criticisms of it was that it was only a makework scheme and not a training programme. It is somewhat ironic that we are now being criticised for building on the community programme and trying to ensure that it has a training content.

I do not apologise for the fact that we have developed the valuable work done by the community programme to ensure that there is a training content in future. The hon. Gentleman is entirely right to draw attention to the fact that many community programme providers will not want to be training managers. They may not be equipped to be training managers. Just as there is more than one way to salvation, so there is more than one way in which the community programme can play its part in the new programme. Many training managers will be responsible for delivering training, and they will need project places. In many parts of the country, CP providers will contract or subcontract to provide project placements for training managers. That process is beginning to take shape.

I bear in mind experience from my constituency. Several consortia are getting together. They are often made up of people who are unable to provide direct training, but know that they can provide project places. They team up with those who are able to provide training. That is another way in which the community programme can pass into the new programme. It is a mistake and overly pessimistic to think that, simply because a CP provider cannot become a training manager in his own right, he cannot take part in the new programme.

The hon. Gentleman drew the House's attention to commitments given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, and, I dare say, by my right hon. Friend the

[Mr. Patrick Nicholls]

Minister of State. I, too, have been saying it throughout the country. The Government are anxious that voluntary organisations should play their full part in providing training, but I am aware from my private office correspondence and from representations that have been made to me that some voluntary organisations are worried about how they will fit into the new scheme of things. That is entirely understandable. The Training Commission and Employment Ministers do their best to resolve such problems.

Some 300,000 places will have to be contracted for under the new programme. About 270,000 contracts have been sent or are in the final stages. I do not underestimate the difficulties that may have been experienced in some areas. Broadly speaking, the community programme is working. Many community programme providers throughout the country have found that they can bring themselves within the new programme. About 270,000 of the 300,000 places are already contracted for.

The hon. Gentleman is also concerned about the amount of time that will be spent on the new programme. He made the point that it will be six months on this programme, whereas it was 12 months on the community programme. I appreciate that the constraints of time apply just as much to the hon. Gentleman as they do to me and that in short debates we all to some extent talk in shorthand. We suspect that six months will be the norm, but if a trainee needs more than six months for his particular circumstances the programme can be for up to a year. Unlike the community programme, the idea is that it will be full-time training. The possibility of full-time training for 12 months, if that is needed, is a better bet than any form of community programme that would involve merely part-time training. When the hon. Gentleman thinks about it, as I know he will in the light of our exchanges, I think he will recognise that that fact needs to be borne in mind.

The hon. Gentleman is also concerned about the funding of the programme. He takes particular exception to the concept of benefit-plus. Although the Government have emphasised the advantages of a training programme, we have to bear in mind that it was designed not by the Government but by the Manpower Services Commission, which is now the Training Commission. It put unanimous recommendations to the Government about the way in which it wanted the scheme to be set up. The recommendations included the funding arrangements and the concept of benefit plus.

I could enliven the debate massively by telling the House about some MSC representations that were not absolutely what we wanted to hear. However, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Employment greatly valued the fact that the training commissioners, including the three trade union commissioners, one of whom was Mr. Todd, who is noted for his recent job initiative in Dundee, were all in favour of the scheme. The fact that this was to be a training allowance rather than a rate for the job was put to us, and we accepted the recommendation.

Bearing in mind the criticism that has been levelled against benefit-plus, it is interesting to see who has criticised it. One has to bear in mind the sweet words of the hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short) about the training programme. She is the Labour party's Front Bench spokesman on these matters. The hon. Lady has been eloquent and vocal about benefit-plus, yet when she was a director of Youth Aid in 1982 she referred to the future of the community enterprise programme, the forerunner of the community programme, and said:

"Consideration should also be given to the possibility of payment on CEP calculated on a 'Benefit plus' basis."

I agree, and that is what we are doing. It is a little sad that, having accepted the MSC's recommendations to that effect, and having done what the hon. Member for Ladywood wanted, we are being criticised for it.

The hon. Gentleman has done the House a service by questioning the voluntary nature of the scheme, if only to give me the chance for the umpteenth time to try to shoot down that idea. There is no question of this being other than a voluntary scheme. I put it as low as that to pander to every evil thought that the hon. Gentleman has ever harboured towards the Conservative party. To try to force people into training would not work. The programme will succeed only if the long-term unemployed regard it as an effective mechanism for getting them back into the main stream of British working life so that they can enjoy some of the benefits that the rest of us have enjoyed in recent years. That is what the programme is about. If it succeeds in that way, who needs to make it compulsory? Even if it does not succeed, the idea that we can forcibly train people will not work.

From our exchanges on the Employment Bill, I suspect that the hon. Gentleman is not always absolutely persuaded by everything that I say. I should like to think that he does not doubt my motives but he may think that I am a trifle naive. Mr. Norman Willis, the general secretary of the TUC, is not naive, nor is he an uncritical supporter of Her Majesty's Government. Two weeks ago the *Financial Times* said that Mr. Willis had reaffirmed his conditional support for the Government's employment training programme. He said:

"There is no viable alternative."

In *The Times* of the same day, Mr. Willis was quoted as saying that should the programme fail, the whole trades union movement would deserve condemnation as well. Mr. Willis has got it right. He has given the programme his conditional support. He believes that it may yet be a mechanism that can help the long-term unemployed back to work. All that I would say to the hon. Gentleman is, if it is good enough for Mr. Willis to give it his conditional support, I am sure that it will satisfy the hon. Gentleman as well.

I shall respond to any letters that the hon. Gentleman may care to write about specific points.

Barn Elms Reservoir

2 pm

Mr. Jeremy Hanley (Richmond and Barnes): Almost everyone in London, and many beyond, know that as one crosses the river Thames from Hammersmith into Barnes there is a complete change of scenery, with wider tree-lined avenues leading to the open spaces of Barnes common and, further on, to Richmond park and Kew gardens. Only seven miles from Westminster, Barnes richly provides proof that Richmond upon Thames deserves to be known as the borough where the countryside comes to town. It is the balance of our love and respect for the environment, for green open spaces and for wildlife that makes Richmond and Barnes such a joy both to live in and to visit.

Barnes itself still possesses a village atmosphere in an ever more frenetic world. Although blighted by the incessant misery of aircraft noise, few residents know of a more pleasant urban environment. We fiercely hold on to our metropolitan open land and, in spite of high density housing, relief is at hand through the natural environment, with the river Thames on two sides, Barnes common in the south and Barn Elms reservoirs to the east. It is Barn Elms reservoirs about which I wish to speak, not only as the Member of Parliament for Richmond and Barnes but as a vice-president of the London Wildlife Trust.

It is a great delight to have as the Minister responding to the debate my hon. Friend the Member for Surrey, South-West (Mrs. Bottomley), who understands and appreciates the special nature of Richmond. I warmly thank her for being here today and congratulate her on her recent appointment. I apologise to her for her baptism of fire and having to answer two Adjournment debates in her first few days as Minister, particularly as her first debate was at 4 o'clock this morning. In spite of it, she is looking lovely.

Barn Elms comprises nearly 70 acres of reservoir, split into four almost equal quarters, and approximately 80 acres of surrounding land, including filter beds, allotments and recreational open land. It was declared a site of special scientific interest in June 1975 as it was decided by the Nature Conservancy Council to be one of the most important wintering sites in the London area for tufted duck, smew, pochard and other species. Between 1986 and 1987, the London Natural History Society recorded no fewer than 35 different species of bird in the area putting it sixth in greater London or 11th in the whole London Natural History Society recording area. In records taken since 1947-48, counts of national significance have also been recorded for gadwall and shovellers—the latter have greatly increased in numbers recently—in addition to pochard and tufted duck. It is a site that is loved by local residents and bird watchers alike. It would be a tragedy if it were to be filled in, bulldozed and turned into a housing estate of some 6,000 houses, totally changing the nature of Barnes. A site of major natural historic importance would be lost.

How does that fear come about? At present the site is controlled by Thames water authority, which has plans to terminate its interests at Barn Elms on the completion of the London ring main. As with any other public body, it has a duty to maximise its assets. A large site close to the centre of London must be a tempting prize. It would be harder, although admittedly not impossible, to achieve if that beautiful area retained its SSSI status. But that seems to be in danger as the number of birds seems to have fallen in recent years.

What are the reasons for the recent reductions in bird numbers? There are possibly four, but none is conclusive. It has been suggested that Thames Water, in managing the reservoirs, has introduced chlorinated water which has changed the birds' food source. That might have helped to accelerate a decline, but while the addition of such water has been recent, there is no proof that the decline in bird numbers corresponds with the first such introduction.

The second reason is possibly the activity of fishing in the immediate area. But fishing takes place during the summer months mainly when the ducks are more likely to be absent, and peak numbers of birds occur during winter months when it is the close season for fishing. It could well be, however, that the artificially introduced fish are competing with the birds for the same food source. Therefore, it is not conclusive that fishing is causing a deterioration in the number of birds, but there may be some related reasons which contribute to the reduction.

Another reason is that the River Thames once possessed rich food resources, but has become, as we all know and welcome, much cleaner. That can be shown by the appearance of salmon as high as Teddington in recent years. All Members of Parliament know that the Thames is much cleaner, but perhaps it is not generally known that the summer recess, which we shall enjoy in a few minutes' time, started because the river was so polluted and smelly that Members of Parliament could not stay here through the warmer months, so Parliament went into recess until the cold months arrived in the middle of October. The river is now clean and there is no smell, but we are fiercely proud of our tradition of a 10-week holiday. While the river is cleaner, food stocks will have declined and that could be a reason for the lack of numbers.

My conclusion is that none of those factors is likely to be of itself a conclusive reason for a permanent decline in bird stocks. Therefore, the numbers are as likely to be cyclical and are in any event only just below those used by the Nature Conservancy Council for judging SSSI status.

The current criteria for creating an SSSI in areas of water such as this are not officially published, but are generally known as threefold. First, the site must be of national or international importance, with its population of one or more bird species breeding, malting or wintering. Secondly, the site must have recent records of at least 70 breeding, 90 wintering or 150 passage species of birds. Thirdly, the site must have a total of more than 10,000 waterfowl, not including coots and grebes, regardless of the species regularly present. Clearly it is difficult for any urban site to qualify, but it is specifically because this is an urban site that the criteria should be widened.

At the third meeting of the RAMSAR convention, to which the United Kingdom is a signatory, the proposal for an addition to the criteria for identifying wetlands of international importance was made. The international criteria are published and there are three. A wetland should be considered internationally important if, first, it regularly supports 20,000 waterfowl; secondly, it regularly supports substantial numbers of individuals from particular groups of waterfowl, indicative of wetland values, productivity or diversity; and, thirdly, where data on populations are available, it regularly supports 1 per cent. of the individuals in a population of one species or sub-species of waterfowl.

[Mr. Jeremy Hanley]

Again, Barn Elms could not possibly qualify, certainly on the first or third of those international criteria, although it may do so on the second. The proposal was serious and far more interesting. It was:

"A Wetland should be considered internationally important if it is both a good example of the type and characteristic of its region and, either, offers special opportunities for promoting research, understanding and appreciation of Wetlands, open to people of several countries, or, is the source of past environmental or archeological information of international significance."

As it is in the centre of London, the site offers unique opportunities to promote research, understanding and appreciation of those lovely birds. The site is in the middle of the largest area of population in the country and is the closest to the biggest international airport in the world. It is precisely because it is unique in being in London that the Wildfowl Trust in Slimbridge has shown a great interest in the site.

Just six weeks ago, the Wildfowl Trust stated that it was examining the possibility of establishing a Wildfowl Trust site near London and, on hearing that the Thames water authority had plans to terminate its interest at Barn Elms, wondered if it could become involved in the development plans there. Of course, matters are at an early stage, but surely, if the Wildfowl Trust is showing an interest, it must be at least an important site. The fact that the trust considered opening a second branch shows that the site has crucial importance to those who know and understand ducks and birds generally.

I believe that the trust's view is proof positive that SSSI status should be retained and that the reservoirs should not be compared to other reservoirs outside London but should hold unique importance in their own right. There is little doubt that the local authority, under any political party that wanted to retain control, would refuse planning permission for residential or commercial use, not only because it would change the nature of Barnes entirely and would cause massive transport and environmental difficulties, but because the people of Richmond believe that this facility is what is wanted and needed desperately as an island in the middle of urban sprawl.

To have a Slimbridge in central London would not only introduce thousands of tourists to the work and wonders of the Wildfowl Trust, but would also be of tremendous educational benefit to children and adults alike. Tourists coming into London might be introduced to the Wildfowl Trust and then travel westward to Gloucestershire to see the original Slimbridge. It would therefore be an introduction of international significance.

To lose the site as an SSI would be not only an uncivilised act of material vandalism but a disaster to the local environment. I ask my hon. Friend the Minister to consider what Barnes would be if a large housing estate were built on the site at Barn Elms. The only exit from Barnes to the north is Hammersmith bridge, which has a severely restricted weight limit. A new crossing over the Thames would be needed—perhaps two new crossings. Already one has to wait up to half an hour to cross Hammersmith bridge on an ordinary morning. If the population of Barnes were doubled, the environmental considerations would be grotesque.

I fully recognise that removing SSSI status does not automatically mean that development will occur, but it would be one step on the road to development. To build a housing estate on the site would not, as some might say, be of benefit to those who cannot afford houses in the area. Houses built there would be extremely desirable and extremely expensive because of their riverside site, so I do not believe that development would benefit the local people or anybody other than those who can already afford expensive houses in the capital.

To summarise, we in Richmond believe that the criteria for judging SSSI status should be refined to take into account both the numbers and rarity of the birds recorded, which would better reflect the sites. The London ecology unit, under Dr. Dave Dawson and his excellent team, further believes that the geographical position of the site should be a criterion for its selection as an SSSI to ensure that no large areas of the country are left with their best sites unrecognised. Dr. Dawson also believes that Barn Elms reservoirs have not been evaluated correctly according to the Nature Conservancy Council's own published criteria because they may form one part of a series of wetlands, each part of which is required to conserve nationally important bird populations, and because an inappropriate area of search may have been employed when selecting London SSSIs for bird populations. Fluctuations in the number of birds on the reservoirs suggest that it would be prudent to allow a margin for future changes as none of the reasons for decline seems permanent.

When an SSSI is threatened with denotification, a formal consultation procedure with the local planning authority and certain other interests such as landowners provides an opportunity for any representations or objections to be made in writing to the Nature Conservancy Council within a period of not less than three months. These are then considered by the NCC in deciding whether to withdraw the proposal. I hope that the *Official Report* of this debate will be regarded as a written representation and a contribution towards the debate on whether Barn Elms should retain SSSI status. On environmental, conservational, educational, recreational, national and international grounds, I beg that Barn Elms should retain its designation as a site of special scientific interest.

2.16 pm

The Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mrs. Virginia Bottomley): First, I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Richmond and Barnes (Mr. Hanley) for his kind words about my new appointment. As he rightly said, I last spoke from the Dispatch Box at about 4.50 this morning, although in parliamentary terms that was yesterday.

I congratulate my hon. Friend on the clear, articulate and forceful way in which he has represented the interests of his constituents. As he well knows, I have personal knowledge of the area and am well aware of the concerns of people in the Hammersmith bridge area about their environment. My hon. Friend referred to the fear that if the necessary steps are not taken the area may end up being developed. I assure him that that is a very premature fear at this stage, although it is entirely understandable and right that people living in or near areas of wildlife interest wish those areas to be properly protected and looked after. That is especially true in urban areas, where opportunities to see and enjoy wildlife are greatly valued.

It is important to consider the particular site in the wider context of the overall objectives and arrangements for the SSSI system. My hon. Friend has presented many of the details very thoroughly, but I hope that he will bear with me if I go over some of the points. My hon. Friend also presented some proposals of his own as to the way in which the arrangements could be modified. I shall certainly study all those points in great detail and pass them on to the relevant authorities. My hon. Friend will appreciate, however, that there is no real prospect of such modifications being introduced in time to alter the situtation with regard to Barn Elms.

I pay tribute to the Nature Conservancy Council for its work in advising the Government on nature conservation in Great Britain which is widely respected. This is a growing area of public interest and concern. In a fast-moving world with more development and a greater threat to the environment, whether from excessive agricultural, urban or industrial development, all of us inevitably appreciate sites of special scientific interest and ways of protecting the natural heritage which is one of our richest and most diverse natural resources. In view of my new responsibilities, it is an honour and a privilege to have a particular interest in this area, which has been a prime concern of mine for many years.

Although SSSIs have existed since the enactment of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, it was the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981—the cornerstone of our conservation policies and a great milestone in the development of care for our environment —that provided for the establishment of a new type of site of special scientific interest. The 1981 Act established a system of comprehensive protection for SSSIs against specific activities that the Nature Conservancy Council considered would be harmful for the conservation interests of the area. The NCC is required to notify owners and occupants of any land that it considers to be of special interest because of its flora, fauna or special features, and to advise owners or occupants of any potentially damaging operations, which are then subject to certain restrictions.

The NCC has had to renotify about 4,000 old-style SSSIs. This has involved a detailed review and reassessment of the scientific interest of all these sites in the light of changes that have occurred since they became SSSIs. Some, inevitably, are now less significant, while others have assumed a greater importance because of the inevitable movements and changes in the pattern of our native wildlife.

Before commenting in more detail on the background to the Barn Elms site, I should explain that it is the prerogative of the NCC to decide on the basis of scientific facts whether a particular site merits SSSI status. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State may make representations to the NCC on particular sites if he considers it appropriate to do so. I can assure my hon. Friend that we have examined most carefully the background to the proposed denotification of the Barn Elms reservoir. I regret to say that we can find no reason to question the NCC's view in this instance.

The Barn Elms reservoir was originally notified as an SSSI in 1975. At that time, it was the most important wintering site in the London area for waterfowl, principally tufted duck and pochard. My hon. Friend has given an admirable description of the various forms of wildlife to be found there. In addition, it was a large winter gull roost.

When the scientific interest of the site was reassessed following the enactment of the 1981 Act, the NCC concluded that, for several reasons, there had been movements of waterfowl to other similar habitats in the area. Again, my hon. Friend gave a clear analysis of some of the reasons that were thought to be responsible for the movement of waterfowl. These included the loss of feeding grounds on the River Thames and changes in the management of the reservoir. The fact remains that the populations of these species has declined sharply since the site was first notified.

The NCC's decision to denotify the site was influenced also by the existence within the greater London area of a further 12 reservoirs supporting larger and more significant waterfowl populations than the Barn Elms site. In fact, the site is now ranked 13th out of 16 sites in the greater London area for its waterfowl population. The range and diversity of waterfowl species supported by reservoir sites in the London area would not be affected by the denotification of Barn Elms.

There should be no automatic assumption that denotification of the site will lead to a decline in its continuing wildlife interest, let alone the premature fears to which I have already referred that development might inevitably take place there. I understand, contrary to my hon. Friend, that the Thames water authority, which currently owns the reservoir, has no present plans to dispose of it. Even if it should decide subsequently to do so, I can reassure my hon. Friend that a change of ownership will not necessarily threaten the wildlife interest. The existing designation of the reservoir as metropolitan open land will help to ensure that the interest is maintained.

There are alternative ways to protect the site, including a number of steps that could be taken by the local authority, which I have considered in some detail. The local authority could follow the example of many other sites throughout the country that have been designated as local nature reserves which are owned or leased and managed and protected by the local authority or by local conservation groups. I know my hon. Friend's constituency quite well and I can imagine that a great deal of local resourcefulness and initiative would be displayed in such a situation.

If the water authority decides that Barn Elms reservoir is no longer required for operational purposes, it could still be managed positively for wildlife benefit by the local authority or a conservation group. The NCC is well able to assist with such arrangements as a result of its expertise and professionalism.

Alternatively, the site could become a reservoir under the control of a national conservation body such as the Wildfowl Trust. My hon. Friend has mentioned that prospect and I share his opinion that the location of Barn Elms makes that a promising idea. I understand that the trust has plans to establish a reserve in the greater London area and has looked at a number of possible sites, one of which is Barn Elms reservoir. I believe that the trust expects to make its final selection towards the end of the year.

Whatever the future ownership of the site, any proposals for a change in its current use would have to be considered in accordance with the guidance given in circular 27/87 entitled "Nature Conservation". That reinforces the advice given to local authorities that they should take full account of the needs of nature

[Mrs. Virginia Bottomley]

conservation not only in determining individual planning applications but in formulating general planning policies. An awareness of conservation should be built into the whole range of their activities affecting the use of land.

I hope that I have been able to reassure my hon. Friend that, even if the site should eventually be de-notified as an SSSI, there are a number of other ways of protecting its wildlife interest.

There is no doubt that the Government have demonstrated their commitment to conservation and wildlife in a number of demonstrable ways. Our record is a good one. We have, for example, increased the resources made available to the Nature Conservancy Council by some 170 per cent. in real terms since 1979—it has increased from £7·9 million to £38·95 million in the current year.

Our approach to conservation is based on the voluntary principle enshrined in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. We believe that effective conservation can be achieved only with public consent, co-operation and support, and it is clearly most important that public confidence in the system should be maintained. That requires that NCC decisions on SSSI notifications should be seen to be based on an objective, dispassionate assessment of the scientific evidence in each case. In the Barn Elms case, that assessment led the NCC to the conclusion that the site was not, unfortunately, a sufficiently good, representative or unusual example of its type to merit SSSI status.

Having carefully considered the background to the case, I am satisfied, in the light of the NCC's assessment of the decline in the wildlife interest of the site, that the NCC was right to implement the de-notification procedures.

I cannot give any guarantees as to the future of the site, but a number of possible options may be followed. I have asked the NCC to discuss those possibilities with my hon. Friend, Thames water and the local authority in more detail. I hope that my hon. Friend will follow up that invitation.

The NCC will, of course, consider any representations or objections received before deciding whether the de-notification of Barn Elms should be confirmed. They have already received a number of such objections which will be rigorously considered by the NCC governing council after the deadline of 9 October. I understand that they expect to announce their final decision towards the end of the year.

I congratulate my hon. Friend on raising a matter of understandable concern in his constituency. I hope that the debate has served to allay the fears of his constituents about the future, to clarify the background to the question, and to make some helpful suggestions to be followed up. His constituents can be assured that as long as he is their Member of Parliament they will not want for a more able advocate of their interests.

It being half past Two o'clock, the motion for the Adjournment of the House lapsed, without Question put.

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Dorrell.]*

Mr. Frank Cook (Stockton, North): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. At about 12 minutes past 11 this morning, I took possession of a document which gives graphic illustration of very serious defects now present in the No. 1 reactor at Trawsfynydd, in north Wales. I considered it so serious that I contacted my hon. Friend the Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott) and engaged the services of an independent engineering consultant who specialises in these matters. The defects relate to cracked welds, cracked nuts and sections of degraded metal that have fallen into the reactor and have not been removed. I shall be brief——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. What is the point of order for me?

Mr. Cook: As this is a very serious matter with grave potential consequences for Trawsfynydd, and as there are similar reactors at Bradwell, Hinkley, Dungeness, Sizewell and Hunterston the same defects could be present in those reactors. My point of order is this: in view of the fact that some Government Department must have knowledge of this, have you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, had a request for a statement to be made on the matter before we go into recess for 12 weeks?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I can assure the hon. Gentleman that I have had no request from anyone to make a statement.

Mr. Cook: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Because of the special circumstances of today —we go into recess until 19 October—do you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have any advice that might enable me to take this matter further?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I can only suggest that the hon. Gentleman pursues the matter directly with the Government Department concerned. There is nothing that I can do about the matter this afternoon, nor have I any responsibility for it.

London Weighting

2.32 pm

Mr. Jacques Arnold (Gravesham): I should like to raise a subject of considerable interest to my constituents, the effect of London weighting on the public services in the adjacent areas. I am becoming increasingly concerned at the blight effect of London weighting on those areas which fall just outside the limits of London weighting.

My borough of Gravesham, in the expensive commuter belt of the south-east, is located at one remove from outer London from which it is separated by the borough of Dartford. Although there are many outstanding aspects which make Gravesham an exceptional place in which to live in terms of housing costs, and the price of food and other necessities, it has little to distinguish it from Dartford or the outer London borough of Bexley. Yet those who work in the public services in my borough are paid less than their opposite numbers in Dartford or Bexley, and indeed, get equal pay with those working in the low-cost living areas of the north. That is brought about by the bewildering hotchpotch of London allowances and assorted fringe allowances paid by the different services locally on top of national pay scales.

Someone working for the NHS in the Dartford and Gravesham district would get a fringe allowance of £149 per annum, a figure established by the Whitley council in 1984 and frozen since. Someone working in the Bexley borough of the DHA would get £718. On the other hand, teachers in the same district find that they sort the sheep from the goats. Teachers a couple of miles away in Swanscombe or Southfleet get a fringe allowance of £333 per annum, but their colleagues in Gravesend or Northfleet get nothing.

A fireman or local government worker will receive no extra allowance for working in Gravesham. An inner-fringe allowance is given if one works in Dartford. Even more odd, a fireman at the Thameside station, which covers large areas of Dartford, receives no extra allowance because the station is located in Northfleet.

Gravesend is located 24 miles from Westminster, yet staff are paid no extra allowance. Thurrock lies immediately across the River Thames, stretching downstream from Gravesend. An allowance is given in Thurrock because local government boundaries stretch greater London further out into Essex than into Kent.

This is a farcical state of affairs. This bureaucrats' beanfeast is not only having a devastating effect on valued public service employees in Gravesham but, even worse, is creating scores of unfilled posts for teachers, nurses and other vital people.

This year, north-west Kent has had 86 teaching vacancies. Despite vigorous advertising, 23 of the posts were still unfilled last week. Even headships of schools have proved difficult to fill, and the Gravesham association of head teachers puts that down to the lack of adequate financial incentives to work in the area.

Locally, the Health Service illustrates the problem even more graphically. Frequently candidates for jobs opt out and go to London in search of high allowances, and others leave their jobs. Out of a group of 12 Irish nursing staff recruited recently, 10 have left for employment with London health authorities. In the local health district, an average of 30 nurses per year from the mental illness unit are lost, largely to Bexley health authority.

To overcome those problems, the public authorities are resorting to complication and subterfuge. They are introducing a proliferation of restructured salary scales, merit payments and improved benefit packages, with wider distribution of company cars, private medical insurance and other sweeteners. That is largely futile when competing with private-sector solutions, notably bank staffs' London allowance of £3,000 per annum.

Is it not time that we got rid of this bureaucratic tangle in the public services and took an axe to national pay bargaining? Government and local government units should be funded to be able to do the job and in the light of local personnel and other costs of the area. The unit should shop for staff, goods and services at the local going rate for their specialisation. This would get rid of the artificial scarcities that create service backlogs and Health Service waiting lists.

If the Government find that approach too radical or, at least, premature, urgent steps should nevertheless be taken to redress the current acute problem. I ask my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Employment to get together with Whitley council, LACSAB and other employer bodies to find a short-term remedy. This should be the immediate extension of outer-London allowances for public services to the borough of Gravesham. Without doubt the care of our patients, schoolchildren and people demands nothing less.

2.38 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. Patrick Nicholls): I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Gravesham (Mr. Arnold) for giving us an opportunity to consider the problems caused by the effect of London weighting. It will not come as a surprise to my hon. Friend that I do not have a remedy to all these ills carefully tucked up my sleeve. My hon. Friend has given me a further opportunity to give the Government's attitude, which to a great extent will reinforce some of the points that my hon. Friend made.

London weighting is a topical and important feature of the labour market. As my hon. Friend implies, the subject goes wider than London and brings into focus labour market pressures throughout the south-east. At present, those pressures are competitive and symptomatic of our thriving economy. Despite an increase in the civilian work force, unemployment in the south-east has fallen from 8·5 per cent. in 1986 to its present level of 5·6 per cent., and it is continuing to decrease. Unfilled vacancies in the region have risen by about 30 per cent. over the past two years.

We are debating the problem of success and how to manage that success effectively.

I am aware that the boundaries drawn by employers to define their London weighting zones vary widely. That will inevitably cause anomalies. However, it would be wrong to set down standard geographical definitions which should be used throughout the public services. These must be determined by individual employing authorities according to their own assessment of labour supply and demand in the particular labour markets in which they operate.

Let me stress at the outset that all pay and conditions of employment, including London weighting or any other allowance, and the areas in which those allowances are paid, are a matter for employers and employees, or their representatives, to determine. The Government do not intervene and nor should they. It is only the parties to

[Mr. Patrick Nicholls]

agreements who can decide what they can afford, and need, in order to recruit and retrain staff with the right skills and experience in the areas concerned.

The role of the Government is to establish a sound economic framework within which business can flourish and to remove barriers that stand in the way of competition and labour market freedom.

It is precisely for that reason that the Government abolished the former London weighting indices, which were produced by my Department until 1982. Those indices annually updated the inner London allowance of £400 and the outer London allowance of £200 recommended by the Pay Board in 1974.

The whole concept underlying that formula was one of cost compensation. Its function was to establish and maintain statistical information on the additional cost of travel, housing, wear and tear and so on, incurred by staff working in London compared with the rest of the United Kingdom and therefore to suggest the level of London weighting which it would be appropriate to pay each year.

It also defined inner London as the area within a four-mile radius of Charing Cross and outer London as the remainder of the then Greater London council area. The indices were widely followed by employers in both the public and private sectors, generally with little regard to their own particular needs or circumstances.

The formula also embedded the concept of London weighting as a uniform allowance payable at the same level to all staff from the most junior to the most senior and as a separate and distinct element in their pay packet.

In announcing the discontinuation of the London weighting indices in October 1982 my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit), then the Secretary of State for Employment, said:

"London differentials are a matter for employers and employees to determine according to the circumstances of each firm or industry. But, in the Government's view, the indices encourage negotiators to place too much emphasis on the need to compensate employees for the additional costs of working in London and too little on the need to set rates of pay which the employer can afford, and which are sufficient to recruit, retain and motivate employees in London".—[*Official Report*, 19 October 1982; Vol. 29, c. *100*.]

Since that announcement, employers have increasingly moved away from determining London weighting by reference to cost compensation alone. Allowances are being set more and more in line with the imperatives of the labour market and the needs of the business. There is now considerably more diversity both in the level of allowances and the zones they cover.

My hon. Friend the Member for Gravesham referred to the clearing banks and building societies, which have increased their inner London weighting to £3,000 per annum and introduced new geographical allowances of £750 throughout the whole of "Roselands"—the so-called "Rest of South-East".

That has clearly intensified pressure on other employers competing in those labour markets, in London and adjacent areas, and not least on the public services. That approach has not been widely emulated for other groups.

I will shortly say more about ways in which the public sector is tackling those problems. First, the debate gives me a chance to say why I believe that employers should increasingly question the nature and purpose of London weighting in its present form.

As I said earlier, we are dealing with a problem which now goes well beyond London itself. Improved communications—for example, with the M25 and the electrification of railway lines into East Anglia—have greatly improved access to the capital.

Secondly, the problems of recruiting and retaining staff are not only about money. It is right of course that relative pay levels should reward, among other things, the skills which employers need to compete efficiently. Otherwise, individuals would have no incentive to acquire the right skills, and firms would have no incentive to make a cost-effective training investment. An ever-increasing spiral in the level of London weighting payments to compete for a diminishing supply of Labour with the right skills and experience would, in the end, be self-defeating.

I am not convinced—and nor is the Confederation of British Industry—that employers have yet understood that those policies offer a more permanent and cost-effective approach to meeting skill demands over the medium term.

The massive demographic changes to which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Employment has drawn wide public attention recently will also affect London and the south-east as much as other parts of the country. Meanwhile, the Government are making a huge investment in training through the existing YTS scheme and the new employment training programme. Our spending on training is up from £458 million in 1979 to a planned £3 billion in 1989-90. But employers themselves will need to look equally radically at their own approach to recruitment and to their policies for training and retraining.

Finally, as far as pay is concerned, the traditional nature of London weighting payments has been very broad brush. The same level of allowance is typically paid to all workers in the relevant zone, irrespective of their seniority, qualifications or experience. A newly recruited clerk straight from school usually receives the same allowance as an experienced senior manager. This can be costly and ineffective. Labour shortages are often confined to particular occupations or to particular areas.

I said earlier that the Government's role was to establish the conditions to enable businesses to compete effectively. I believe that the Government can also set an example as an employer. In the Civil Service we are making pay more responsive to labour market needs by targeting resources at specific problems. Additionally, along with this year's London weighting settlement, the Government and the unions have agreed to consider the whole question of the future of London weighting payments.

Finally, we have introduced new long-term pay arrangements for about a third of civil servants which incorporate a greater degree of flexibility enabling pay to vary according to both performance and local labour market conditions. Similar arrangements are being discussed with the unions representing most of the remaining Civil Service grades. For example, I know that some local authority employers in the south-east have responded to market pressures in a variety of ways including incentive recruitment packages targeted at particular occupations, by restructuring jobs and regrading posts, and by job share and other schemes to attract back experienced staff. Training and retraining is also playing an important part in their approach.

Those are all examples of the way in which the public services are responding selectively and flexibly to the

problems of localised recruitment and retention difficulties instead of by increasing or spreading existing London allowances indiscriminately. I think that their approach is a responsible and effective answer to current labour market constraints. As to the longer term, I believe that the way forward is for employers and employees in all parts of the economy increasingly to develop payment systems that are generally more flexible and better attuned both to performance and market conditions. In that way, pay can respond more individually and appropriately to the imperatives of local labour markets, be they in London, Liverpool, Llandudno, or, indeed, in my hon. Friend's constituency of Gravesham. The present concept of London weighting might well then become irrelevant.

I came to the House today with no easy solutions. I hope that I have given my hon. Friend some idea of where I believe the argument will go. I also note from our previous dealings on other matters that were of concern to my hon. Friend that if this is the first time that he has introduced this concern to me, I have every reason to suspect that it will not be the last.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at thirteen minutes to Three o'clock, till Wednesday 19 October, pursuant to the Resolution of the House [28 July].

House of Commons

Wednesday 19 October 1988

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Death of a Member

Mr. Speaker: I regret to have to inform the House of the death of Sir John Alec Biggs-Davison, Knight, Member for Epping Forest, and I desire on behalf of the House to express our sense of the loss we have sustained and our sympathy with the relatives of the hon. Member.

Imprisonment of a Member

Mr. Speaker: I have to inform the House that I have received a letter from the resident magistrate of the Belfast petty sessions informing me that Mr. Peter Robinson, the hon. Member for Belfast, East, was sentenced to a period of imprisonment of seven days.

I shall cause the text of the letter to be published in the Votes and Proceedings and in the *Official Report*.

Following is the letter:

Magistrates' Courts,
The Courthouse,
Chichester Street,
Belfast BT1 3JB.
24th August 1988.

Dear Mr. Speaker,

Peter David Robinson, Member of Parliament for Belfast East, was convicted by me at Belfast Petty Sessions on 9th February 1988 of taking part in a public procession, contrary to Article 3 of the Public Order (Northern Ireland) Order 1987 and fined £280·00.

Upon the hearing of an appeal the County Court for the division of Belfast reduced the fine to £50·00 payable in 28 days. As the fine has not been paid Mr. Robinson was today committed to prison for a period of 7 days.

Yours faithfully,
T. J. Travers.
Resident Magistrate.

Vice-Regal Chair (Australia)

Mr. Speaker: I have a short statement to make. On 18 January this year the House approved a motion relating to the presentation, on behalf of both Houses of Parliament, of a Vice-Regal Chair to the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia. The gift was to mark this year's bicentenary of the first European settlement of Australia and the opening of the new Parliament House in Canberra.

I should inform the House that, at the invitation of the President of the Australian Senate and the Speaker of the Australian House of Representatives, and in company with many other Presiding Officers from around the world, I attended the first sitting of the Australian Parliament in the new Parliament House on 22 August. The Vice-Regal Chair was in place for that occasion; and each House of the Australian Parliament adopted a resolution which, among other things, expressed

"thanks and appreciation to the Parliaments, Governments and peoples of those countries, states and territories and to those organisations which have so graciously presented gifts to Australia's new Parliament House."

NEW WRIT

For Glasgow, Govan, in the room of the right hon. Bruce Millan. (Chiltern Hundreds).—*[Mr. Foster.]*

PRIVATE BUSINESS

LONDON DOCKLANDS RAILWAY (BECKTON) BILL
Read the Third time, and passed.

LONDON LOCAL AUTHORITIES BILL *[Lords]*
Order for Second Reading read.
To be read a Second time tomorrow.

Oral Answers to Questions

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Bophuthatswana

1. **Mr. Knowles:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a further statement on Her Majesty's Government's policy towards recognition of Bophuthatswana.

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mrs. Lynda Chalker): The creation of Bophuthatswana by the South African Government was a key element in the policy of separate development, to which we are wholly opposed. In common with all other states, except South Africa, we do not recognise Bophuthatswana as independent.

Mr. Knowles: I thank my right hon. Friend for her reply, but may I remind her of her comments earlier this year after the abortive coup in Bophuthatswana: that the intervention of South African forces proved that Bophuthatswana was not independent? In the light of recent events in Lesotho, is she reconsidering those earlier remarks or are the Government reconsidering their policy towards Lesotho?

Mrs. Chalker: I am well aware that the intervention by the South African Government in Bophuthatswana, which is part of the Republic of South Africa, concerned many hon. Members. It is true that Bophuthatswana and Lesotho depend in varying degrees on the South African economy, but Lesotho was never part of the South African union. Unlike Lesotho, Bophuthatswana and the other independent homelands—so called—are effectively dependent on South Africa in foreign policy. They also receive loans and grants from the South African Government, so their position is not the same.

Mr. Beggs: Is there not a democratically elected Government in Bophuthatswana, a multi-cultural society with a Christian ethos and a free enterprise economy? Does the Minister accept that it is striving to be completely

free financially from South Africa? What further evidence is required by Her Majesty's Government to grant recognition to Bophuthatswana?

Mrs. Chalker: There would be consideration of such a course only if the writ of the Republic of South Africa did not run in Bophuthatswana. It does, and that country is recognised only by the Republic of South Africa. I cannot see, as I know Her Majesty's ambassador to Pretoria told the hon. Gentleman when he met him on 4 October, that such a situation is ever likely to pertain.

Mr. Gardiner: Despite my right hon. Friend's answer, is it not essential that the staff of the British embassy in the Republic know what is going on in Bophuthatswana and that they should know the political views of its populace? To that end, will my right hon. Friend tell us how often members of our overseas staff visit Bophuthatswana, and to what kind of persons they talk?

Mrs. Chalker: My hon. Friend knows already that everybody in the embassy in South Africa charged with knowing the political circumstances of the whole of the Republic of South Africa visits different parts of that country, which includes Bophuthatswana. Sometimes members of staff may go more frequently than others to forward projects such as those that were described to a number of colleagues when they visited South Africa and Bophuthatswana in October this year. I know that in recent months, because of the number of projects coming forward—of which we hope there will be more—in Kuruman and other places, there have been slightly more visits, but staff go whenever they need, as well as on a regular basis.

Transylvania

2. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has on tensions between Hungary and Romania; and what representations he has made about the proposed systemisation of villages in Transylvania.

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. William Waldegrave): Tension between Romania and Hungary over the status of Transylvania has been exacerbated by Romania's policy of forced relocation of rural communities. My right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary has written to his Romanian counterpart to warn against human rights violations and damage to Europe's common cultural heritage.

Mr. Flynn I congratulate the Minister on his first appearance at the Dispatch Box in his present role. I hope that in this regard, as in many others, there will be common ground between both sides of the House.

Is not the Foreign Secretary's letter a first step in denouncing the barbarism of the planned demolition of 8,000 ancient villages in Romania and the erasure of 1,000 years of history? Will the Minister note the anger and despair felt by the victims of systemisation, one of whom has written to me saying that they must remain silent, and that they feel impotent in the face of this threat? Is this not a first step, and must we not now continue to use our voice? We must not remain silent. We must protest powerfully and repeatedly against the planned demolition, which will be a community and linguistic pogrom and an act of architectural vandalism and cultural genocide against communities there.

Mr. Waldegrave: I am happy to agree with the hon. Gentleman and to say that this issue unites not only Members on both sides of the House, but many people on both sides of the iron curtain. I know that the hon. Gentleman appeared on Hungarian television and discussed this matter. It is an entirely legitimate use of the power of the House to protest and to make the kind of remark that the hon. Gentleman has made, because there is some chance that the people who are running Romania may listen. We should redouble our efforts, as the European Community and many individual countries have done, to emphasise our disgust at what is going on.

Mr. Cyril D. Townsend: Is not what is going on in Transylvania outrageous in terms of both human life and European culture? Will my hon. Friend do all that he can to gather the strength of the European Community so that we can speak with a strong voice and monitor the position closely?

Mr. Waldegrave: I shall certainly do what my hon. Friend urges me to do. The Twelve made a protest to the Romanian Government on 7 September. Like the hon. Member for Newport, West (Mr. Flynn), I have been receiving first-hand accounts of what is happening, and the hardship and distress that will be faced there in the winter will be very dire.

Mr. James Lamond: Whatever feelings the Minister may have on behalf of Romanians of Hungarian origin, if he pays regard to the reports that he receives from the embassy in Bucharest he must know that the systemisation of villages is not an act of discrimination against Hungarians. I see the Minister nodding. He may dislike the act of the Romanians in modernising their villages—*[Interruption.]*—systemising their villages if the House prefers it—but I wonder what purpose the Minister has in making a protest about it.

Mr. Waldegrave: I am willing to confirm that the regime in Romania is equally unpleasant to all its citizens. The Hungarians are one group of sufferers, as are, equally, the people of Romanian origin. If the hon. Gentleman is presenting himself to the House, and perhaps to Western Europe, as the last unreformed Stalinist who wants to defend this policy, I do not think that he will find many of his hon. Friends with him on that matter. Perhaps I misunderstood him. I am sure that he will join us in opposing a policy which is causing widespread anxiety among countries in Eastern as well as Western Europe.

Britons Abroad

3. **Mr. Carrington:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with foreign Governments about the behaviour of Britons travelling abroad.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Tim Eggar): I have discussed the behaviour of Britons overseas with Government Ministers in Greece and Spain. The small minority of Britons who behave badly damage Britain's

reputation and ruin other people's holidays. We have made it clear that we support other Governments who deal firmly with offenders.

Mr. Carrington: When my hon. Friend next meets the Spanish and Greek Governments, will he assure them that the British Government treat such behaviour as seriously as they do soccer hooliganism and that we would support punishment for the offenders as severe as we would for soccer hooligans?

Mr. Eggar: Just as we welcome tougher action against such individuals at home, so we welcome tougher action by Governments overseas. When people go abroad they must recognise that they must obey the laws of the country in which they are based.

Mr. Heffer: As the Heysel stadium people have not been found guilty by anyone, as they were encouraged to be extradited by the Government, and as many who have gone to Belgium are unemployed and without any financial assistance, will the Government now reconsider their attitude towards assisting those who have gone there quite voluntarily when they could have tried to dodge going? I ask the Minister to reconsider the Government's attitude and give financial assistance to those who are now before the courts in Belgium.

Mr. Eggar: Those individuals chose to go to that football match and became involved, or did not become involved—*[Interruption.]* We cannot prejudge the results of the Belgian court hearing. It has never been the policy of any British Government to provide free board and lodging overseas for people to attend court hearings or to provide for legal assistance.

Dr. Michael Clark: Will my hon. Friend have discussions with the Spanish Government about the sale of semi-pornographic and obscene T-shirts on the island of Majorca? Is he aware that the wearing of those T-shirts in Majorca causes offence to other holidaymakers and to people in high streets in this country when they are brought back here?

Mr. Eggar: I was not aware of this particular problem. I look forward to having more details from my hon. Friend, but I will ask our consul in Malaga for a report.

Israel

4. **Mr. Ernie Ross:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last discussed with the Prime Minister of Israel the case for an international conference to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian question.

Mr. Waldegrave: My right hon. and learned Friend last met Mr. Shamir in September 1986. My hon. and learned Friend the Member for Putney (Mr. Mellor) discussed the Arab-Israeli dispute with him in January. The Israeli Government know that we continue to support an international conference.

Mr. Ross: Does the Minister agree that the most recent statement by Mr. Peres that an Israeli Labour Government would hold elections on the West Bank and in Gaza so that the Palestinian people could choose their own representatives, and his commitment to an international peace conference offer much more hope than Mr. Yitzhak Shamir, who seems impervious to international criticism and domestic acrimony about the policies that his party is producing in Israeli?

Mr. Waldegrave: It is true that the policy of the Labour party in Israel is much closer to that of Her Majesty's Government. We welcome that recent statement, but, of course, it would be quite wrong for me to comment on an election in another country.

Sir Dennis Walters: Has my hon. Friend recently made any representations to the Israeli Government about the brutality and repression in the occupied West Bank? Is he aware that the civilian toll of casualties among Palestinian adults and children is steadily growing? Is this not absolutely intolerable?

Mr. Waldegrave: I recently protested to the retiring Israeli ambassador, Mr. Avner, about the use of plastic bullets. I think my hon. Friend understands that these are not baton rounds, but plastic bullets fired by high explosive charges. We registered a protest, as did the United States Government, about the casualties caused by those plastic bullets. The Israeli Government know very well that Her Majesty's Government believe that they are sleep walking to disaster by their treatment of the people in the occupied territories.

Mr. Janner: Does the Minister accept that however much we may fervently hope for the election of one Prime Minister or one party or the other in Israel on 1 November, electors in a democracy, including our own, sometimes make mistakes? It is important to recognise that that is about the only country in the area where free elections are held and that our Government will have to get on and try to make peace with any Government whom the Israeli electors see fit to elect.

Mr. Waldegrave: Any group or any party in Israel that comes forward with practical plans for peace will get the full support of this Government.

Mr. Lawrence: Is it not more urgent and important than an international conference that the Arab states should be able to provide a leader who can guarantee security and peace for Israel in any peace settlement that is negotiated with the Israelis?

Mr. Waldegrave: I do not know whether waiting for leaders is relevant. What is impressive is the solidarity of the people in the occupied territories, which expresses very clearly their desire for self-determination.

Mr. Kaufman: In welcoming the hon. Gentleman to his new responsibilities and hoping that his statement of views on the middle east will not lead to his speedy removal from those responsibilities, may I put it to him that the flexibility now emanating from the Palestine Liberation Organisation and the voices of peace from Arab Governments are being prevented from achieving the possibility of an international conference and real peace by the obduracy of the Likud party in Israel? Will he join the Prime Minister, the United States Administration, President Mubarak and all other sensible people in every part of the world who believe that the only hope of breaking the deadlock and getting peace in the middle east is a Labour victory in Israel on 1 November?

Mr. Waldegrave: I noted that when addressing the Socialist group of the European Parliament Mr. Arafat

said that he hoped for the emergence of an Israeli de Gaulle. I hope that he and everyone else, including the hon. Member for Dundee, West (Mr. Ross), will respond to any practical proposals for peace, from whatever political spectrum they come.

Mr. Tredinnick: Does the Minister agree that a settlement in the occupied territories is very much in Israel's interests because of the increased birth rate among Arabs west of the Jordan, which will lead to the outnumbering of Jews early in the next century?

Mr. Waldegrave: I think that what my hon. Friend says is right. More profoundly, surely the tragedy for Israel is that those of us, many of whom are in this House, who have protested about the actions of Israel are her friends. The tragedy for Israel is the way in which it is corrupting itself by its treatment of people in the occupied territories.

Central America

5. **Mr. Flannery:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next expects to have discussions with the Government of the United States of America regarding the recent developments in the Central American peace process.

Mr. Eggar: We have regular discussions with the United States Administration on a wide range of issues, including developments in the Central American peace process.

Mr. Flannery: Does the Minister agree that the will towards peace of all the peoples, Governments and nations of Central America is now greater than it has ever been, as well as the chances and opportunities? Does he realise that the freely elected Government of Nicaragua, no matter what anyone says—this is attested to by people of this country who were in Nicaragua at the time of the election—are being harassed by the Contras? Is he aware of the new development that has resulted in more money being supplied to the Contras in the guise of certain forms of aid? Instead of producing generalised answers, such as his answer to the main question, will he realise that, if we are democratic, the British Government must talk to the American Government and try to persuade them not to send money to those who are led by people of the old Somoza regime? For 30 years that tyrannical group was brutal to the people of Nicaragua.

Mr. Eggar: I note what the hon. Gentleman says. However, his analysis is not widely shared, even within Central America. For example, I met President Arias of Costa Rica this morning. He urged that the Nicaraguans should take a stronger line on compliance with the Esquipulas accord. He stressed that, in his view, Nicaragua had failed to honour its commitments to democratise.

Sir Jim Spicer: Have any representations been made by Her Majesty's Government to the Nicaraguan Government about the plight of the leaders of the Conservative party, the Christian Democrats, the Socialist party and trade unionists, who, having taken part in a peaceful demonstration in the spring, were arrested and placed in gaol, and have remained there ever since?

Mr. Eggar: We were most concerned by that development and by the way in which democratic leaders of the Opposition were arrested. As my hon. Friend has said, some of them are still in gaol. I was amazed when I read a letter that the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition wrote to President Ortega, which was published in June, in which he praised President Ortega's commitment and skill. I presume that the right hon. Gentleman was praising President Ortega's commitment to suppressing democratic opposition within Nicaragua and his skill in pulling the wool over the eyes of Opposition Members.

Mr. Tony Banks: One of these days the Minister might have the courage to visit Nicaragua. In the meantime, how can anyone hold him to be sincere in his view about wanting peace in Central America when the Government allowed Adolfo Calero, a terrorist from the Contras, to enter Britain and attend the Tory party conference? Why was that terrorist allowed into the country? What assistance did the Foreign Office give to him?

Mr. Eggar: The hon. Gentleman has a nerve. He arrived on Noriega's plane from Panama and stayed in Nicaragua for 24 hours before returning to the United Kingdom. That shows a great knowledge of what is going on in Nicaragua, as well as an interesting selection of friends and of ways to spend his holiday. As Mr. Calero went to Managua and had talks with the Sandinista Government, I do not see why he should not come to Britain.

Mr. Foulkes: Will the Minister calm down a little and recall the revelations made by the Speaker of the United States Congress, Jim Wright, of the CIA's involvement in destabilising Nicaragua? Will he give an assurance that there was no British complicity in that action? Given the constant repetition by the Government that we seek a peaceful solution to the problems of Central America, will he for once take his courage in his hands and condemn the American Government for unwarranted interference in the affairs of an autonomous country?

Mr. Eggar: As the hon. Gentleman knows, we support the Central American peace process. As I have said, President Arias made it clear this morning that he thinks that the Nicaraguan Government should and could do a great deal more to further the process and to move towards democracy within Nicaragua. United States policy is a matter for the United States.

Zimbabwe

6. **Mr. Bowis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next intends to visit Zimbabwe; and what subjects he proposes to discuss.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend has no plans, at the present time, to visit Zimbabwe.

Mr. Bowis: When my right hon. Friend manages to get to Zimbabwe, will she remind Mr. Mugabe of the Pope's visit to that country, when he called for apartheid to be ended, not by sanctions and boycott, but by constructive discussion and pressures? Will my right hon. Friend also remind Mr. Mugabe of the recent visit to Harare of the South African white and black rugby organisers and express the hope that the conclusions that have come from those discussons are the way forward? Does she agree that Zimbabwe, the Western world and Africa should respond,

when such progress is made towards ending apartheid, by welcoming the South Africans back into the international fold?

Mrs. Chalker: When I next see President Mugabe I shall most certainly point out the importance of what the Pope said, and far more was said on that issue than was probably published in British newspapers. It is only through constructive discussion that apartheid will be brought to an end and a representative system of non-racial government effected in South Africa.

Although I welcome the reports of the meeting of the South African rugby board with various people in Harare, it would be premature to speculate about a change of policy. If the press reports that we have seen are confirmed, I shall agree with my hon. Friend that that change of policy is a worthwhile step in the long progress towards genuine non-racialism in sport in South Africa. We hope sincerely that that will happen.

Mr. Roger King: When my right hon. Friend goes to Zimbabwe, will she ensure that she takes with her—and does not leave any behind—some photographs that she can give to the Zimbabwean Government of notable members of our own political system, so that unfortunate incidents such as the one earlier in the year, when the Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition was not known, can be avoided?

Mrs. Chalker: I would recommend to the Zimbabweans that they should have an excellent book such as *The Times* "Guide to the House of Commons", so that they can recognise hon. Members. In case that is not ready in time, I shall see about a scrapbook that features photographs of members of the Opposition Front Bench.

United Nations

7. **Mr. Michael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last met the Secretary-General of the United Nations; and what was discussed.

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. and learned Friend met the Secretary-General on 27 September during his visit to the General Assembly. They discussed Afghanistan, Iran-Iraq, Namibia and Cyprus. The following day the Secretary-General was present at a confidential meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council.

Mr. Michael: Does the Minister accept that there is some concern that the subject of refugees was not higher on the agenda and that there are serious anxieties in parts of the world where Britain has a historic responsibility? I shall give two examples. What help and hope can the Minister offer to those who have to flee the savage internal war in Somalia? Is he aware that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees expressed concern at the false distinction drawn by Britain between political and so-called "economic" refugees? Will the Minister give us a straightforward reassurance that that false distinction will not govern decision-making? Will he ensure that those topics are high on the agenda the next time there is a meeting between British Ministers and the Secretary-General?

Mr. Eggar: There is, of course, a great deal of concern about the position of refugees, not only in the country that the hon. Gentleman has mentioned, but in a large number of others. We have recently made a major additional contribution to the UNHCR, particularly to assist it with the help it is giving to Hong Kong, and, as the hon. Gentleman is aware, there have been recent discussions with the Vietnamese authorities. I can assure him that I, other Ministers and my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs raise the plight of refugees and general policy towards refugees on appropriate occasions.

Mr. Wells: Will my hon. Friend congratulate the Secretary-General on the effective reactivation of the Security Council, especially over the Iran-Iraq conflict and Afghanistan? We hope that the strengthening of the Security Council will lead to a settlement in Cyprus, and of other difficult problems. May I congratulate our representative and ambassador in the United Nations on the constructive role that he played in that process? Is my hon. Friend satisfied wth the rate of progress in reforming the administration of the United Nations in line with the effective way in which the Security Council has been reformed?

Mr. Eggar: I quite agree with my hon. Friend. There have been some major developments in the United Nations, especially in the Security Council. I join him in paying tribute to our permanent representative, Sir Crispin Tickell, who had a major role in co-ordinating the five members of the Security Council over Iran-Iraq.

On the more general question of the reform of the United Nations, my hon. Friend is quite right in saying that much progress still has to be made. We are working hard with other countries to make sure that sensible reforms are introduced.

Sir Russell Johnston: Is the Minister aware that many people will be surprised that apparently there have not been any discussions with the Secretary-General about the immediate and ghastly plight of the Kurdish refugees? Has the Minister raised, for example, the refusal of Turkey and Iraq to allow United Nations' observers to visit the camps of the Kurdish refugees? Has he taken any action following the bombing attacks, allegedly with chemical weapons, on the 11th and 14th of this month?

Mr. Eggar: The hon. Gentleman is right. This is a matter of concern. We have been in touch with the Turkish Government and with other Governments in the region, as well as with United Nations agencies, and those discussions continue.

Sir Bernard Braine: Were there any discussions with the Secretary-General of the United Nations about the use of chemical weapons against defenceless Kurdish villages by the Iraqi army, and at the same time the continuation of the mass murder of political opponents of the Khomeini regime in Iran, and about whether it is desirable that those atrocities should be reported to the assembly of the United Nations?

Mr. Eggar: I understand my right hon. Friend's concern. We have urged that there should be a United Nations investigation of those serious allegations and incidents, but I regret to say that the Iraqi Government have refused to co-operate.

Mr. Robertson: On the subject of the Iraqi attacks on the Kurdish population, may I commend the Government for their recognition, albeit belated, of the compelling evidence that now exists about those Iraqi attacks? As one who recently visited refugee camps at Diyarbakir and Mardin in Turkey, I can say that the evidence seems overwhelming. It seems remarkable only that the Government took so long to come to that conclusion. I am sure that there is considerable unanimity among hon. Members of all parties that Iraq's conduct is unacceptable and unspeakable, and that simply condemning Iraq is not enough. It is essential to take some action and, like the American Congress, to threaten punitive economic consequences if Iraq does not immediately stop the chemical bombing of its Kurdish population and allow United Nations' observers to ensure that that country returns as quickly as possible to civilised conduct.

Mr. Eggar: I understand the hon. Gentleman's concern. I know that he paid that important visit and that he has a great deal of personal knowledge of the circumstances. However, I advise him that we condemned the action as soon as we felt that we had adequate evidence on which to do so. We had to wait for that evidence to accumulate. Further investigations will be extremely difficult to carry out without the full co-operation of the Iraqi Government. We have asked for that co-operation and the United Nations has also asked for it, but unfortunately the Iraqi Government have refused to co-operate.

Angola

8. **Mr. Riddick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether his Department has played a direct or indirect role in recent negotiations to secure a peaceful settlement in Angola; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: Though not a direct participant in the negotiations on the withdrawal of foreign troops from Angola and independence for Namibia, we have given them our full support. In particular, we have urged both sides to show flexibility and a sense of urgency.

Mr. Riddick: I am sure that my right hon. Friend will join me in welcoming the positive moves that have been made in the Angolan peace talks. Does she agree that, for a lasting peace to be brought to that troubled country, all 55,000 Cuban troops, along with the South African troops, must be withdrawn urgently from Angola? Does she believe that the British Government should advocate that UNITA should be recognised as having a full and legitimate role to play in the future development of Angola?

Mrs. Chalker: I think that we must be careful to separate those two issues slightly. We have done all that we can to assist in the quadripartite talks by our discussions with other leaders of African countries who have more direct influence than we could possibly be expected to have. Of course we hope that there will soon be an acceptance of the proposals under discussion for full Cuban and South African troop withdrawal.

When it comes to the whole problem of internal reconciliation, however, which we believe to be essential to a regional settlement, we need to see a mediation that will be acceptable to both sides in Angola. We believe that the African states are best placed to bring that about and that process is complementary to the United States-led peace negotiations. We have full diplomatic relations with the Angolan Government and if we are asked to help in bringing about reconciliation, of course we will consider that. We have contacts at official level with UNITA, in addition to our official recognition of the Angolan Government. However, it is extremely important that the Cubans, Angolans and South Africans reach agreement on full troop withdrawal within a reasonable time and that the internal reconciliation is pursued alongside that. The two things cannot be mixed up. Otherwise, I fear that we may not get the solution that we all hope for, which is peace in Angola and independence in Namibia.

Mr. Tony Banks: How can we possibly hope to exert any influence over the Cuban presence in Angola after we have expelled the Cuban ambassador from this country, probably on instructions from the United States embassy? Can the Minister tell us what she is now trying to do to restore good relations between the United Kingdom and Cuba?

Mrs. Chalker: I am very surprised—but I suppose I should not be—that the hon. Gentleman seeks to raise a question of security and safety that occurred in this country in the context of a very serious matter—the peace that we are seeking in Angola. All I can say to him is that if he is prepared to be a member of a party that would not do exactly the same if guns were toted on London streets, I feel even more strongly that it will never be fit to be in government again.

Mr. Wilkinson: Is it not the case that South African troops have now actually withdrawn from Angola? If it is not the case, can my right hon. Friend clearly tell the House that? Is it not therefore important that the Cubans now get on with withdrawal at the earliest possible date so that the people of Angola can proceed to self-determination without external interference in their internal affairs?

Mrs. Chalker: I believe that the vast majority of South African troops have indeed withdrawn from Angola, but I cannot give my hon. Friend an absolute assurance on that because we are not there to see. All I would say is that I believe that it is right and proper that, as soon as it is possible, all foreign troops should withdraw from that country.

South Africa

9. **Mr. Pike:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations Her Majesty's Government has made to the Government of the Republic of South Africa; and on what subjects.

Mrs. Chalker: We have made representations to the South African Government, both bilaterally and with our European partners, on a wide range of issues.

Mr. Pike: Will the Minister recognise that in South Africa there is a growing opinion among whites that the ANC must be involved in negotiations about the future of that country? That is evidenced by business and now by sporting contacts. Will she do all in her power to urge the South African Government to accept that, if they want meaningful talks to achieve a just, peaceful and acceptable solution to the problems of apartheid in that country, they

must allow the blacks freely to appoint their own representatives to such negotiations and be involved in the formulation of the agenda for such meetings?

Mrs. Chalker: It would be most welcome if the Government of South Africa would involve the representatives of all groups of black people in meaningful negotiations in South Africa. Until such time as they do we shall continue to seek to persuade them through dialogue that this is the only way towards a peaceful transition.

Mr. John Carlisle: May I correct an earlier reply by my right hon. Friend to my hon. Friend the Member for Battersea (Mr. Bowis) about the South African rugby board—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Member should ask a question.

Mr. Carlisle: It is leading to a question, Mr. Speaker. May I remind my right hon. Friend that the South African rugby board—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Member should ask his right hon. Friend a question.

Mr. Carlisle: Does my right hon. Friend accept that some on the Government side will give a cautious welcome to the news that Dr. Daniël Craven and the ANC have come to some arrangements over the future of international rugby? Does my right hon. Friend also accept that many of us on the Government Benches remain deeply suspicious of the motives of the ANC and believe that unless they renounce violence and armed conflict such talks are worthless?

Mrs. Chalker: My hon. Friend knows that we have called upon the ANC to renounce violence. We call upon all those who are engaged in violence to cease that violence, because the use of violence is not the way to bring about a peaceful solution in South Africa. I shall look at what my hon. Friend the Member for Battersea (Mr. Bowis) said and what I said to him in reply, but I do not think anything was said that would give my hon. Friend real grounds for correcting me.

Mr. Steel: Will the Minister be a little warmer than she was this afternoon and a lot warmer than the Minister with responsibility for sport was yesterday in congratulating the ANC and Dr. Craven on getting together, at least to discuss the future of multi-racial rugby? Will she also assert that that would never have happened had it not been for the success of the various sports boycott campaigns over the years and the Gleneagles agreement?

Mrs. Chalker: I always welcome it when those who previously had not found it possible to agree come together with the object of agreeing on a matter such as this. If the reports of the discussions between the African National Congress, the South African rugby board and the rugby union are correct, and if they lead to the creation of a single non-racial governing body for rugby in South Africa, that will be an encouraging development.

Mr. Cormack: In the context of the remarks made by my hon. Friend the Member for Luton, North (Mr. Carlisle), is my right hon. Friend aware that there are more of us than there are of them?

Mrs. Chalker: That all depends on what the dividing line may be.

Miss Lestor: While supporting the question by my hon. Friend the Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike), and notwithstanding the earlier reply by the right hon. Lady, on Angola, may I ask whether it would be correct of her to support me in saying that there is considerable mistrust about the intentions of South Africa in that region, including Angola and other areas? Conservative Members refer to violence by the ANC, by if South Africa wants to establish any basis of credibility in that region ought not the right hon. Lady to put pressure on the South African Government immediately to cease the imminent political hangings in South Africa? If South Africa were to comply it would at least show that there is some degree of credibility in what it is saying rather than in what it is doing.

Mrs. Chalker: The hon. Lady knows that we have always been prepared to join appeals for clemency in cases that are clearly political and where there are strong humanitarian grounds for clemency. In respect of the last part of her question, if that should be needed, once the legal process has been concluded—as has been the case with the Sharpeville Six and others—that will be done. As for the earlier part of the question, we shall condemn now, and always, violence, wherever the source of that violence may be. Cross-border violence in southern Africa will do nothing to bring about peace in the region.

Mr. Neil Hamilton: Does my right hon. Friend accept that one of the major reasons for the rise of the so-called Conservative party in South Africa has been the important element of dismantling the apartheid system that President Botha has brought about in the last five or six years, and that continuing attempts to isolate insecurity of certain elements among the whites who support the Conservative party and make President Botha's task even more difficult?

Mrs. Chalker: We would welcome any moves towards meaningful reform. I fully accept that there have been some such moves, but they are not enough. There is still the Group Areas Act and the Population Registration Act, and the South African Government have put forward a Bill to promote so-called orderly internal politics. However, none of those can hasten the end of the division of the people.

As one hon. Gentleman said earlier, many people are now recognising the need of all races in South Africa to come together to discuss future systems of government. Unfortunately, those in the KP—the Conservative party in South Africa—are not presently among them.

Council of Ministers

10. **Mr. Spearing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement relating to the overall outcome of meetings of the Council of Ministers of the European Economic Community which have occurred since 29 July last.

Mrs. Chalker: There has been one Foreign Affairs Council, on 26 September. I represented the United Kingdom, accompanied by my hon. Friend the Minister for Overseas Development. The main issue discussed was the Community's negotiating mandate for Lomé IV. With permission, Mr. Speaker, I will circulate a fuller statement in the *Official Report*.

My ministerial colleagues will, I am sure, be reporting to the House in the usual way on the outcome of councils for which they are responsible.

Mr. Spearing: Will the right hon. Lady tell us something about the Internal Market Council that met on 29 September? Cannot that council create legislation applicable to this country, even if it is against the wishes of the Government and the House, by virtue of qualified majority voting? Has not that highly centralised authority of the emerging European union come about only because in 1986 she, on behalf of the Government, signed the Single European Act, with the active encouragement and endorsement of the Prime Minister?

Mrs. Chalker: My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary attended the Internal Market Council and will report in detail on it. It is fair to say that during the past two years the Community would not have made such progress on the single market without qualified majority voting. That has been in the interests of the people of this country.

The Single European Act was the first update of the Treaty of Rome, and there is nothing in it to cause me anything like the elevated concern that the hon. Gentleman expresses, both in the House and elsewhere. Without the Single European Act and the qualified majority voting that applies to many internal market issues, this country's position would have been far worse on many occasions. To name but one, the Commission forwarded our views about the export of British-made Nissan cars to another Community country. That is one way in which we have made the internal market work better.

Mr. Gow: Has my right hon. Friend committed to memory the excellent speech of our right hon. Friend the Prime Minister at Bruges? Will she ensure that that speech is the first item on the agenda at the next meeting of the EEC Council of Ministers? Will she arrange for a signed copy to be sent to our right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath)?

Mrs. Chalker: In the knowledge that we are all fallible and that sometimes we all forget, I took the precaution of ensuring that I have with me a copy of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister's speech. I commend it to every hon. Member. Any Prime Minister who speaks so clearly for the needs of this country, by saying that

"our destiny is in Europe as part of the Community,"

has our fullest support. I shall ensure that all those attending council meetings are aware of her speech, although I am sure that most of them are already aware of it.

Mr. Cryer: Are not the Prime Minister's words at variance with the deeds of the Government? Are not the Government capitulating to every demand of the Common Market, including the payment of £4·7 billion since 1984 and the development of a trade deficit in manufactured goods of £10 billion? Does she think that 1992 and the complete harmonisation of the internal market will help, or hinder, that?

Mrs. Chalker: The completion of the internal market will help this country no end. I am sorry that the hon. Gentleman has not learnt sufficient about it to know that already.

Mr. Aitken: In view of her warm endorsement of the Prime Minister's fine speech, would my right hon. Friend care to comment on today's rather puzzling report in the *Daily Express*? It stated that Mr. Delors' speech to the TUC conference was approved in advance and ticked as innocuous by Foreign Office representatives. Will my right hon. Friend assure us that, if there is any showdown between British and German interests at a future Council of Ministers, the Bruges speech will be the text of our foreign policy?

Mrs. Chalker: If there is any need to have a discussion with our colleagues at future councils—whatever councils they may be—if we have disagreements, we shall express them most clearly, as we always do. I tell my hon. Friend that when any TUC speaker shows his speech in advance to the Foreign Office, I will really think that he is living in never-never land.

Sir Russell Johnston: While we are on the subject of speeches, has the Minister noticed yesterday's speech by Dr. Helmut Kohl, the German Conservative Chancellor, who warmly commended European economic and monetary union and spoke of a social Europe? Is it not the case that, despite what the hon. Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow) said earlier, the Prime Minister's Bruges approach is a solitary one and is not supported by any other European leader?

Mrs. Chalker: I know of Chancellor Kohl's pragmatic approach to the Community, which he expressed quite fully in his speech yesterday. We do not agree with every word that every other European leader says, but we certainly have more in common with our German colleagues in pursuing the right path for Europe and for our respective countries than we shall ever have with the hon. Gentleman's party or the Labour party.

Mr. Ian Taylor: Has my right hon. Friend taken note of the various measures that the Government have already introduced, which are well ahead of those of our European friends in terms of showing our Europeanness? In particular, has she congratulated the Chancellor on introducing ecu-denominated debt in the summer, an issue that was so dramatically successful that other Governments are now thinking of following suit?

Mrs. Chalker: My hon. Friend is perfectly correct. The Chancellor of the Exchequer's proposals last year, earlier this year, and again at the meeting in Berlin have been fundamental in persuading a change of mind in some other Governments towards solving the problems of middle income debtors. It is interesting to note that Britain is the first country to contribute in full to the $75 billion of the general capital income increase in resources for lending to middle income debtors. All that has happened thanks to a Conservative Chancellor in Britain.

Mr. Kaufman: In her Bruges speech, which the right hon. Lady has commended, the Prime Minister stated her opposition to, the abolition of frontier controls, the creation of the European super-state, the centralisation of power in Brussels, with decisions taken by an appointed bureacracy and the concentration of power at the centre of a European conglomerate, and said that Britain's parliamentary powers must be preserved. As every one of those changes that the Prime Minister opposes is now entrenched in United Kingdom law through the European

Communities (Amendment) Act 1986, which the right hon. Lady forced through the House of Commons on a guillotine, will the right hon. Lady now apologise to the Prime Minister and introduce legislation to repeal the European Communities (Amendment) Act?

Mrs. Chalker: No, Sir.

European Free Trade Association

11. **Mr. Page:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the most recent discussions held with members of the European Free Trade Association on forging closer links with the European Community in the run up to the completion of the internal market in 1992.

Mrs. Chalker: We maintain close contacts with our EFTA friends on this important issue. Most recently, I visited Oslo and Helsinki between 4 and 9 October. Like their other EFTA colleagues, the Norwegians and Finns are pressing ahead with measures necessary to ensure that they can respond to the new challenges and opportunities of the single market.

Mr. Page: I thank my right hon. Friend for that reply. Does she agree that it is a tribute to the importance of the internal market of 1992 that people within the European free trade area are urging their countries to join the EEC? Is that not a message that every company engaged in industry, commerce and trade in the United Kingdom could take on board?

Mrs. Chalker: Indeed. I can tell my hon. Friend that in my discussions during the summer recess with representatives from many of the EFTA countries—indeed wider than EFTA—it was remarkable to discover how much they wish to participate in the policies that we are pursuing of the single market in the European Community and in the policies of sound growth, the creation of jobs and the reduction in unemployment, in which this country has been so successful.

Argentina

15. **Mr. Shersby:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress has been made in achieving a declaration from Argentina of a cessation of hostilities and in restoring diplomatic relations.

Mr. Eggar: Argentina still refuses to declare that she regards hostilities as being at an end, has made no response to a series of practical British initiatives to bring about more normal relations and maintains restrictions on United Kingdom exports. It is, therefore, premature to think in terms of restoring diplomatic relations.

Mr. Shersby: Does my hon. Friend agree that a declaration of cessation of hostilities is an essential prerequisite to the restoration of diplomatic relations with Argentina?

Mr. Eggar: Very much so, but, as I have already said to my hon. Friend, there are a number of other initiatives that we have taken with regard to Argentina on which we are still awaiting responses.

GCHQ Cheltenham

3.30 pm

Mr. Gerald Kaufman (Manchester, Gorton) *(by private notice)*: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the dismissal of and disciplinary action against trade unionists at GCHQ.

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. William Waldegrave): Staff at GCHQ are permitted by their conditions of service to belong only to a departmental staff association approved by the director. The reasons for this were explained to the House by my right hon. and learned Friend on 25 January 1984. Every effort has been made since to accommodate the tiny minority who did not accept the new terms of service, including a lengthy search for other jobs or the offer of compensation. A number have indeed accepted alternative jobs. Our action now follows our assessment that nothing further realistically can be done to find alternative employment. Even at this late stage we would urge those who have refused the terms of service to change their minds and to stay at GCHQ. But to do nothing would be grossly unfair to the 99 per cent. of staff who accepted the new terms of service.

Mr. Kaufman: Is it not ironic that the Foreign Secretary is not here to answer this question today—[HON. MEMBERS: "Why?"]—because he is in attendance on the Queen in Spain, a country rightly praised for getting rid of a Right-wing regime that persecuted trade unionists?

While a British Government have for the first time sacked people for being members of a trade union, is it not a fact that in Britain a long string of proved traitors have been members, not of a free trade union, but of the Cambridge union? For example, is it not disgraceful that Mr. Brian Johnson is being sacked after being employed for 32 years at GCHQ, having given longer and more loyal service to his country than the Prime Minister or any other member of the Government? How can the Government justify the further disciplinary proceedings that are threatened against Mr. Clive Lloyd and others when they have already been made to pay fines? This kind of double jeopardy is another mark of the authoritarian state.

Why have the Government not accepted the GCHQ unions' long-standing offer to negotiate a no-strike deal, to divorce national pay questions from issues involving GCHQ and to accept security vetting of officials involved in bargaining at GCHQ?

When visiting Poland, would it not be utterly hypocritical for the Prime Minister to force her company on Lech Walesa, who is fighting for free and independent trade unions in Poland, while she is trampling on free and independent trade unions in Britain?

Mr. Waldegrave: The right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) bases his argument, perhaps characteristically, on a mixture of rather cheap debating points and mistakes.

The first mistake is the belief that there is anything unusual in having special terms of service in security installations in this country or in any other. If the right hon. Gentleman looks more carefully at the practices in other countries he will find that there is nothing unusual about those terms.

The right hon. Gentleman's second mistake is that we have not, at any point, doubted the loyalty of the people at GCHQ. The proof of that is that, even at this late hour, we would prefer those involved to stay there. It was the national trade union leaders who used GCHQ as a football in disputes that were nothing to do with that installation. They knew that the population at large were not inconvenienced by those disputes, and they knew also that only senior Ministers and senior officials knew how much damage had been done. They brought this on their own heads.

I am happy to say that GCHQ is now working very well indeed and that 99 per cent. and more of the people there have accepted the terms of service.

Sir Peter Blaker (Blackpool, South): Does not the effectiveness of GCHQ depend upon uninterrupted operation? Am I right in recalling that between 1979 and 1981 the number of man days lost through strikes at GCHQ—many of them called on issues totally unrelated to it—was about 10,000? Does not that figure provide a powerful endorsement of the Government's policies?

Mr. Waldegrave: My right hon. Friend is right. The number of hours lost at GCHQ during that period was about the figure that he mentioned. Those lost hours meant that, at key moments, that installation, which must run all the time if it is to protect our security, was working on a part-time basis. No responsible Government could possibly have put up with that.

Mr. James Wallace (Orkney and Shetland): By their actions, do not the Government diminish the role of GCHQ by undermining from within the very liberties that GCHQ and the other security services are intended to defend?

Mr. Waldegrave: That is a nonsensical argument. As the hon. Gentleman may or may not know, others involved in security have similar terms of service. The importance of GCHQ to the nation is second to no other security institution. It is not possible to allow it to be misused for arguments in which it has no part, and that was the situation that we faced when we came to power.

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg (Hampstead and Highgate): As the courts of this country and the European Court of Human Rights have made it clear that the Government have acted correctly in all these matters, will my hon. Friend say why it has taken so long to take this final step, which many of us believe is overdue?

Mr. Waldegrave: My hon. Friend is right. The lawfulness of our action has been confirmed by our courts, and at the European Court of Human Rights. It has taken so long because we have tried very hard to find alternative jobs for the people involved. Now we have to say that, realistically, there are no alternative jobs available. It is increasingly unfair to the great majority who have accepted the terms of service to leave a small minority operating without terms of service and without accepting what their colleagues have accepted.

Mr. Terry Davis (Birmingham, Hodge Hill): If the Minister is blaming national trade union leaders, why is he sacking individual trade unionists?

Mr. Waldegrave: That seems to be a curious question. The people are being dismissed from GCHQ because they are in breach of the terms and conditions of their service, and for no other reason.

Mr. Ivan Lawrence (Burton): In how many other countries, Socialist or otherwise, do the security and intelligence establishments permit either a trade union or the right to strike?

Mr. Waldegrave: I believe that my hon. and learned Friend would find that the number is very small. I know of none.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): Is the Minister aware that those who are now being victimised are to be congratulated on defending the principles of British democracy and fair play against an authoritarian Government? Now that the Government, at long last, have lost the Spycatcher case in the courts, when will they learn the basic principle that people have a democratic right to belong to a trade union? When will the Government stop penalising people who want to exercise that right?

Mr. Waldegrave: I must not be drawn on to Spycatcher, but clearly the hon. Gentleman has not read the judgment. He will find it a little different from what he expects. The reason why we had to take action, unwelcome though it is, has been clearly set before the House and supported by it. I do not apologise for it.

Mr. Tony Baldry (Banbury): Does my hon. Friend recall that during the last Parliament, when the Employment Select Committee investigated this matter, national Civil Service trade union leaders were unprepared to give an undertaking that civil servants who continued at GCHQ would not continue to disrupt the activities of that organisation?

Mr. Waldegrave: There was no undertaking to accept a no-strike agreement at GCHQ. When the subject was raised as a possibility, it was instantly repudiated by two of the unions concerned. What is more, it would have been ironic if it had not been, because the TUC is expelling trade unions which have been seeking to make no-strike deals.

Dr. John Reid (Motherwell, North): As the Minister has obviously given great consideration to the relationship between the undermining of security and trade union membership, can he tell the House and those who are listening how many traitors who have been convicted since 1945 for treacherously undermining our security were members of a trade union?

Mr. Waldegrave: There is no connection between membership of a trade union and people's loyalty to this country. *[Interruption.]* If there is a connection, it was the misuse of the strike weapon by national trade union leaders who did not know, and could not know, what they were doing by so interrupting the work of GCHQ as gravely to damage our security. That is what was damaging our security. I emphasise again the point that Opposition Members have missed from the beginning to the end of this controversy, which is that we have never at any time doubted the loyalty of individual people to this country. What has been doubted is the willingness of the national trade unions involved to understand the importance of that institution.

Sir John Stokes (Halesowen and Stourbridge): Is my hon. Friend aware that the public at large simply will not be able to understand all the fuss that the Opposition are making about this dispute? The dispute is wholly bogus, the Government's action is perfectly reasonable, and it is about time the whole matter was settled.

Mr. Waldegrave: Not for the first time, my hon. Friend has encapsulated good sense in the House.

Mr. Graham Allen (Nottingham, North): Who is next?

Mr. Waldegrave: If the hon. Gentleman means by that lapidary question is there any intention to extend such a ban outside those involved in security, the answer is that there is no such intention. What is more, if there were, I doubt whether it would be upheld by the courts. It is because these people are involved in security that the courts have upheld the Government's position.

Mr. Derek Conway (Shrewsbury and Atcham): Despite the wringing of hands by Labour Members—*[Laughter.]*—and despite their giggling, will my hon. Friend undertake to explain to the widest general public that the TUC targeted GCHQ during its day of action, and that such an irresponsible act on its part shows that it is wholly unconcerned for British security and is the action of a dying dinosaur, which should be suitably ignored?

Mr. Waldegrave: My hon. Friend is right. That was extremely irresponsible and was done deliberately, because only senior officials and Ministers knew the damage that was being done. It was a cheap action for the trade unions to take and grossly irresponsible. All the consequences have flowed from that.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): Who is damaging national security—the trade unionist who feels that he must take industrial action because he has a grievance, or the Tory Member who writes a book setting out in complex detail every aspect of GCHQ's operations? Who is being disloyal?

Mr. Waldegrave: I shall not get involved in the hon. Gentleman's characteristic conspiracy theories. I know for a fact that our security was damaged by interruptions at GCHQ and that no Government could have stood by and done nothing about that. I know, too, as do hon. Members on the Opposition Front Bench, that if they had been in the same position they would have acted in the same way.

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): Is my hon. Friend aware that the individuals who were named and who have been working all these years at GCHQ worked there when I represented them as a member of a trade union looking after their interests? At that time it was understood that GCHQ and the Air Ministry, where I worked, would never be included in industrial action because if they were the Government of the day, regardless of their colour, would change the rules because that work could not be interrupted. That is exactly what has happened. The rules have been changed, and trade union leaders knew from the beginning what would happen.

Mr. Waldegrave: My hon. Friend is right. This is an area, and it is not alone in modern Britain, where, because unspoken conventions have been breached, different steps have had to be taken. What my hon. Friend—who knows a great deal more about it than does the right hon. Member for Gorton—has said is correct.

Broadcasting and Terrorism

3.45 pm

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Douglas Hurd): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a statement about access to the broadcast media by certain organisations in Northern Ireland.

For some time, broadcast coverage of events in Northern Ireland has included the occasional appearance of representatives of paramilitary organisations and their political wings, who have used these opportunities as an attempt to justify their criminal activities. Such appearances have caused widespread offence to viewers and listeners throughout the United Kingdom, particularly just after a terrorist outrage.

The terrorists themselves draw support and sustenance from access to radio and television—from addressing their views more directly to the population at large than is possible through the press. The Government have decided that the time has come to deny this easy platform to those who use it to propagate terrorism. Accordingly, I have today issued to the chairmen of the BBC and the IBA a notice, under the licence and agreement and under the Broadcasting Act 1987 respectively, requiring them to refrain from broadcasting direct statements by representatives of organisations proscribed in Northern Ireland and Great Britain and by representatives of Sinn Fein, Republican Sinn Fein and the Ulster Defence Association. The notices will also prohibit the broadcasting of statements by any person which support or invite support for these organisations. The restrictions will not apply to the broadcast of proceedings in Parliament, and in order not to impair the obligation on the broadcasters to provide an impartial coverage of elections the notices will have a more limited effect during election periods. Copies of the notices have today been deposited in the Library, and further copies are available from the Vote Office so that hon. Members will be able to study their detailed effect.

These restrictions follow very closely the lines of similar provisions which have been operating in the Republic of Ireland for some years. Representatives of these organisations are prevented from appearing on Irish television, but because we have had no equivalent restrictions in the United Kingdom they can nevertheless be seen on BBC and ITV services in Northern Ireland, where their appearances cause the gravest offence, and in Great Britain. The Government's decision today means that both in the United Kingdom and in the Irish Republic such appearances will be prevented.

Broadcasters have a dangerous and unenviable task in reporting events in Northern Ireland. This step is no criticism of them. What concerns us is the use made of broadcasting facilities by supporters of terrorism. This is not a restriction on reporting. It is a restriction on direct appearances by those who use or support violence.

I believe that this step will be understood and welcomed by most people throughout the United Kingdom. It is a serious and important matter on which the House will wish to express its view. For that reason, we shall be putting in hand discussions through the usual channels so that a full debate on the matter can take place at an early date.

Mr. Roy Hattersley (Birmingham, Sparkbrook): Like the overwhelming majority of citizens in this country, the Labour party is dedicated to the defeat of terrorism, and we share the natural revulsion at the exhibition on television of support for terrorists and terrorist organisations. But the important task is not so much demonstrating disapproval as defeating the IRA and the UDA, and it is against that criterion, together with the consequences for freedom of speech and the practicality of the proposals, that the Home Secretary's statement must be judged.

Will the Home Secretary confirm that nothing that he now proposes reduces the opportunities for the opinions of terrorist organisations to be reported on television or in newspapers? All that he has done today is to prevent personal appearances. Why does the Home Secretary believe that the net effect of such a specific prohibition will be to damage terrorism and help in the defeat of terrorists? Has he considered the damaging way in which his proposal will be used at home and abroad, especially in the United States, to portray the Government as the enemy of free expression? Has he weighed that publicity coup for the IRA against the advantage of keeping its representatives off television? Does he not have enough faith in the British people to accept that such personal appearances only increase the revulsion and contempt felt by most British viewers for terrorism and terrorists?

Can the Home Secretary tell us how the law will define such general concepts as "representatives of" and "supporting"? Will he assure us that there will be a more objective test of those terms than simply the Government nominating individuals who must not be interviewed on television or radio? That would be an absolutely unacceptable power for any Government to possess.

What consequences does the Home Secretary foresee from his necessary exemptions of both the House and the period of parliamentary elections? Is there not something absurd in allowing the hon. Member for Belfast, West (Mr. Adams), were he to attend the House, to voice his views on "Yesterday in Parliament", while at the same time preventing him being interviewed on that speech as he left the building? What consequences does the right hon. Gentleman foresee for the impending parliamentary by-elections, other than the near certainty, for which the Government must take responsibility, of Sinn Fein candidates being nominated in all of them?

Does not an examination of the detailed results of the proposal demonstrate that it is trivial, worthless and almost certainly counter-productive in the real fight against terrorism? Today's statement is intended to create the illusion, rather than the reality, of activity. It will make the Government look simultaneously repressive and ridiculous.

Mr. Hurd: I am surprised—not wholly surprised—that the right hon. Gentleman takes that line, because I am afraid that it stands four square with the attitude that he has taken personally for some time now to the measures that we and the House have thought to be necessary in the fight against terrorism. The notice that I have given to the two chairmen today is, I believe, clear and precise. It specifies organisations, and I believe that it is as clear and precise as such a notice can reasonably be. Of course, it distinguishes between speech in the House and speech outside. If I had not done that, I should have been immersed in considerable argument about privilege, which I wish to avoid as that would have obscured the main issue.

The Broadcasting Act and the Representation of the People Acts lay certain obligations of impartiality on the broadcasting organisations during elections, and it was right that that should be respected when we drafted the notice. I have always regarded the obligation of impartiality as an important part of holding free elections, and, in turn, the holding of free elections in Northern Ireland as a crucial part of our stance there. I did not want to do anything that undermined that.

The right hon. Gentleman is right on his general point. This step will provoke an immediate flurry of protest from Sinn Fein and the supporters of terrorism, but it will deny them a weapon of which I believe they have made substantial use. I answer the right hon. Gentleman's main question in this way. I believe that the use that those people have made of direct access to radio and television has aroused the deepest outrage in Northern Ireland, as I said in my statement. People cannot understand how we are to be taken seriously in fighting terrorism if, after reading a statement by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, for example, the next thing that they see on the news is a supporter of terrorism using direct access to underline or deepen the impression that he wishes to create.

The airwaves are full of points of view with which we all disagree from time to time. In a free society it is our job to argue and, we hope, to out-argue in those discussions. However, we are not talking about that. We are talking about whether there should be a platform for those whose weapon is not argument but destruction and death.

Mr. Michael Mates (Hampshire, East): Is my right hon. Friend aware that only a few short weeks ago a television company was proposing to give two hours of air time so that the hon. Member for Belfast, West (Mr. Adams) could express his views? That would have caused the greatest disquiet and disgust among most decent people. Is it not because the media have collectively declined the opportunity that has been there to put their house in order in this matter that the Government have had to act? Having acted, will my right hon. Friend and his right hon. Friends continue to try to ensure that the same sorts of measures that have to be taken in the fight against terrorism are taken, as far as possible, on both sides of the border?

Mr. Hurd: I understand what my hon. Friend says. To be fair, as I said in my statement, the broadcasters have had a whole series of individually difficult decisions to take, and I am glad that they have recently taken some which illustrate the point that I have been making. From their point of view, it is more clear and straightforward for them to operate under a notice of this sort, for which I take responsibility and which the House will debate, than to have to operate at their discretion, sometimes in difficult circumstances.

Mr. Paddy Ashdown (Yeovil): Have not the Government's own standing advisory committee on human rights and Lord Colville advised against such bans? The Government seem to have taken the worst of all possible measures. They have given the IRA a propaganda coup. They have left it open to it to put its view through the newspapers; they have left Sinn Fein still a legal organisation which is denied the right of access to a free press; and they have established a dangerous precedent by using the Broadcasting Act in this manner.

If the Government are intent on taking serious action, why do they not strengthen the sanctions of the court against elected representatives who give comfort to terrorism, instead of taking this action, which is ill-conceived, ill-judged and almost certainly counter-productive?

Mr. Hurd: The hon. Gentleman has misunderstood the point about Lord Colville, who has made a recommendation about section 11 of the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984. That is quite separate from the point that we are discussing. What we propose is within the bounds of the European convention on human rights, which is no doubt why it has been practised in the Republic of Ireland for some time without problems of this kind.

Although I take note of what the hon. Gentleman, who is the leader of his party, has said, unless the newspapers are wrong, I rejoice in the support of his colleague, the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton).

Mr. Julian Amery (Brighton, Pavilion): Why was this decision not taken a long time ago?

Mr. Hurd: I thought that one of my right hon. Friends might ask that. A number of possibilities respecting Northern Ireland have been looked at from time to time. Since the last round of terrorist outrages—I am thinking particularly of Enniskillen—we have been looking again, as Governments should, at options—even at options which have not been adopted in the past. This is one of a series of decisions. As the House will recognise, some remain to be taken and announced by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, but as part of this reconsideration of all options we came to the conclusion that the time was right to take this step.

Mr. Ken Maginnis (Fermanagh and South Tyrone): Does the Home Secretary accept that my right hon. and hon. Friends and I welcome what he has done today? We believe that there is considerable merit in his belated action. The legislation is aimed at protecting, not the intelligent viewer, but young people who can be influenced by the likes of Gerry Adams and Danny Morrison on television.

Does the right hon. Gentleman accept, too, that it will not be particularly helpful if, during election time, members of constitutional parties must desist from making use of the media so as to prevent members of Provisional Sinn Fein from doing so? Has he consulted his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, who is bringing forward legislation dealing with the repudiation of violence by those wishing to stand for council and other elections in Northern Ireland? That legislation is to fill the gap in the Home Secretary's measures so that in the final analysis something equivalent to the primary legislation in the Republic of Ireland—the amendment to section 31—will be provided. In that way, the purveyors of violence will never be able to appear on television.

Mr. Hurd: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his support for what I have announced. I followed the rest of his argument. He knows that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland published some ideas in a consultation paper on the subject that the hon. Gentleman mentioned—the possibility of asking candidates to renounce the use of force. My right hon. Friend is still considering the response to those ideas and,

[Mr. Hurd]

obviously, as he moves to a conclusion on that he will take into account the implications of and the connection, which certainly exists, between that measure and the measures that I have announced.

Mr. Peter Robinson (Belfast, East): Will the Home Secretary take it from me that the people of Northern Ireland will see that it was not he who banned Sinn Fein, but that it was Sinn Fein who excluded itself by its behaviour? Will he recognise that it would be illogical for him to take the decision that he has announced today alongside the fact that Ministers in the Northern Ireland Office refused to meet members of Sinn Fein? The Home Secretary is now refusing to allow Sinn Fein to appear on television and radio. Would it therefore be consistent to permit Sinn Fein to sit in our council chambers and expect Unionist politicians to sit with them?

Mr. Hurd: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his general support. He will know that the further point that he raises has been argued and discussed many times and falls absolutely within the scope of the consultation exercise that I mentioned.

Mr. Seamus Mallon (Newry and Armagh): The Secretary of State has drawn attention to the thoughts and emotions of people who have been bereaved by the actions of paramilitary groupings as those bereaved people watch paramilitary spokesmen on television. Although that is an understandable sentiment, it is not a basis for legal or political decisions. Will the Secretary of State accept that the real damage will be done, not to the UDA or the Provisional IRA, but to the highest standards of judicial and legal practice in this country? Does he accept that he is doing exactly what the gangsters in the Provisional IRA and the UDA want him to do? Those organisations will be laughing all the way to the European election and the district council elections because they now have the street issue that they did not previously have. Would the Secretary of State care to speculate about how many of the hard-line activists in west Belfast, South Armagh and Derry will lay down their guns because they cannot watch Gerry Adams on television?

Mr. Hurd: I have never heard the hon. Gentleman inveigh with that eloquence against the provisions in the Republic of Ireland. I listened to the hon. Gentleman on the radio this morning and thought that he gave a very idealised version of what actually happens. His constituents and those of other Northern Ireland Members do not hear Sinn Fein supporters being grilled by challenging professional journalists. What they hear, and what I used to hear, are supporters of Sinn Fein having the skill to stay just within the law and using the right of direct access to the media to glory in violence and death. We propose to stop that. Of course, the measure in itself is not decisive, because no single measure can be decisive. It is part of the strengthening pattern of action against terrorism and it has an important part to play.

Mr. John Wheeler (Westminster, North): Does my right hon. Friend agree that the overwhelming majority of men and women of common sense in this country will fully understand and agree with the measures that he has proposed? Secondly, does he agree that the measures are not dissimilar to those that have operated for many years in the Republic of Ireland, save that they are considerably more liberal and that broadcasters, whether on television, radio or elsewhere in the media, will not be affected by the proposals when they are reporting events?

Mr. Hurd: My hon. Friend is on the crucial point. This is not censorship, because it does not deal with or prohibit the reporting of events. It deals with and prohibits direct access and its extra impact on terrorism and its supporters. Broadly, we are putting broadcasters on the same basis as representatives of the written press.

Mr. Gerald Bermingham (St. Helens, South): Bearing in mind the looseness of the term—I say that as politely as I can—"and supporters of", will the Home Secretary assure the House that before any organisation or its members are proscribed under the terms of this notice the House will be given details? If that is not done we will lay ourselves wide open to an ever-growing catch-all pool of persons or groups banned from commenting on radio or television.

Mr. Hurd: It would be very reasonable for the House to be kept informed of any variation in the two notices that I have issued.

Sir Giles Shaw (Pudsey): Does my right hon. Friend accept that the vast majority of people will undoubtedly agree with the step that he has taken? What other changes implemented by the Irish Republic in its handling of Sinn Fein might he consider? Will he consider advising those in the European Union of Broadcasting Nations about what he and his colleagues from the Irish Republic have done?

Mr. Hurd: We did not work out this proposal with the Irish Government, but we informed them yesterday of what we proposed. There is an increasing amount of consultation and discussion across this whole range of issues and, as my hon. Friend says, those discussions are not just between the Irish Government and Her Majesty's Government, but go right across Europe.

Mr. Peter Archer (Warley, West): Will the Secretary of State answer the question put to him by the hon. Member for Newry and Armagh (Mr. Mallon)? Have the paramilitaries not achieved one of their major purposes by maneouvring the Government into chipping away at the institutions of a free society? What precedents are there for proscribing the content of a broadcast, not on security grounds, but because the Government find unacceptable the opinions that are likely to be expressed?

Mr. Hurd: I do not agree with that classic statement of the Opposition case. We are not in the ordinary business of the tossing to and fro of arguments and controversy. We are dealing with two things that are different from the traditional arguments. They are the direct impact of access to the media, and the people who use that access, not to out-argue me or the right hon. and learned Gentleman, but to spread the aura of fear that surrounds their acitivities. *[Interruption.]* Conceivably we should have known before, but we think that it is now right to take this step.

Mr. Ivor Stanbrook (Orpington): Is my right hon. Friend aware that, although these measures are welcome, they do not go far enough? When may we expect a statement from our right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland about further measures to be taken against the IRA, including the banning of Sinn Fein?

Mr. Hurd: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has been careful to say that my hon. Friend's last point is kept under review. My hon. Friend should not feel that this is an isolated measure. As I have said, some steps have already been announced. For example, we have announced the proposals that we intend to include in forthcoming legislation to get at the funds of the IRA. Other measures, of which I hope my hon. Friend will approve, will be announced in due course.

Mr. Tony Benn (Chesterfield): Is the Secretary of State aware that his statement will be seen as a massive extension of state control over the broadcasting authorities, and that it is precisely comparable to the ban on the Zircon film and the attempt to ban the Spycatcher book? Any attack on the rights of elected representatives has always historically been seen as an attack upon those who elect them, the people who have chosen to use the ballot to express their views. The powers that the right hon. Gentleman has used are so general that they could be extended to anybody. There is no limit to those powers. I once exercised them when I was Postmaster General. Is he also aware that, as Lord Scarman said on television, it is questionable whether broadcasters will be so timid as to obey the law? There is no moral obligation to obey an unjust law that attacks civil liberties and democracy.

Mr. Hurd: The legal standing of the power is as clear now as it was when the right hon. Gentleman exercised a parallel power.

Mr. Benn: I never did.

Mr. Hurd: The right hon. Gentleman has just told us that he did. There have been occasions, whether in his time or since, when this power has been used, and its legal status is not in question. What it does is to bring into the open, and state as clearly and precisely as we can, an obligation with which the broadcasters have been wrestling, case by case and programme by programme, with some difficulty for many years. We know, and I believe, that although the broadcasters will share some of the disquiet that has been expressed by the Opposition—they would not be human if they did not—as they reflect on it they will see that this gives them a clearer and better way to proceed than they have ever had.

Mr. James Kilfedder (North Down): Tomorrow I shall attend the funeral of a constituent who was blown bloodily asunder by an IRA car bomb. His wife, who was bespattered with the blood and flesh of her husband, had a miraculous escape, but both she and her two children are distraught to the point of extreme agony. Does the Home Secretary know that the IRA put out a statement immediately after that outrage in an attempt to justify its obscene crime—a statement that was a tissue of lies, but was broadcast by the media? Is there not, in addition to the right of free speech, the greater, fundamental right to life, which is being denied to a vast number in Northern Ireland by the IRA, which is the enemy of democracy, and will make use of democracy in order to defeat it?

Mr. Hurd: What the hon. Gentleman has said is necessary, because we find it easy to forget, this side of the water, the kind of emotions which are not manufactured but which are genuine, particularly in the aftermath of such outrages. I would draw a distinction, which I believe is crucial, between the right and duty of the media to report what happens, including the views of all kinds of people, and the right, which I do not accept, of people who support the kind of outrages which the hon. Gentleman mentioned to march into the studio and parade their support for terrorism. It is that which we are addressing.

Mr. Martin Flannery (Sheffield, Hillsborough): Does the Home Secretary not realise that the IRA, and probably the paramilitaries of the other side as well, will recognise this measure as being born of panic? What is new, or what is worse than it was some years ago when he or his predecessors did not introduce such a measure? Why is it being introduced now? They will construe it as their victory. Is the measure a capitulation to the ultra Right-wing of the right hon. Gentleman's party, as embodied in the Tory party conference—the floggers and hangers—which is demanding that he do something like this, which, it seems to me, is against his own essential nature?

Mr. Hurd: The conference was last week, so I do not think that it is entirely relevant to this. I have already answered the hon. Gentleman's question in answering my right hon. Friend the Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Mr. Amery). In a whole range of Northern Ireland policy issues there are several things lying around—issues and decisions that are possible and options that are conceivable. It is foolish for a Secretary of State or a Government to say never in these matters. There are several issues—the hon. Gentleman knows them as well as I do. It is foolish to say never, and it is sensible, as things change, to look again at the different options, to look at them afresh to see whether they make sense in the circumstances of 1988, although they did not make sense in the circumstances of 1986. That is what we have done, issue by issue, and option by option, and this decision is one of the results.

Mr. Tim Rathbone (Lewes): Will my right hon. Friend accept that anybody must welcome the actions of the Government to diminish the threat of terrorism, not only in this country, but anywhere in the world? Will he also accept that hon. Members, on both sides of the House, will welcome his commitment to have a debate on this question because of the real problems raised about the intervention into free speech, which is probably conceived as a short cut to the point raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Orpington (Mr. Stanbrook), who advocated the total banning of those whom my right hon. Friend now wishes to ban from the television sets? I hope that he will be able to develop that argument when we debate this question.

Mr. Hurd: That is an important point. When we come to a debate it will clearly be necessary, in a way which is not possible in a statement, to link the various strands to show how this fits into the pattern which several hon. Members have raised.

Mr. Jeff Rooker (Birmingham, Perry Barr): Is it the case that people will be banned even when it is not known what they will say if they are given the chance of an interview? Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that, unlike the situation in the Irish Republic, hardly a week goes by in this country without some local government by-election? What is to stop the propagandists of the IRA coming over here week by week to seek election in local government by-elections, using the excuse that they are

[Mr. Jeff Rooker]

prevented from talking in Northern Ireland? Has the Home Secretary considered the media circus that will go around if that comes about?

Mr. Hurd: That is an extraordinary unlikely supposition. People would soon tire of that game and find it extraordinarily unnewsworthy. The wording of the notice, in reply to the hon. Gentleman's first and serious point, is that we are talking about—to a large extent this is drawn from the Irish wording—words spoken by a person who appears or is heard on the programme on which the matter is broadcast where the person speaking the words represents, or purports to represent, one of the organisations specified.

Mr. Robert G. Hughes (Harrow, West): Will my right hon. Friend accept that the logic and explanation that he has used to advance his argument today will be appreciated and understood by the British people, as the arguments of the Labour Opposition will be misunderstood and deeply resented by the British people? Will he accept that the British people look to the editors of newspapers voluntarily to understand that they do not want newspapers to be used as a platform for the IRA and its apologists?

Mr. Hurd: The press certainly has a responsibility, just as the broadcasters have. We are not discriminating against the broadcasters. We are bringing them to the same level as the writing press by allowing them to report and by not encroaching on their ability to report, but denying some people the extra dimension of radio and television, by denying direct access to these media.

Mr. Ken Livingstone (Brent, East): Before taking this decision, did the Home Secretary receive any briefing from the intelligence services on the likely impact of this decision on the flow of funding from Canada and North America for the IRA? If he did not, why not? How was it that the IRA managed to sustain itself, decade after decade, from the 1922 bombing campaign through into the 1930s and 1950s, without access to television? Is this not simply a diversion in response to the increased level of violence in Northern Ireland during the summer? Has the Home Secretary not thrown this bauble into the House of Commons, where it will be debated at great length, and with which the media will be obsessed because it affects them, rather than deal with the real problem, which is to find the answer to the violence, either by defeating terrorism, or by negotiating a peace settlement?

Mr. Hurd: We considered this decision over a considerable period and I assure the hon. Gentleman that we took into account every consideration that could be relevant. The decision was not taken quickly or in a panic, as some people have suggested. Of course it is not the answer, as no single measure could be the answer, to the problems of terrorism or of Northern Ireland. What it does is to remove from the men of violence—we have been even-handed in this, as the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara) urged upon us—an extra weapon which the existence of direct access to the media has provided for them.

Rev. William McCrea (Mid-Ulster): No doubt the Home Secretary has heard the "do nothing against the mouthpiece of terrorism lest we offend" brigade. Will he take it from me that the vast majority of people in Northern Ireland, and within the United Kingdom, accept this as a step in the right direction and hope that it will be followed by many other steps to bring an end to the catalogue of violence that the people of Northern Ireland have suffered? Will he also accept that the people of Northern Ireland find it greatly offensive that the spokespersons for terrorism can parade themselves in front of the television screens and gloat over brutal acts of terrorism? It is about time that it stopped, and we welcome this proposal.

Mr. Hurd: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Harold McCusker (Upper Bann): Is the Home Secretary aware that the real welcome in Northern Ireland will be, not for the detail of what he has said today, but for what he subsequently confirmed, namely, that his statement heralds the beginning of an inevitable process designed to squeeze Sinn Fein out of the political system in Northern Ireland?

Mr. Hurd: The hon. Gentleman is paraphrasing boldly. I did not say anything that could reasonably bear that interpretation. I simply said that, as he knows very well, my right hon. Friend is considering a range of possibilities and has published a consultation document. No doubt the hon. Gentleman's party has responded copiously to the invitation, and my right hon. Friend will reach and announce his conclusions in due course.

Mr. Michael Morris (Northampton, South): Does not the evidence of history, such as our troubles in Malaya, and the experience of our European partners, such as West Germany with Bader Meinhof, demonstrate that the one thing that terrorists do not like, and will not accept, is being denied access to the media? What exactly are the sanctions available to my right hon. Friend for those who choose to flout the new regulations?

Mr. Hurd: The two notices are from me to the regulatory authorities, the BBC and the IBA. It is then for them, as regulatory authorities using their powers of discipline, to ensure that those notices are respected. If they are not respected, that is a matter for my action against the regulatory authorities.

Mr. Hattersley: I asked the Home Secretary about the definition of the individuals whose direct broadcasts will be prohibited under these regulations, and other hon. Members pressed him on that point. He said that it was individuals—he was quoting from the notice—who represent or purport to represent the listed organisations. What is the situation if people express equally unacceptable opinions, views on killing and murder, which would be unacceptable to everyone in the House and deeply offensive to the people of the United Kingdom, but can demonstrate that they are not attached formally, or in any way that can be demonstrated, to one of the proscribed organisations? Will they be allowed to broadcast?

Mr. Hurd: They would be caught by paragraph (b). The right hon. Gentleman has perhaps misunderstood the significance of the word "or". Let me re-read paragraphs (a) and (b) for the sake of clarity. They state:

"the person speaking the words represents or purports to represent an organisation specified in paragraph 2 below, or"—

this is the point about which the right hon. Gentleman asked me—

"the words support or solicit or invite support for such an organisation".

Mr. Hattersley *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. There is a long list of right hon. and hon. Members who wish to participate in the next debate. We have had a good run on this statement and I have listened to what the Home Secretary has said. There is to be a debate later and I am sure that these matters can be raised then. I will ensure that those hon. Members who have not been called to put a question have some precedence when we come to that debate.

Scottish and Newcastle Breweries

4.23 pm

Mr. Alistair Darling (Edinburgh, Central): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the proposed takeover of Scottish and Newcastle Breweries by Elders IXL."

The matter is urgent because the takeover bid was launched on Monday, and it has already caused widespread concern and opposition in Scotland and England. The Government's attitude must be made clear as quickly as possible.

The matter is important because Scottish and Newcastle is the second largest manufacturing company in Scotland and has 11 per cent. of the United Kingdom market. Elders has 9·5 per cent. Together they would account for 21 per cent. of the United Kingdom market. Scottish and Newcastle employs 24,000 people—4,000 in my constituency, 6,000 in Newcastle and others throughout the United Kingdom.

Scottish and Newcastle is a successful company. It is not a lame duck, but it is another in a line of companies which have been subject to hostile takeover bids, and this highlights the lack of effective Government policy on takeovers and mergers. The bid would be bad for Edinburgh and Scotland because decision-making would pass to the other side of the world. All that Elders offers is a wholly-owned subsidiary, but control would remain in Melbourne. All that it is offering is a brass plate on an Edinburgh door, and, despite all that Elders says in its glossy publicity and what its paid consultants say, the whole thing is reminiscent of the Guinness affair. It is vital that this United Kingdom company should remain based in Edinburgh. It is vital to Scotland's beleaguered industrial base and to jobs in Scotland and the north of England.

In a recent leaked Scottish Office report, it was made clear that Scottish companies were exposed because of the Government's lack of preparation for the European single market. We must make sure that Scottish and Newcastle does not fall victim to that, and we must protect those companies which have set up and flourished outside the south-east of England. We must not let Scotland and the north of England become backwaters of Europe. We cannot allow the short-term needs of the market to decide our long-term future. In those circumstances, I ask for an emergency debate to discuss the matter.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he believes should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the takeover bid made by Elders for Scottish and Newcastle Breweries."

I have listened with care to what the hon. Gentleman has said about this matter and I appreciate the likely possible impact upon his constituents, but I regret that I do not consider the matter appropriate for discussion under Standing Order No. 20 and I cannot therefore submit his application to the House.

Bradford Council

4.25 pm

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I thank you and the Clerks for the guidance that I have been given on how I can refer to an announcement made by the Conservative-controlled Bradford council today that, at its full council meeting next Tuesday, it intends to restrict entry by the public to the council chamber. I understand that it intends to issue 118 tickets to members of the public who, in the council's view, are not considered to be trouble makers, and to allow a further 50 members of the public to listen to a broadcast of the council meeting in an adjoining room.

There are 45 items on the council's agenda. The council is seeking the ratification of 9,000 council redundancies, the selling of 15 homes for elderly people and the denial of funding to 25 voluntary organisations. I am sure you understand, Mr. Speaker, that there is a great desire on the part of people in Bradford to——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I well understand the hon. Gentleman's concern about this matter, but he must find another, more appropriate method of raising it before the House. It seems to me that it is a matter for the local council, not for the House of Commons. I understand his concern and I hope that he will follow the guidance that I gave him previously.

Mr. Madden: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I do not think that I can help the hon. Gentleman any further.

Mr. Pat Wall (Bradford, North): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. Are we not devaluing the role of this House as the issue has been debated nationally and discussed in the press? The issue of Bradford can apparently be discussed everywhere but in this House. That is a deplorable situation.

Mr. Speaker: I must have regard to the rules of our House and we must discuss here matters which are within our rules and within ministerial responsibility. Both the hon. Gentleman and his hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden) must try to find other ways of raising the matter.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. May I ask you briefly whether you will keep an open mind on the question of applications under Standing Order No. 20 regarding the announcement of 9,000 sackings in Bradford by the Tory-controlled council? The situation continues to develop. Fresh announcements of serious cuts are being made. The whole council system is being gerrymandered on the mayor's casting vote, so I ask you to keep an open mind on this serious constitutional issue.

Mr. Speaker: I understand the significance of this to hon. Members who represent that important city, but, as the hon. Gentleman will be the first to appreciate, I must have regard to the rules of the House. The hon. Members concerned will have to seek other ways of raising the matter.

Defence Debate

Mr. Eric S. Heffer (Liverpool, Walton): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Before we come to the defence debate, I should like to ask your guidance. Two amendments have been tabled to the Government's motion.

Mr. Speaker: Order. It would be more appropriate if the hon. Gentleman raised that at the beginning of the debate. He does not yet know my decision.

North West Regional Assembly

4.30 pm

Mr. Ian McCartney (Makerfield): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to provide for the establishment of an elected North West Regional Assembly as a regional authority and of a North West Development Agency, and to specify their functions and powers; and for other purposes.

When a devolution Bill was last introduced in the House it brought down the then Government. I sincerely hope that my personal proposal will have the same result.

The concept of devolved government for the regions of England, and the north-west especially, is not a publicity stunt. It is a genuine attempt fairly to redraw the political and industrial map of the United Kingdom. The north-west region comprises the counties of Cheshire and Lancashire and the industrial conurbations of Greater Manchester and Merseyside. It has a population of 7 million, and since the industrial revolution it has been one of the two great engines of the British economy. About 4 million people live in the Liverpool-Manchester industrial corridor, and last year they contributed over £31 billion to the nation's economy. That represented 11 per cent. of the wealth creation of the United Kingdom. We are the second most important wealth-creating region in the United Kingdom. Our contribution to the United Kingdom is larger than the income of Greece, which is an equal partner in the European Community.

It is tragic that under the present Government the people of the north-west have been prevented from participating in wealth creation. We are ruled over and bludgeoned by a Government of the south-east who are in and for the south-east. The Prime Minister talks of glasnost and perestroika, but these policies are not put into practice in Britain. Double standards are applied when it comes to listening to the needs of the northern parts of the nation. Since the Prime Minister came to power, unemployment in the north-west has shot up by 91 per cent. I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Eccles (Miss Lestor) and my other colleagues who have stood four square against the 1,200 redundancies announced at the Royal Ordnance factory at Patricroft. We shall not desert the work force or throw it to the asset-stripping wolves of the City of London who are growing fat on the Government's privatisation programme at the expense of the north-west industrial base.

Manufacturing employment in the north-west has fallen by more than 38 per cent. since the Government came to power. Over 350,000 of my fellow north-west citizens have been out of work since 1979. North-west weekly earnings are slipping behind those for the rest of the country. In 1979, male average weekly earnings were £9·30 less than those in the south-east. In 1987, the gap leaped to a staggering £41·60. Local services and democracy are suffering as well. Rate support grant for local authorities in the north-west has been cut by a staggering £1 billion by the Government. Housing improvement programmes have been cut by 80 per cent. Homelessness has increased by 200 per cent., and house building has declined by 35 per cent. There has been a net loss of 20,000 skilled jobs in the north-west construction industry. The Health Service within the region is also in crisis, with 96,000 of my fellow north-west citizens on waiting lists. About 25,000 of them have been on lists for over a year. Is the House aware that 6,400 hospital beds have been closed? The community care programme has been all but suspended.

Those of us who live in the north-west and who are committed to it are hitting back. Local government and private enterprise initiatives are trying to promote tourism, inward investment, alternative industries, improvement of the infrastructure, the utilisation of derelict land and the initiation of meaningful training programmes.

For ideological reasons the Government continue to undermine the most successful municipal airport in the world. Manchester International airport is under pressure in respect of second terminal investment, and the Government have refused to allow the airport to have additional air routes to Europe and the United States. That means that 1,100,000 north-westerners are forced each year to fly from Heathrow or Gatwick, at considerable extra expense, instead of from their own airport. Under the threat of privatisation, one of the great success stories of north-west industry has been put at risk. That is the result of the Government's ideology.

With the abolition of the strategic Greater Manchester council and Merseyside county council, the Government have almost wiped out strategic planning for two thirds of the region. My Bill is about bringing democratic government to the north-west, in the north-west and for the north-west. It would provide for the formation of a 158-member assembly on a four-year fixed term. It would be responsible for strategic social and economic policy initiatives.

The Bill provides for the establishment of a north-west regional development agency, which would be similar to the Scottish Development Agency. Its membership would come from local government, industry, banking and commerce, the trade unions and higher and further education. Its job would be to further economic development, maintain employment, promote industrial efficiency and competitiveness and improve the environment.

We want to create an office of the north-west to co-ordinate and administer the activities of all Government Departments in the region. We want a Minister for the north-west who will be accountable to Parliament and will report to the regional assembly.

The north-west is not looking for favours at the expense of the nations of Scotland and Wales or of other hard-pressed English regions. However, there is a growing feeling among the people—whether they be industrialists, community groups, local government officers, trade unionists or members of chambers of commerce—that there is sufficient talent, skill, ideas and vision to ensure that, if the region is given a chance and resources, those with ideas and vision can rebuild the north-west and govern it to the eternal benefit of the region and of the United Kingdom as a whole.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Ian McCartney, Mr. Keith Bradley, Mr. Allan Roberts, Mr. Roger Stott, Mr. Lawrence Cunliffe, Mr. Terry Lewis, Mr. Tony Lloyd, Miss Joan Lestor, Mr. Jim Callaghan, Mr. Eddie Loyden, Mr. Peter Pike and Mr. Ken Eastham.

North West Regional Assembly

Mr. Ian McCartney accordingly presented a Bill to provide for the establishment of an elected North West Regional Assembly as a regional authority and of a North

West Development Agency, and to specify their functions and powers; and for other purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be printed. [Bill 215.]

Orders of the Day

Defence Estimates

[First Day's Debate]

Mr. Speaker: I must announce to the House that I have selected the amendment in the name of the Leader of the Opposition. As I have said previously, many right hon. and hon. Members wish to participate in the debate. Although this is a two-day debate, I hope that we shall have brief speeches today.

Mr. Eric S. Heffer (Liverpool, Walton): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. It is obvious that an amendment in the name of the Leader of the Opposition must be called. However, there is a further amendment on the Order Paper that has much support in the House and in the country as a whole. This support is not confined to the Labour party or any other party. It would seem right that hon. Members who agree with the amendment should be able to vote upon it. This has happened in the past. Amendments that were tabled on prices and incomes policy, for example, were debated and voted upon. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to reconsider your decision not to select the amendment in the names of 13 of my hon. Friends and myself. We shall then be able in general terms to support the official Opposition's amendment and vote specifically on an amendment that some of us consider to be of the utmost importance.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I wish to support the hon. Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer). It appears that the amendment in his name and those of his hon. Friends is closer to the policy that was approved at the Labour party conference two weeks ago. Is this not an example of the twin-track approach of the Labour party on defence policy?

Mr. Robert Hayward (Kingswood): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. It is stated specifically on page 466 of "Erskine May" that Mr. Speaker will select the most important amendment. That was a ruling given by one of your predecessors in 1919, Mr. Speaker. Given the decision of the Labour party conference on defence policy, the comments of the hon. Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer) demonstrate that his amendment is more important than that of the official Opposition.

Mr. Speaker: "Erskine May" states also that Mr. Speaker makes his selection and gives no reason for doing so. I cannot help the hon. Gentleman in that respect, but I will try to help him by ensuring that he is able to make his case during the debate.

4.40 pm

The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. George Younger): I beg to move,

That this House approves the Statement on the Defence Estimates 1988 contained in Cm. 344.

Due to pressure of other business in the House, today's debate on the statement takes place five months after it was published, but that has given hon. Members of all parties time to digest the report on the statement by the Select Committee on Defence. As we have come to expect,

the Committee has produced a thoughtful and thorough report, and I am sure that the whole House will wish to express its gratitude to my hon. Friend the Member for Hampshire, East (Mr. Mates) and all his colleagues on the Select Committee.

The theme of this year's statement on the Defence Estimates is the maintenance of security in a changing world. The House needs no reminders of the signs of change. Nineteen eighty-eight has seen the start at long last of a Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, and the beginning of the removal and destruction of a complete class of nuclear missile. We have witnessed the beginning, perhaps, of a new era in relationships between East and West.

Those momentous events present us with opportunities for greater security in Europe. They are opportunities we must grasp. Equally, we owe it to the people of this country to explain what the risks are, and to test the avowed intentions of the Soviet leadership by their deeds and not by their words. We owe it to our people to ensure that we do not sacrifice our hard-earned and long-term security for easy and deceptive short-term gains.

Over the past nine years, the Government have carried out our promise to strengthen Britain's defences and to achieve verifiable arms control agreements. If we had followed the siren call of the unilateralists, represented on several sides of the House, today there would have been no intermediate nuclear forces treaty and no removal of the SS20 missiles. In contrast, the Opposition parties have learned nothing and forgotten nothing. The Labour party's policy of unilateralism has guaranteed its defeat in two general elections. Today we find that the Labour party has not one but two defence policies.

I must confess that I have great sympathy with the point raised by the hon. Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer) a few moments ago because, as he rightly pointed out, two alternative amendments have been tabled in the proper way. There is the strange situation that the amendment which has been selected is supported by the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues, but is not the official amendment of the Labour party of which the right hon. Member for Islwyn (Mr. Kinnock) is the leader, and that another amendment, which has not been selected, represents the official view of the Labour party. That puts hon. Members in considerable difficulty in knowing where questions should be raised and to whom their attacks should be directed.

The hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) has not helped very much, because in a speech to the North Atlantic Assembly a short time ago he pointed out that by the time the Labour party comes into office again—whenever that is, although he appears to know—there will be little money left to save on the Trident programme, even supposing that the right hon. Member for Islwyn carries out his undertaking to scrap it and decommission it right away. Unfortunately, that is in complete conflict with the second of the amendments which, as I understand it, is in tune with the official position of the Labour party, which is to scrap Trident and use the money saved on welfare.

I hope that it may be possible for discussions to take place during the next few weeks and before tomorrow between the various parts of the Opposition so that they can decide, and give us all some indication, which policy we are to counter in this debate, by whom it is supported, and the view of the Leader of the Opposition, who has been placed in an enormously uncomfortable position today.

Mr. Ian Gow (Eastbourne): Before my right hon. Friend leaves that point, will he draw the attention of the House to the fact that there is no amendment on the Order Paper in the name of the leader of the Liberal party? My right hon. Friend has rebuked the Labour party, but will he not add some further rebuke to the Liberal party, the position of which on defence is every bit as confused as that of the Labour party?

Mr. Younger: Not for the first time, I am greatly indebted to my hon. Friend for putting his finger unerringly on another difficulty, which I confess I had not noticed. He is right to say that no amendment has been tabled in the name of the Liberal party, but if I understand correctly, that party has ceased to exist—or it has ceased to exist until next year's conference of the Social and Liberal Democratic party decides on its name. That is one difficulty, but the other difficulty—I am grateful to my hon. Friend for bringing this to my attention—is that the official defence spokesman of the Social and Liberal Democratic party is not in his place. I hope that that does not mean that he is unable to be here or that he is ill. However, it is unusual for the official spokesman of any party represented in this House not to be present for a major debate—indeed, the only major debate that we have on the Estimates per year.

Mr. Frank Haynes (Ashfield): The Secretary of State for Defence is a joke today. He realises—and I realise—what my party's policy is on defence—*[Laughter.]* It is not a laughing matter. It is serious. People in this country are behind us and support what we want to see happen. Why does the Secretary of State not agree with the American and Soviet Union policies of getting rid of nuclear weapons, instead of hanging on to them like him and that woman at No. 10? The Soviets and the Americans are achieving Labour party policy.

Mr. Younger: I am greatly indebted to the hon. Gentleman for his joke this afternoon. It reminds me of the pleasant fact that I had the pleasure of speaking after him when he made his maiden speech. I recall saying then that I hoped very much that we would hear him often. I did not realise how important that was and how much I would appreciate it today. We can hear a great deal more from him on that subject and I am sure that the right hon. Member for Islwyn will be glad to hear from him on that.

Mr. Haynes: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I have listened to what the Secretary of State has said about the speeches I make here. I have made many speeches here, but he has not been present to hear them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): The hon. Gentleman knows that that is not a point of order; it is a point of information.

Mr. Haynes: The Secretary of State should come here more often.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Mr. Younger.

Mr. Younger: The hon. Member for Ashfield (Mr. Haynes) is being unduly modest. I have heard many of his speeches and enjoyed all of them.

[Mr. Younger]

There is clearly a large unilateralist policy on the Left of the Labour party and we must recognise that. There is also still unilateralism by stealth among the leadership of the party that the right hon. Member for Islwyn represents. Neither of those two policies provides Britain with a credible defence policy in a changing world. Today, only the Government have any sound defence policy which balances the opportunities and the risks and ensures that we can meet the challenges of the 1990s effectively.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): The Secretary of State has said that he is meeting the challenges. How does he meet the challenge of the 132 non-nuclear nations which have signed the United Nations nuclear non-proliferation treaty and which have called on the United Kingdom to carry out the treaty that we signed under clause 6 to get rid of our nuclear weapons? Does the Secretary of State not support those 132 non-nuclear nations?

Mr. Younger: As the hon. Gentleman says, we are signatories to the non-proliferation treaty. We not only believe in it and support it: we actually implement it. We have been major supporters of the effort to make the first ever reduction in nuclear weapons, about which I will say more in a moment. That is an immense success and is due entirely to the policy followed by this Government and our allies abroad.

We need to be clear about the nature of the changes taking place in the Soviet Union. President Gorbachev has clearly decided that a lessening of external pressures and distractions is required if his programme of internal reform is to succeed. To that end, he must reduce the costs of Soviet foreign policy by abandoning the old and failed policy of intervention and confrontation. The Government have been unstinting in welcoming the greater signs of openness and reform within Soviet society. Unfortunately, we cannot infer from those signs that Soviet leaders have renounced their foreign policy ambitions.

Despite all the talk of interdependence and reasonable sufficiency, and despite the reductions in intermediate nuclear forces under way—which I welcome warmly—there has been no noticeable slowing down in any sector of Soviet military research, development or production. That is borne out today by the latest edition of "The Military Balance" produced by the International Institute for Strategic Studies, reports of which appear in this morning's newspapers.

For example, in the Soviet Union, new submarines are being completed at the rate of one every six weeks. Each day, two new aircraft and eight new tanks roll off the production lines. The Soviet chemical warfare capability remains the largest and most comprehensive in the world. Therefore, we ignore the Soviet Union's military capability at our peril. Soviet leaders may have ceased threatening to bury capitalism, but they show no signs yet of throwing away the spade.

Responding sensibly and safely to changes in Soviet policy is a major challenge for NATO, but the way to meet that challenge is clear. NATO has a well tried and tested security strategy supported, I remind the House, by all members of NATO, whatever may be the political complexion of their Governments. It remains solidly based on the twin and complementary principles of the Harmel report. They are that the Alliance should maintain sufficient military strength and political solidarity to deter aggression and that, at the same time, NATO should seek a more stable relationship with the East in which we can find political solutions to underlying problems. We should adhere to those principles. They have proved their worth. Indeed, the INF treaty is a triumphant vindication of our policy of negotiation from a position of adequate security.

The treaty was a major milestone in at least two ways. For the first time, an entire class of nuclear missile will be eliminated. Secondly, the Soviet Union has accepted the need for asymmetrical reductions to reflect imbalances in force levels and for intrusive verification as an essential part of arms control. To those who fall for the idea that the Soviet Union should get credit for the treaty, I commend the essay in the statement outlining the history of the negotiations.

The fact is that the treaty is very similar to that composed by NATO in 1981. We should not forget, for instance, the claims made early on by the Soviet Union that a rough equivalence in intermediate range systems existed. Similar claims, with as little basis in fact, are now being made in the preliminary rounds of the conventional stability talks. However, the Alliance held firm despite a succession of tactical ploys by the Soviet Union and despite the unceasing efforts in this country of the Labour and Liberal parties and CND to weaken our resolve and our negotiating position.

No amount of sophistry can disguise the fact that the INF treaty is a triumph for NATO and the result of a NATO initiative. Similarly, Western proposals have provided the basis and agenda for the other arms control negotiations. Our priorities are: a major reduction of 50 per cent. in the strategic nuclear arsenals of the United States and the Soviet Union; an agreement on the establishment of a stable and secure level of conventional forces in Europe, in which our aim is to concentrate on the dominating and destabilising Soviet military presence in Europe, with its capability for large-scale offensive action and its readiness for surprise attack; and not least, a global ban on chemical weapons, with adequate verification.

The arms control process depends crucially on openness about military activities. We therefore welcome the limited moves towards Western standards of openness shown by the Soviet Union. Those Western standards are exemplified by the United Kingdom's policy of maximum openness about chemical warfare. We abandoned our offensive chemical weapons capability in the late 1950s. Since then, we have provided detailed information about our former production and stocks of chemical weapons. The exchange of visits between the chemical defence establishment at Porton Down and the Soviet chemical weapons facility at Shikhany followed a British initiative and was a significant move forward.

However, many questions and concerns still remain. It is clear that the Soviet definition of openness remains, even now, very different from ours. In any arms control process, confidence is essential to underpin an effective agreement. We need much more frankness from the Soviet Union about its chemical weapons activities before we can say that we have that confidence.

The arms control journey will be long and complex, but we have a clear idea of our goals and priorities. Reducing the level of armaments cannot be safely an end in itself. Our objective must be to preserve, and if possible enhance, our security at lower levels of armaments. That will be

difficult enough as things stand in any of the areas under negotiation, but it will be impossible unless we as an Alliance maintain our defences, keep our forces—both nuclear and conventional—modern, effective and up to date, and provide the resources necessary to that end.

The NATO summit in March set that out in the clearest possible terms. The summit also reaffirmed the Alliance's continuing common purpose and solidarity. Ours is not a static Alliance. It has evolved over four decades. It was founded in the dark years immediately after the last war. The American military presence on this side of the Atlantic bolstered western Europe as a bulwark against Soviet military power and subversion, and it encouraged the Europeans to make a stand against Soviet ambitions.

At that time, European nations were emerging from the war with demobilised or shattered forces. They could barely scrape together at that time 15 divisions to face the 100 or so across the iron curtain. Those 100 were backed by war industries at full stretch and by the political will to use them to further Soviet aims.

Since then, the European members of the Alliance have expanded in number and in the forces that they contribute to the common defence. Today, we in the Western Alliance can muster about 80 divisions. Something like 90 per cent. of the military manpower and an overwhelming proportion of the tanks, artillery and aircraft stationed in Europe in peacetime and provided by the Europeans. Therefore, we have made major advances in strengthening what has come to be called the European pillar of NATO.

Nevertheless, recent pressures on the United States to reduce its trade and budget deficits have breathed new life into the debate about burden-sharing within the Alliance. Although we must expect the United States to look again at its range of commitments in the light of changes in the world, I am sure that the American commitment to the defence of western Europe will be maintained.

The American contribution of a strategic guarantee backed by a substantial military presence in Europe remains vital to the Alliance's security. Furthermore, it is no more provided out of charity than is our contribution to forward defence in Germany, for Europe represents a vital interest to the United States. Moreover, all our Alliance partners are agreed on the importance of relating any force reductions to solid progress in arms control negotiations.

But we must ensure that the costs and risks of Alliance membership, as well as the benefits, are shared fairly among its member nations. This principle has always been at the heart of NATO, and reflects the fact that it is a free partnership of 16 sovereign nations. We need to take further steps to strengthen the European pillar as a means of strengthening the Alliance as a whole—not, as some would propose, to create a European security identity distinct from the Alliance. That remains neither a desirable nor an achievable aim.

While there is no doubt of the commitment felt by European members of the Alliance, some member countries devote a disappointingly small share of their national wealth to defence. They should give particularly careful consideration to increasing it to levels closer to the NATO average, and we must all consider how we can further improve our contributions to the common defence from the resources available.

Mr. Keith Speed (Ashford): On the question of burden sharing, will my right hon. Friend ensure that the American Congress in particular is made aware of the contribution that this country and other European countries are making— by way, for example, of bases such as Diego Garcia, the sovereign base areas in Cyprus and out-of-area activities such as the Armilla patrol and many others? When I was in Washington, I found there a profound ignorance of what many European defence forces are doing around the world to help and bolster up their American allies.

Mr. Younger: I strongly agree with my hon. Friend. I, too, have found, whenever I have had the opportunity to talk about this in America, that audiences are usually amazed by how much Europe does for its own defence. I am grateful to my hon. Friend for raising that extremely important point. It suggests that, while expressing our efforts more clearly to Congress and to others in America, we must all consider how we can further improve our contributions to the common defence.

European nations are already striving to strengthen their contribution through the revitalised Western European Union and through the Independent European Programme Group. The United Kingdom assumed the presidency of the Western European Union in July. We shall use the period of our presidency to strengthen co-operation among European nations and encourage practical contributions to the common defence. We shall also work to secure a satisfactory outcome to the negotiations on the entry of Spain and Portugal into the organisation. The Western European Union also played a key role in co-ordinating the presence of European navies in the Gulf in the last year, as my hon. Friend the Member for Ashford (Mr. Speed) just mentioned.

We are also seeking actively to extend bilateral links with our European allies, as they can make an important contribution to strengthening the Alliance. In particular, we are examining a number of proposals for closer co-operation with France and the Federal Republic, covering a wide range of defence business, and we have recently agreed to establish a joint study with the Federal Republic to consider how the close links that already bind us can be further developed within the Alliance framework.

European nations have a special role to play in the basing of theatre nuclear forces. These forces give vital support to the Alliance strategy of flexible response. As with other forces, they must be kept properly structured and up to date. That is nothing new. It is part of the enduring responsibility which a full and active membership of the Alliance carries with it. Decisions on these matters will be taken as and when required, and will be reported to the House at the appropriate time.

Sir Peter Emery (Honiton): My right hon. Friend referred to the role of the Western European Union. Does he accept that the North Atlantic Assembly consists not just of the WEU nations but also of the Americans and the Canadians, which means that NATO as a whole is represented in that assembly, that it ought to be encouraged to reflect the political will of the Alliance to as great an extent as WEU and that it ought to play as great a part as WEU?

Mr. Younger: I agree with my hon. Friend. The North Atlantic Assembly is another useful forum in which to explain to our friends across the Atlantic how much the Europeans are doing, and vice versa.

Mr. John Wilkinson (Ruislip-Northwood): My right hon. Friend will remember that he and the British Government most kindly hosted a WEU symposium on research co-operation within Europe in the military sphere. Is my right hon. Friend able to report to the House that any progress has been made on implementing its recommendations, which were contained in the Vredeling report to the Independent European Programme Group —that there should be a single permanent secretariat for the IEPG and a common research fund for military research within the IEPG nations?

Mr. Younger: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. I remember the symposium very well. I shall be in a better position to answer his question in a fortnight's time. Another meeting of IEPG Ministers is to take place in Luxembourg in about two weeks' time. Good progress was made at the last meeting, but we are still awaiting final decisions. However, we are working very much along the lines that my hon. Friend has mentioned. I hope to be able to report to the House before very long that further progress has been made.

To get the greatest benefit from these developments and improvements, we need well trained and highly skilled people. We expect a great deal from our service men and women and from the civil servants who work with them. Happily, they always seem to be able to meet our expectations, but we must not take their efforts for granted.

Consider, for example, the range of professional skills that they must demonstrate—from the traditional skills of the battlefield to state-of-the-art knowledge of electronics and computers. The Army alone has no fewer than 150 different categories of employment. No other work force in the country can match the range of skills and of training available in today's armed forces.

Consider also the diverse tasks that we ask our service men and women to undertake, often in difficult and dangerous circumstances. We have had many occasions in the past year to admire the skill and efficiency with which they perform their operational duties. Nowhere are these qualities more apparent than among the personnel from all three services who support the Royal Ulster Constabulary in the fight against terrorism in Northern Ireland and elsewhere. These qualities have been demonstrated in the light of the recent upsurge in violence which has brought tragedy to so many families, both service and civilian.

We are all aware of the great personal courage that it takes for the security forces to discharge their duties in the hazardous circumstances of the Province, but we should not forget that these duties also require of them enormous patience, discipline and professional expertise. Our troops there face a ruthless enemy who deliberately brings death, destruction and misery to all the people in the Province, to their own community as much as anyone else. Our service men's contribution in enabling the ordinary law-abiding people of Northern Ireland to go about their daily lives in peace is beyond question. I am sure that the House will wish to join me in expressing our admiration and appreciation to those many thousands of service men and women who continue to serve us so well.

A similar level of professionalism has been shown by the men of the Royal Navy, the Royal Marines and the Royal Fleet Auxiliary who have been carrying out the Armilla patrol since 1980 in tense and trying circumstances. The reduced tension in the region means that conditions are now right for the Armilla patrol to move away from closely accompanying British merchant shipping to patrolling the areas of the Gulf most used by British shipping, but we are not reducing the size of our naval forces in the Gulf, and we shall continue to provide protection for British merchant shipping for as long as a significant threat to their safety remains.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): Does the Secretary of State still feel that there is a significant level of danger to British shipping in the Gulf, in view of the decisions taken by Iran and Iraq? How many foreign ships have re-flagged to the ensign in order to take advantage of the Armilla patrol, which many Opposition Members think has been using the British Navy as a mercenary force? Would it not be appropriate to ask some of those countries that have re-flagged to pay part of the cost of the Armilla patrol?

Mr. Younger: I am always grateful to anybody who offers to pay any part of the costs of what we do, but I must resist that temptation in this case. A very small number of countries have changed to British or to British dependent territory flags. The British Armilla patrol has been prepared to accompany only British-flagged or owned ships. In doing so, it is interesting to note that the Armilla patrol has escorted in and out of the Gulf more ships than all other countries added together. As the Armilla patrol is supporting only British shipping, that is a remarkable contribution to the British shipping industry, to our interests overseas and to the rights of world shipping to use international waters. It has been a very fine chapter in the long history of peacekeeping by the Royal Navy.

It is our duty to ensure that we provide the equipment and support that the services need to undertake their multifarious tasks, consistent with operational and value-for-money considerations.

Our defence budget, at £19,215 million this year, is among the highest in NATO, both in absolute terms and in the share it represents of our national wealth. The cash increases in planned provision published in the last public expenditure White Paper enable us to consolidate that post real growth and to maintain our defence spending at a level almost one fifth higher in real terms than 10 years ago. We can thus carry through the necessary modernisation of our strategic nuclear deterrent.

The Trident programme remains on course for entry into service in the mid-1990s. However, the bulk of the real increase in defence spending has been devoted to improving our conventional forces. Since 1978-79, we have spent some £21·5 billion more on defence than would have been the case if expenditure had been kept at 1978-79 levels. Of that increase, only £2·5 billion has been spent on strategic nuclear forces.

We have yet to reap the full benefits of that investment. I can cite various examples of major items of equipment ordered for delivery during the next few years. Twenty-seven of the 64 major vessels ordered for the Royal Navy since 1979, almost two thirds of the 200 aircraft ordered for the RAF since 1979, the bulk of the new armoured personnel carriers for the Army, a further regiment of Challenger tanks, three multiple-launch rocket system regiments and a new air defence regiment equipped

with the Starstreak high velocity missile have still to be delivered, although they have been ordered and are currently being produced.

Mr. A. E. P. Duffy (Sheffield, Attercliffe): The Secretary of State has made claims about the Government's shipbuilding programme that were made, again and again, by his predecessors. It is easy to make such claims—even in this House—and avoid close examination, much less analysis.

The plain fact remains that under this Government the ordering rate for new vessels has been only 1·6 per year. Because of the attention paid to the effectiveness and size of our fleet during recent years, all hon. Members must be aware that even to retain a reduced surface fleet of about 50 calls for an ordering rate of three ships per year. How can the right hon. Gentleman get around those two figures? The Government's record stands at 1·6, against the three ships required to carry out Government policy.

Mr. Younger: The hon. Gentleman knows a great deal about these important matters. It is not surprising that the ordering rate during the past few years has been lower than usual, because we are changing from one type of frigate to another, and there is always a pause when changing to a new type. Of course, the number of ships ordered per year is only one factor in keeping the size of the surface fleet at the required level, which is about 50 destroyers and frigates. The Select Committee clearly said that the required number was, in fact, 2·6 and not three as the hon. Gentleman suggested.

I assure the hon. Gentleman that, through a combination of new ordering of ships and keeping old ships operational until the end of their useful life, we intend to maintain the destroyer-frigate force at about 50 for the near future. I hope that that is the assurance that he seeks.

The fleet is benefiting from a substantial programme to keep our surface escort force up to date, with 10 frigates currently on order. Those include the three new type 23 frigates ordered in July from Yarrows. They will provide a major improvement in our anti-submarine warfare capabilities. We expect to invite tenders for more of those ships next year. Our ability to counter the submarine threat in the north Atlantic will be enhanced further by the three nuclear-powered fleet submarines and four type 2400 Upholder class conventionally powered submarines that are on order. Major programmes are continuing to update the fleet's air defence and mine countermeasure capabilities, and to improve underwater weapon systems and sonars.

The Army's contribution to forward defence in Germany is being strengthened by the formation of 24 Airmobile Brigade, bringing a new degree of flexibility to 1(BR) Corp's operations in NATO's central region. An additional Challenger regiment is in place, and Saxon and Warrior armoured fighting vehicles are being deployed. The most modern equipment, including the SA 80 rifle, the LAW 80 anti-tank weapon, the S10 respirator and battlefield thermal imaging systems, is steadily being introduced. That programme will greatly improve the Army's capability, especially its mobility and firepower. We are continuing to examine both an improved Challenger and foreign options as possible replacements for the Chieftain tank.

The RAF's major modernisation programme is well under way. Two thirds of the strike attack version of Tornado are now in service and the first two squadrons of the air defence variant have formed during the last year. The first squadron of the improved Harrier, the GR5, has started to form. Since the statement was published, the Government have signed a memorandum of understanding for the full development of the European fighter aircraft. That is a major step towards providing the RAF with the next generation of air defence and offensive support aircraft. The Government remain determined to continue to provide the resources necessary for effective defence and to ensure that we get the best value for these substantial sums of money.

During recent days, there has been a good deal of speculation and rather wild allegations in some parts of the press and from some Opposition Members about the sale of Royal Ordnance to British Aerospace last year. I should like to put the record straight. The fact is that we held an open competition and BAe won it. What it bought for £190 million was the business as a going concern, with its weaknesses as well as its strengths. It is all very well to speculate about the profits that BAe may or may not make from developing the sites at Enfield and Waltham Abbey, but the minuses must also be taken into account. For example, BAe faces substantial costs in reproviding the Enfield and Waltham Abbey facilities elsewhere; the company has embarked on a major rationalisation programme which will lead to costs for providing equipment and for redundancy; many of the sites being disposed of will need a good deal of decontamination work before they can be developed; and BAe also took on existing contracts at Royal Ordnance, whether profitable or not.

The benefits that might be derived from any property development depend very heavily on whether planning restrictions for the areas concerned are relaxed. All these factors have to be weighed together, and that was the commercial judgment made by BAe and the other competitors when framing their offers. The Government, as advised by their merchant bankers, Rothschild, believed that the price obtained was very fair. Indeed, it was almost twice the £100 million that Rothschilds advised would have been obtained had we floated the company. That is the answer to all those who try to take one aspect of a perfectly genuine sale while ignoring all the other facts that led to a balanced judgment, after competition, with the best price being obtained for the public purse.

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): As the right hon. Gentleman knows, one of the important Royal Ordnance factories is in Scotland. Will he confirm that it was always open to the Government to reject any offer, even that made by British Aerospace? Therefore, the responsibility for losing finance and resources for the nation, which will now accrue either directly or indirectly to British Aerospace, lies with the Government.

Mr. Younger: There will be no such effect. It was, of course, the Government's decision to transfer Royal Ordnance to private ownership. It is well known how that was done—through competition, with the best price being taken. That fact cannot be denied. The hon. Gentleman knows that the objective—which looks like being attained—is to produce a more profitable, more successful Royal

[Mr. Younger]

Ordnance that can export more successfully. That will be of benefit not only to the country but to the company's employees.

Dr. John Reid (Motherwell, North): Will the right hon. Gentleman comment on the staggering difference between the value of the land when it was sold to British Aerospace and the value of such land if it is sold now? Will he confirm that the excuses that are being given—namely, the distinction between what is called the use value of the land and the market value of the land, which is the get-out for the Department now—are a step backwards for him a reconversion to Marxism?

Mr. Younger: I am not sure about the last point. The hon. Gentleman would be much more of an expert on that matter than I am. On the first point, the clear fact is that consideration of the value of the business as a whole took all that into account. Even if it had not, there was an open competition in which everybody knew all the facts, and the best price was taken.

On his second point about land values, I remind the hon. Gentleman that land values can be affected by many things, one of which is whether land has planning permission. Much speculation has centred upon making exotic calculations about land values without planning permission and assuming that planning permission might be granted. The disposal of land also depends on the condition of the land. Because of its condition, some of this land, if it were to be disposed of, would require quite a lot of money to be spent on it. I hope that that has answered the hon. Gentleman's question.

This year's statement outlines the measures in hand and the successes so far to ensure that resources are used effectively. Civilian staff numbers are now down by over 40 per cent. from 1979 levels. The Department is adopting a new management strategy. By the early 1990s, we shall have a system of budgets for running costs operating in all parts of the Department and in commands. Managers will have greater freedom with approved budgets to determine how best to meet their objectives, for which they will be accountable. We have set ourselves ambitious annual targets for improving the efficient use of resources. These improvements may be secured either by reduced input for the same output or increased output for the same input.

In response to the "next steps" initiative, we are examining two possible candidates for agency status—the Meteorological Office and the non-nuclear research establishments—and how they could provide us with a more responsive and more effective service. Another key element in our strategy is the continued pursuit of a more commercial approach to equipment procurement. The benefits of the more rigorous approach to competition are already apparent. An indication of the savings to be obtained is given by the 11 examples quoted in the statement, which will yield savings of over £100 million, and the competition for this year's order of type 23 frigates obtained significant savings over earlier prices.

We are also redeploying service manpower to enhance operational capabilities. Since 1981, the proportion of Royal Navy personnel serving in the front-line or immediately in its support has increased to 70 per cent. About half the savings of 4,000 uniformed support posts, under the Army's "lean look" programme, have now been achieved, to the benefit of front line units, and the RAF has saved some 1,700 uniformed posts in the support area over the past four years.

In its report on this year's statement, the Defence Committee expressed concern about the defence implications of reduced spending by my Department on research and development. I can assure the House that the primary objective will continue to be to ensure that sufficient R and D resources are provided to meet essential defence needs.

Mr. Tony Banks *rose*——

Mr. Younger: I should press on, to enable other hon. Members to speak. However——

Mr. Banks: I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman. Perhaps if there had been a bit more R and D, scientists and military personnel would have known the size of rifles. I understand that 42 million bullets were bought from India, and it turns out that the rifle bore does not match the size of the bullet. Is that true? How much has that cost the British taxpayer? What is the shelf life of a bullet?

Mr. Younger: I understand that the ammunition in question is no longer satisfactory. I also think that the hon. Gentleman may unwittingly be scoring one of his celebrated own goals, because it was ordered and obtained by the last Labour Government.

The decisions earlier this year to participate in full development of two major collaborative programmes, the European fighter aircraft and the Trigat guided weapon system, are clear proof of the better use of R and D resources.

On the reduction, it has to be recognised that the nation's resources of qualified scientists and engineers, and of skilled manpower to support them, are not infinite. While meeting our essential defence requirements, we must also ensure that the successful working of the civil economy is not hampered. Appropriate restraints on Government-funded defence R and D spending are necessary to free resources for civil work, but companies will be encouraged to offer technology that they have developed for civil purposes when tendering for defence equipments. This approach implies no change in our criteria for selecting new equipment.

Our policy will continue to be to secure the best long-term value for money in national terms in procuring the equipment needed by the armed forces for their tasks. In most cases, that will involve national programmes of development and production or collaboration with our allies. In some cases, as in the past, we shall find that best value is obtained by turning to a foreign supplier.

I entirely share the Select Committee's view that the effects of the constraints on defence R and D spending must be carefully watched, and any disadvantages minimised. My Department fully recognises the need to support and to have access to sufficient R and D to maintain effective defence, while avoiding a situation where such demands might hinder the long-term economic development of the United Kingdom as a whole. Other Departments besides my own will play an appropriate part in this, in particular the Department of Trade and Industry as regards the impact on civil R and D effort.

The House will of course recall that British industry, with the energetic encouragement of the Government, has itself had notable export successes this year, particularly with the memoranda of understanding that we have

concluded with the Governments of Saudi Arabia and Malaysia. The total value of export contracts signed in 1987 was some £3·5 billion.

On the more general point about the defence budget, the House will understand that I can say nothing at this stage about the 1988 public expenditure survey, beyond reaffirming the Government's commitment to a strong and credible defence policy.

The Select Committee recognised that, in the 1987 survey, the Government allocated extra resources to defence over those planned in previous years. This provided broadly level funding in real terms until 1990-91, and some necessary room for manoeuvre in the programme. But there will always be, as we have said, difficult decisions about priorities, of the sort faced every year, and by all Governments, in the course of the usual planning cycle. It may be necessary to make changes at the margins of the programme, to allow for cash pressures, to offset necessary enhancements in capability elsewhere in order to construct a sustainable, balanced programme.

Mr. Derek Conway (Shrewsbury and Atcham): I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for giving way. I shall not delay his concluding remarks. In view of what he has said, and in view of the fact that 50,000 Territorial Army troops are committed to the British Army of the Rhine, will my right hon. Friend tell the House whether the phase 2 enhancements for the Territorial Army are progressing well and are safe from cuts or whether they, too, will be within the remit of "further consideration"?

Mr. Younger: All items in the programme are under consideration at all times, but the expansion of the Territorial Army has gone extremely well. We should like to see it go further, but we require better recruitment and better retention of people in the Territorial Army to get the numbers that we wish.

We have already had to face some difficult choices. We would have preferred, for instance, to buy eight AWACS aircraft, but we had to conclude that we could afford only seven at this stage. We have had to conclude that we should not fit a 360-deg radar to Royal Navy Lynx mark 8 helicopters. Undoubtedly there will be other difficult choices, but we shall maintain all our main defence roles and commitments, as this year's statement makes clear.

Mr. Douglas: Surely the Secretary of State will make some comment about armed forces' pay and the fact that, in 1989, in Scotland in particular the armed forces will have to pay the poll tax. What provisions are being made for some consideration of that and the removal of the anomalies involved?

Mr. Younger: The hon. Gentleman has raised a point that has nothing to do with armed forces pay. The armed forces will be treated the same as every other citizen with regard to the community charge. I do not think that they are likely to be treated in the same way as the hon. Gentleman appears to be planning to treat himself—by not paying it.

The world is changing with regard to arms control. It is changing in a way which presents this country and NATO with new challenges and opportunities. The best means of pursuing those opportunities is to remain faithful to policies which have proved their worth and develop them to meet the new challenges ahead.

We will seek, as we have done, to move to lower force levels, but the journey will be a long one and will be undertaken with caution. The West's need to maintain its security by preserving and modernising the structure, range and equipment of its forces will continue.

In their first defence White Paper, the Government pledged to restore our defence effort to the level needed to give the best possible guarantee of safety and peace, using the most economical means possible. In this one, the Government continue to pursue a programme which has been proved to be successful and has been designed to fulfil that pledge.

5.31 pm

Mr. Martin O'Neill (Clackmannan): I beg to move, to leave out from "House" to the end of the Question and to add instead thereof:

'believes that the plans outlined in the Statement on Defence Estimates, Cm. 344, and in particular the Government's acquisition of Trident which is neither British nor independent, are already having a deleterious effect on the conventional defences of the United Kingdom, especially the Royal Navy surface fleet, and on related defence procurement industries; calls upon the Government to cancel Trident and use resources to secure our non-nuclear defences and to work actively for the reduction and abolition of nuclear weapons in Britain and elsewhere and the adoption by NATO of a strategy of No First Use; applauds the signing of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty by the Governments of the United States and the Soviet Union and would be opposed to any nuclear arms deployment which would undermine the effectiveness of that Treaty; welcomes the progress being made towards a Chemical and Biological Weapons Ban Treaty, and the anticipated 50 per cent. cuts in ballistic missiles which would result from the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks; and further believes that the Conventional Stability Talks will provide the means whereby NATO and Warsaw Pact troop numbers can be asymmetrically reduced, forward troop deployments can be withdrawn, and short-range ground and air-launched dual capable systems can be eliminated.'.

This debate is long overdue. It is five months since the White Paper was published and we are now more than half way through the period of estimated expenditure. I realise that part of the delay is due to the time required for the Select Committee to prepare its report and its commentary on the report. We welcome the report and the helpful, if at times somewhat understated, criticisms that have been made.

Our contention is that after nine and a half years of Government the time has come for a comprehensive defence review that will take account of the budgetary crisis that the Secretary of State skated over in his closing remarks. The review should assess the impact of the cost of Trident on the rest of our defence provision and place Trident in the context of the emerging arms control consensus between the two alliances. It should also consider how we should respond to the challenges made to many of the assumptions upon which the flexible response theory and nuclear deterrent are based.

In the light of the INF treaty and the confusion that exists between the Government and the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany about the time and nature of the modernisation of short-range systems, these matters must be looked at in a cool way. We will endeavour to raise them this afternoon, but I hope that the Secretary of State will bear in mind the words of one of his predecessors, when he said:

"We have a choice. Either we can continue to pretend that there is no problem, that we can wish away the threat or

[Mr. Martin O'Neill]

imagine that the United Kingdom can somehow sustain, replace and enhance its operational effectiveness without a fresh look at how we perform our tasks—what we are doing, and why—or we can continue to drift down the path that led. . . to cuts".—[*Official Report*, 19 May 1981; Vol. 5, c. 160.]

That statement was made in the House by the former Secretary of State for Defence, Sir John Nott. The task which he set himself, and from which he had to back down, is one that the Government, nine and a half years into their period of rule, should look at again. There are a number of problems which must be dealt with and which would strengthen the hand of the Secretary of State in his battle with the real chief of defence at the moment, namely, the Financial Secretary to the Treasury.

Mr. Edward Leigh (Gainsborough and Horncastle) *rose*——

Mr. O'Neill: I should like to carry on, but I shall be happy to let the hon. Gentleman speak in a moment or two.

Since 1984-85, and including this year, 1988-89, defence spending has fallen by 7·1 per cent. in real terms. That may be greater if inflation continues to rise above 4·5 per cent. and the spending outturn falls below the planned level. It is likely that the real reduction over the past five years will be about 8 per cent. I quote those figures from the work of such people as Professor Greenwood at Aberdeen and Dr. Channers at the University of Bradford. They are people from varying positions in the political spectrum but who, as defence economists, come to pretty much the same conclusions. Their work has suggested that up to 1991 the budget will stabilise around its current level, but that will depend upon the Treasury allowing an increase in the MOD cash limit to compensate for higher than expected inflation projections. If that does not happen, we can expect defence cuts during the next three or four years of about 1 per cent. per annum in real terms.

Mr. Jonathan Sayeed (Bristol, East): Will the hon. Gentleman confirm that defence spending by the Government since 1979 in real terms has increased by 20 per cent.? Will he tell the House whether the Labour party, if it were ever elected, would continue defence spending at the same level?

Mr. O'Neill: I confirm the first question. I shall reply to the second question in the course of my remarks.

The decline in certain critiical areas of the budget is in large measure due to the expemditure on Trident during the past three or four years. As expenditure on Trident increases, with the accompamying rise in personnel costs, the funds for conventional equipment will continue to fall. Non-Trident expenditure om new equipment will have fallen by 26 per cent. between 1984-85 and 1988-89, and is likely to fall by a further 10 per cent. up to 1992. Spending on spares and repairs, excludling Trident, will have fallen by 15 per cent. in the five years up to 1989. By June 1991 more than 50 per cent. of the Trident budget will have been spent, with another 10 to 20 per cent. contractually committed. By 1992 it will be in excess of 60 per cent., with savings from the cancellatiom amounting to between £1 billion and £3 billion. Even in those circumstances, the saving will depend upon the contract interpretation.

I say to my hon. Friends who have an alternative amendment that they are deluding themselves if they believe that cancellation of Trident would release countless billions for social expenditure. My contention is that the deleterious effect that Trident spending will have on our conventional defences will require such a response that little of this money could be released from the defence budget in the early years of a Labour Government.

The Select Committee on Defence has pointed out that the difficulties of measuring the cost of replacing equipment in terms of generation-on-generation costs are often far in excess of what even the most sophisticated statistical tools at our disposal can predict. I shall repeat the examples quoted in the Committee's report. A type 22 frigate costs four times the price of the Leander that it replaced. The Challenger tank costs two and a quarter times the price of a Chieftain, and the Sea Wolf costs three and a quarter times the price of Sea Cat. In paragraph 2.11 of its seventh report the Select Committee says:

"There is no reason to think that the effect of this phenomenon is declining; indeed, in the areas of highest technology there is every reason to believe that it is increasing substantially."

It is not the equipment that forms the basis of our defence; it is the quality and morale of our service personnel.

Mr. Leigh: The hon. Gentleman spoke of the need for a review of defence policies. Will he review his own defence policy? Does he recall writing in 1988 in the "Journal of European Disarmament" that he was opposed to END's over-emphasis on human rights in eastern Europe? He said that if it came to a choice between reducing the threat of war and defending human rights in eastern Europe, he knew which course he would take. Will the hon. Gentleman also tell us whether he still believes that the Labour party's commitment to nuclear disarmament is greater than ever? Does he belong to that wing of the Labour party that wishes to consult the British people, or to that wing that wishes to ignore the wishes of the British people? Perhaps he could come clean.

Mr. O'Neill: I was mistaken in letting the hon. Gentleman intervene. I appreciate that, as a lawyer, his capacity wilfully to misrepresent statements is a way of life. My first point is that I do not believe that the process of disarmament negotiations should be unnecessarily involved in questions of freedom and civil liberties at the same time. That is a dangerous precedent that clutters up discussions, and that is something that is accepted by all those who are seriously concerned about the prospects for arms control. I am whole-heartedly behind the present moves to reduce the threat of nuclear war on the continent and throughout the world.

The hon. Member for Gainsborough and Horncastle (Mr. Leigh) interrupted me as I was trying to raise the matter of the pay and conditions of service men, to which the Minister did not refer. I welcome the Government's implementation of the pay review board award. That was necessary, and it is desirable that we seek to treat our troops as fairly as possible. However, it should be borne in mind that, under the new budgetary arrangements, any increase in the amount contained in the Supply Estimates, over and above that increase estimated for inflation, will have to be borne within the defence budget. An inflation

rate of 6·5 per cent. is mentioned, and that means that we are talking of an RPI of 4·5 per cent. We know that that is a gross under-estimate of the ultimate rate of inflation.

This year the Ministry has already overspent its budget for food and accommodation by some £230 million. An ever-increasing element of the defence budget will be accounted for by enhancements to pay and conditions. Unfortunately, such enhancements will be paid for by resulting inadequate equipment and reductions in supplies. Such enhancements must be found within the budget, and they will be at the expense of the kit and conditions under which service people must work. Since 1983 the pay awards to the services have been underfunded by the MOD to the tune of £725 million.

Such is the disenchantment with service life that, in certain critical areas, such as air crews, we are training fewer pilots than are leaving the service. All too many high-grade technicians are leaving the naval technical staff and they are exactly the type of people whom we wish to retain to man our high-tech frigates in the 1990s.

I am surprised that no one has referred to the previous Labour Government and the days when recruitment was lower and resignations were higher. I accept that that took place, but unemployment is now twice as high as it was in 1979, yet we still see valuable people leaving the services at an alarming rate. In constituencies such as mine, male unemployment is still sticking at around 20 per cent., and in some of the villages young adult male unemployment stands at 40 per cent. We do not need to be reminded that unemployment is still the best recruiting sergeant.

We look to the future with some concern, because the Government have not properly taken into account the fact that that cohort of the population between the ages of 16 and 19, who account for about 80 per cent. of recruitment into our forces, will fall from 1·8 million, as recorded in 1987, to around 1·3 million in 1994. I concede that in Germany the population change is more dramatic, but it has established a plan that will take it through to the year 2000 that will accommodate that change. Germany already operates a system of conscription, and we are not talking about such a system. The Government must take into account the changes in the age groups within the population and the reduction in the birth rate, not only in terms of military planning, but because of their effect on the labour market. The cost of such planning must be borne by the defence budget.

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): I wish to refer to what the hon. Gentleman said about the problem as it affects Royal Air Force pilots. Does he accept that the requirements for a modern fast jet pilot are much higher than they were some years ago? The numbers volunteering have not dropped. The problem is finding sufficient numbers of the right quality, and that means aptitude as well as everything else, and included within that is attitude. It has been most difficult to find sufficient numbers with the right attitude. This is a qualitative problem rather than a quantitative one.

Mr. O'Neill: I appreciate the hon. Gentleman's great interest in the works of W. E. Johns, and I recognise his experience in such matters. However, fewer pilots are joining the RAF than are leaving it. It is not just a qualitative problem, and I believe that the hon. Gentleman's comments are a slur on those recruits that are taken on. I accept that the rigour of the training is considerable, but we should consider how to keep those men on whom we have spent so much money and training and who are so valuable to our defence effort.

Population figures are important and the Ministry should anticipate that problem. Perhaps we shall hear something about this in the debate. The pay and conditions of the armed forces are important, and will become increasingly so as there are greater and greater pressures on the labour market.

We recognise and welcome the work that has been done in the "tail to teeth" programme, which is a useful and helpful enhancement of the armed forces. We also recognise and pay tribute to the work of the Territorial Army. We hope that the programme that the Secretary of State instituted a couple of weeks ago will be a success. There have been problems with the TA, and research has shown that its image and conditions have not been as good as they might have been. The Government are now learning a lesson that has been spelt out to them by Members on both sides of the House since they took office.

Mr. Conway: The hon. Member has been reasonable in his remarks, and I am grateful to him for giving way. During the course of the recent election campaign his leader made a commitment to expand conventional forces to counteract what his party was saying to the public about nuclear forces. Given that that commitment still stands —notwithstanding the other amendment tabled by some of the hon. Gentleman's recalcitrant hon. Friends—and bearing in mind the reduction in the number of adult males available for military service, how does the hon. Gentleman marry those two precepts? He rightly says that the Ministry must think about this problem, but, given the commitment that the leader of his party has made, where will those young service men come from? Is he not actively saying to the young British public that the Labour party stands for the reintroduction of conscription?

Mr. O'Neill: I do not believe that there is any basis for that argument. I believe that it is the Government's responsibility to anticipate the dramatic drop in the number of young people who will be available for recruitment within the next five years. That drop will, I hope, be accompanied by a change in the labour market, and any Government taking office in 1992 will have to address that problem. It is incumbent upon the present Government to consider it.

Some of our allies have had to extend conscription and that is fair enough as they have more pressing problems than our own. That has been the German solution, but it is not the British solution. It is not one that I would advocate, and I do not believe that any of my hon. Friends would be prepared to support such a solution. I am not suggesting that the Labour party considers that there is any possibility of the reintroduction of conscription, but the Government have a responsibility to come up with a solution. The Government are making estimates about what they want to spend within the next three to four years, and we are entitled to know what plans they have regarding recruitment. We do not know their plans at present, and surely it is one of the items that should be included in a defence review.

Mr. Duffy: In the face of inquiries from Conservative Members about what a Labour Government would do, is it not helpful to put on record what the Labour Government did in 1978-79 in respect of these two matters

[Mr. Duffy]

with which my hon. Friend has dealt at length? The Secretary of State for Defence is smiling, but I wonder whether he is aware that the Labour Government removed the pay claim from the defence budget. They entered into a commitment to increase defence spending by 2 per cent. I know that that was a NATO sanction, but the understanding was that it would be for conventional equipment. That is the record.

Hon. Members: Answer.

Mr. O'Neill: One must take refuge when one can.

I have dwelt on the cost of personnel, where economies cannot be made. Greatest savings can be made in procurement, and the Government's solution, as I am sure we shall hear tomorrow if not later today, is competitive tendering. That means that, instead of the old cosy relationship between defence manufacturers and the Ministry, where a figure was set for a contract and an additional percentage provision made for increased costs —the cost-plus approach, as it was known—we now have competition between suppliers, and the lowest tender wins. Naturally, if the Government continue to think that the cost is too high, they re-tender, forcing the price down further. That happened with the contract for the latest batch of type 23 frigates.

But that is only half the story. When the Secretary of State does not have the money, or when it is earmarked for something else, it is only too convenient for him to delay the process by requiring a new round of bids. That has the effect of forcing companies into corners, and in shipbuilding it leads to a beggar-my-neighbour, and ultimately a beggar-myself, approach. That is evidenced by the difficulties that both Yarrow and Swan Hunter had in meeting the challenge of the contracting process for the type 23. As a consequence, both the design teams and the work force must be declared redundant.

That tough value-for-money approach is seen in other areas where competitive tendering is inappropriate. The recent contract with British Aerospace for the ROFs' munitions and supplies showed that macho-negotiating can reduce a price from £700 million to £400 million. It could be argued that since British Aerospace is a monopoly supplier it is reasonable to protect the taxpayer, but it is neither reasonable nor prudent for the Government to impose a price and cost regime on a supplier such that the surplus capacity—it was recognised that the ordnance factories were always required to meet increases in demand in time of crisis—would be threatened. That is yet another example of the shortsighted short-termism that so characterises the Government's approach to our industrial base and to procurement generally.

It is certainly true that the way in which the privatisation deal with British Aerospace was finally concluded resulted in an improper valuation of the real estate. We are told that the possibility of getting changes in planning permission was not taken into account. I defy the Secretary of State to give us more than 10 instances from the period when the present Secretary of State for the Environment has had planning appeals before him for the change of use of development land and he has refused it. If there has ever been a Government who are a soft touch for property developers, it is this one. For the Secretary of State for Defence to hide behind such a feeble excuse ill becomes his office and his responsibilities.

Mr. Keith Mans (Wyre) *rose*——

Mr. O'Neill: I have already given way four times, which is a reasonable amount, and I must proceed.

I hope that the Public Accounts Committee will investigate the propriety of the whole privatisation and that the Select Committee will examine the impact of a reduction in capacity on the ability of British Aerospace —the only realistic supplier—to meet our needs in a time of hostility. According to the White Paper, the Navy has sufficient stocks of fuel, spare parts and ammunition to meet NATO requirements, but even now plans exist to eliminate shortfalls. In the somewhat convoluted language of paragraph 310 of the White Paper we read that, although we meet NATO requirements, we do not satisfy the MOD. The Army's performance is not set out so explicitly, but it is stated that substantial resources are devoted to ensuring that adequate supplies of war materials can be obtained. Does that mean that targets are being met? The RAF already meets NATO requirements for virtually all war stocks and has plans to remove the remaining shortfalls.

British Aerospace is being required to cut its capacity because of the strictures of a contract which in the short term may be of advantage to taxpayers, but in the long term may be our undoing. If we strip away the gloss of the Secretary of State's remarks, clearly there are shortages in all the services, and we can only shudder at the problems that could arise. The RAF is merely another example of where the Government pursue value for money in the short term, but will sacrifice the defence of the country in

The Secretary of State gave cast-iron assurances in the House to the work force of the ROFs that their jobs would be safe after privatisation, but he now says that that is not his concern but the responsibility of management. If the management alone were to blame, perhaps we could expect some condemnation from him about the way in which those to be made redundant heard that they would lose their jobs. At six in the evening they switched on their television sets to discover that their jobs were to disappear. Neither the trade unions nor the work force, in any shape or form, were informed on 6 October. The Secretary of State says that it is not his fault or responsibility, but he was responsible for privatisation, for selling the factories to British Aerospace, for the price he accepted and for the deal which enabled the company to reduce capacity and sell the land. He will be responsible, too, for the lives of the service men, which could be endangered if the forces do not get the munitions that they will require in times of hostility.

The picture is similar for other MOD privatisations. We have seen disastrous job losses at Devonport, where more than 5,000 people will have to leave the yard by 1990. The Secretary of State knows my concern and that of the whole work force on this issue. The unions and I appreciate his willingness to meet us and hear the case, but I must say to him what we said in his office: urgent attention must be given to the diversion of additional work to the yard—the Southampton is an obvious case. I realise that it is still somewhat early, but I hope that the work that Devonport has done in the past will be taken into account and that it will be given a fair chance of getting a share of

the work. The Secretary of State must take another look at the docking and rental charges, which he conceded were unreasonably high and impose an unfair burden on that yard.

Mr. Younger *indicated assent.*

Mr. O'Neill: Despite the Secretary of State's nods and sympathetic noises, action must be forthcoming speedily, because a yawning gap will open between the time of the new development and the need to close existing facilities quickly. He owes it not only to the Navy, which has been served so well by the yard, but to the work force and the people of the south-west who have depended on the yard for so long.

The problems that procurement presents for the Government are primarily due to the absence of any coherent strategy. Sadly, the only threat that can be discerned is the attempt to postpone decisions for as long as possible. The MOD is the biggest single customer of Britain's manufacturing industry. It has three responsibilities: to ensure that taxpayers' money is wisely spent and to obtain the best possible kit, to ensure that British industry gets the best possible chance, consistent with taxpayers' interests to meet the needs of the armed forces, and to enable United Kingdom suppliers to plan ahead and so arrange their research and development and productive capacity as to meet future demands in peacetime and war.

We read in *The Sunday Telegraph*, which on defence matters is never 100 miles away from the truth, that we are considering the purchase of a tank from the United States. Will the Minister who is to reply to the debate tonight deny that the Abram M1 tank will be bought off the shelf without even the prospect of production under licence? Will the Secretary of State tell us whether he is satisfied with the fact that AEG and Ferranti are competing over the contract for the European fighter aircraft radar, which is not so much a fight between AEG and Ferranti, but a fight to the death between Marconi and Ferranti, and possibly our last opportunity to have a presence in the new generation of radar systems? Would the Germans or the French behave in that way? I very much doubt it. They have a sense of what one may call undue nationalism about the defence of their industries. But they certainly do not sell the pass in defence procurement, as the British Government do.

The British defence industry is demoralised, despite its success in selling abroad, which success we welcome. The first thing that defence contractors tell us about is the difficulty of obtaining consistency and forward planning from the Government. Just as the deployment of our men and materials requires planning and the development of our new equipment requires foresight and research, so we need strategic thinking for the defence industry to restore the confidence of the managers who run it, the people who work there and the armed forces, whose lives will depend on it.

Behind all the distortions to the budget lies Trident—the weapons system that we do not need, that we cannot afford and that will hardly be ours if it arrives. We know from the Select Committee report that problems have arisen with the capital works at Aldermaston, which will be two years late. The Committee was worried about the implications of those problems for the Trident warhead programme, which would have repercussions for the three other SSBNs that will enter service in the second half of the 1990s.

Equally important is the problem of staffing at Aldermaston and Burghfield because of low rates of pay. The Committee concluded in paragraph 90, in the light of all the prevarication, the misleading statements, the half truths and the economies with the truth from the mouths of officials and others:

"We consider that the MoD can have little cause for complaint if future assurances are not taken at face value."

Trident is the most prestigious programme which the Government are backing, we believe wrongheadedly, but the watchdog of the House—the Select Committee—has said, in the light of the assurances that it has received from the Government, enough is enough and that it will no longer easily take their word for it.

Mr. Michael Mates (Hampshire, East) *indicated dissent.*

Mr. O'Neill: The hon. Member for Hampshire, East (Mr. Mates) shakes his head. Perhaps the Chairman of the Select Committee chooses his words injudiciously when trying to achieve ambiguity in his reports and in trying to ensure unanimity. The hon. Gentleman may not understand what he is saying, but I understand the report all too clearly to mean that he and his colleagues are sick and tired of the short change that they have been getting from the Government in respect of that area of the Trident programme.

The production of the warhead is the only part of the programme that is distinctly British. In almost every other area the work is done under licence from the United States. Last year the Secretary of State said that the warhead was made entirely in Britain, although the Select Committee states at page 22:

"The purchase of elements of the re-entry body and certain warhead-related components within it are mainly incurred in the U.S."

Not only are the missiles American, but the guidance system has been purchased from the United States. The only part that is British built will be the fissile material, which we are having difficulty obtaining at present. Sadly, we are years behind with the construction of buildings and the recruitment of staff, and although we may have the boats we shall certainly have to wait for the warheads.

As my right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) discovered when he visited King's Bay in Georgia earlier this year, the Trident D5 missile pool will provide us with "drawing rights". We shall be able to obtain equipment as and when required, but we shall have to take missiles back there for servicing and the whole process will take about 18 days. If there is a war —I sincerely hope not—we can only hope that the Russians give us three weeks' notice before launching any nuclear weapons.

So much for our independent deterrent. Apart from the problems that are being caused to the services as a whole, the problems of the Navy are manifest in the declining size of the fleet. I had hoped that the Secretary of State would give us the latest figure. In a previous debate we had a running total on a daily basis. One day officials gave the Select Committee a figure, and the next day junior Ministers told us that the figure was slightly more, but that it might be slightly less depending on what happened. Perhaps the Secretary of State will tell us whether it is about 50 or under 40.

[Mr. O'Neill]

We must take account of the Armilla patrol, on which I welcome the Secretary of State's remarks. It has done an outstanding job in difficult circumstances. It is no secret that that is not the easiest place in the world in which to work. I hope that in the very near future, when circumstances allow it, the Secretary of State will consider bringing back some of our men, because the conditions in which they operate are not only dangerous but, in the context of the climate, extremely uncomfortable. We owe that much to the men who have displayed such fortitude and professionalism throughout the operation.

The size of the fleet was the subject of a major report from the Select Committee this year. Referring to the previous report "The Way Forward", the Select Committee said:

"The philosophy underlying that paper has been quietly discarded without being replaced by a Ministerially approved coherent long-term plan for the Navy."

It came out in evidence to the Committee that the confusion derived from the fact that if the Navy wished to participate in a forward maritime strategy, its contribution in more traditional terms to the campaign in the south-western approaches might be limited to a surprising extent.

Yet the entire purpose of the northern maritime strategy has been the highly provacative aim of taking out a large section of the Soviet fleet that is based in the Kola peninsula. It was somewhat inelegantly described by a former Under-Secretary for the Navy in the United States as bearding the bear in its lair. There are grave doubts in the mind of the Norwegian Government about the good sense of having this highly provocative presence in northern waters.

Mr. Julian Brazier (Canterbury): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. O'Neill: The hon. Gentleman has experience in some matters relating to the armed forces, but the Navy is not his specialist subject, so I shall not give way.

The White Paper seems to suggest that the Soviet threat is reducing in the northern waters, because it says that Soviet naval deployments away from home have been reduced steadily during the past two years. It is time for NATO to reconsider that provocative and potentially destabilising strategy which, in purely national terms, debilitates and confuses our contribution to the overall maritime strategy of the Alliance and causes alarm and misgivings among the people whom it is supposed to protect—the Norwegians.

NATO is reconsidering its approach to the modernisation of short-range weapons. The March meeting of the NATO Heads of Government was somewhat confused in its intentions. The Prime Minister's view of what was decided was very different from that of Chancellor Kohl. Perhaps that was because he got to President Reagan the week previously and stitched up the entire deal. He said that there would be no modernisation of short-range weapons in the foreseeable future, which means beyond the West German elections in 1990 and well into the 1990s.

Furthermore, the Germans are most reluctant to replace theatre or tactical weapons. The reasoning for that is clear. No one who lives in either of the two Germanies wants nuclear weapons which, if fired, could either land in his own country or endanger the lives of his family who live on the other side of the border. Even the French, whom we normally associate with the level of bellicosity to which the Prime Minister seeks to aspire, have now recognised that the use of such weapons from within France could result only in their landing in the Federal Republic. The fallout from Chernobyl in central Europe has left an indelible mark on the minds of the people who live there. They now recognise the dangers of blitzkrieg, whether nuclear or conventional.

It appears, from what we have heard from the Secretary of State today, and from repeated statements by the Prime Minister, that they do not begin to realise the political sensitivity of the issue on the continent of Europe. The simplistic and wrong-headed notion that the use of small nuclear artillery shells in the face of massing troop formations will result in the troops' withdrawal, and not retaliation, is incredible.

As we approach the conventional stability talks, the Government should open up a debate on the concept of flexible response. When the upper rungs of the ladder are about to be reduced by half because of the strategic arms reduction talks, when the middle rungs have already been removed, and when many do not want the obsolete bottom rungs replaced, should not Britain, which has its own strategic missiles and 55,000 troops in the firing line in Germany, take a lead in making the first step towards European disarmament by advocating a policy of no first use of weapons for our Alliance? If such steps were taken, we should be seen as a nation that was interested in disarmament.

It is becoming all too obvious that in the management of the post-INF environment Britain is collaborating with the United States in the building up of compensatory systems in Britain. An article in tomorrow's edition of the *New Statesman* will show that the F 111 will be kept in this country for the foreseeable future and that it will soon be equipped with long-range air-launched systems. Indeed, on 5 March this year, the *Washington Post* carried a report that some 50 F 111Gs will be based in Britain under an agreement between the United States and Britain, which was made at a private meeting in Norway last year following the NATO meeting there.

That is contrary to what the Secretary of State told the Select Committee on Defence on 18 May, in paragraph 58:

"no . . . proposals have yet been made".

I realise that when the article appears tomorrow that will be the time for someone to respond, but we in the House are all too well aware that the last people who ever get to know about the deployment of other people's weapons in this country seem to be Members of Parliament. It seems that the first to know are those in the United States, who enjoy the benefits of freedom of information legislation and a press that is a great deal freer and more independent than are sections of the British press.

We are seeing the undermining of the spirit, if not the wording, of the INF treaty. That shows a form of irresponsibility that could endanger many of the discussions on which so many of us place such optimism and hope. Instead of rehearsing the old arguments about the Soviet build-up, does the Secretary of State agree that he cannot have it both ways when he complains about increases in Warsaw pact armaments while at the same time he does nothing about the offers and overtures that Mr. Gorbachev continually makes and to which the Prime Minister never responds? Surely we do not have to wait

until we have a good grip of the United States' skirts before we start talking to the Soviet Union. We should be doing it now.

Mr. Gorbachev has pulled off one propaganda coup after another, while we are cast in the role of warmongers. Of the 13 initiatives that Mr. Gorbachev has taken since 1985, some are important and some are irrelevant, but none should have been rejected out of hand. For example, the offer to look at Krasnoyarsk in return for Fylingdales may be absurd, but when we start obtaining serious discussions about listening stations one would think that it would be of some interest to the country that is the host for that facility in our Alliance.

A NATO Assembly paper of September 1987, written by one of my colleagues in the SPD, Karsten Voigt, stated:

"Like it or not the initiative in arms control is being taken by Secretary Gorbachev. It is therefore incumbent on the Western Alliance that as a matter of urgency it

(a) determine what it actually wants from Arms Control
(b) exploit every avenue with the Soviet Union on how to get there."

As another German, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, said:

"If there is a chance after 40 years of confrontation there could be a turning point in East-West relations, it would be a mistake of historic dimensions to let it slip away because of habits of thought which expect only the worst from the Soviet Union."

Discussions on the conventional stability talks mandate will soon be complete. I hope that we shall play our full role in those sessions and that both sides will take the lessons of the mutual balanced force reduction experience.

With regard to the chemical and biological weapons ban talks, some flexibility would stand us in good stead. One of the interesting points about the White Paper is that it makes no reference, in the area of the chemical and biological weapons ban, to the role of the United States. It is as if the Government do not wish to mention the United States' reluctance to accept our proposals on unchallenged inspections. I hope that credit is given to the sincerity of Soviet intent on that matter and that the Government will find ways of taking advantage of Soviet willingness. If we cannot get a global ban on chemical weapons, at least we should try to proceed to a NATO-Warsaw pact agreement. If we dig in our heels too deeply for a global ban, we could be in danger of allowing the best to become the enemy of the good.

In other areas, the Soviets have shown a willingness to consider asymmetrical cuts. The first display of such cuts was the INF treaty, when the Soviet Union gave up far more than we did. Superiority in numerical terms would appear to be in the Soviets' favour, but in force comparisons we must avoid bean counting. The threat assessment paper provided by the Western European Union stated:

"Sometimes divergent, even contradictory, estimates of Soviet forces or equipment used in public statements by different allied national authorities can only detract from the credibility of the estimates".

That did not come from anyone on the peace wing of the Labour party; it did not come from anyone on the war wing of the Labour party, if one wants to designate it in that way; it came from one of the coolest of the cold warriors in the House, the hon. Member for Halesowen and Stourbridge (Sir J. Stokes) who, unfortunately, is not here, but who, as rapporteur for that WEU committee, made a reasonable and fair point.

Perhaps it is unfortunate that the International Institute for Strategic Studies report, voluminous and valuable as it is, was published today, so that we did not have enough time to look at the nature of the balance. We should avoid over-simplistic bean counting. We should seek the publication of the net assessments, which are presently classified but which are available to NATO Council members, so that we can find out the true picture of the balance between East and West. We should avoid the mistakes of the tank counting, where we still include 23,000 Soviet tanks built before 1947.

We need to look not only at the quantitative matters, but for qualitative contributions to arms reduction that can be seen by the Warsaw pact, by showing willingness to modify and progressively eliminate many of our provocative forward strategies such as the air-land battle plan and deep strike. Those suggestions are being made in a context that involves the UK both independently and as a member of the Alliance. We in the Opposition recognise that there are opportunities for initiatives and new thinking.

The ownership of nuclear weapons and the substantial contribution that we make to NATO are supposed to give us a seat at the top table. In his speech to the Tory party conference the Secretary of State praised the Prime Minister as the leading statesman of the free world. If that is so, she can claim credit for a great deal: the sorry state of Britain's defences, the underfunding of our conventional defences, our distorted Trident-led priorities and our slavish commitment to outdated doctrines of flexible response—all of which stand in the way of lasting peace and disarmament.

I ask those of my hon. Friends who have signed the other amendment to support the official Opposition amendment. If they do not, they will show themselves to be out of touch with the feelings of the breadth of the Labour party and of the millions of our supporters across the country. They will be cast in the same position as the Conservatives, who refuse to participate in the process of disarmament unless it suits their purposes and their distorted view of the world.

In Scandinavia, in central Europe, in the two Germanies and in the Warsaw pact an historic opportunity is opening up. That is why the outdated and outmoded thinking that lies at the heart of these Estimates must be changed by our amendment and why, before next year, the Secretary of State or his successor must institute a wide-ranging review of our defence commitments and of where we shall find the resources to meet them.

6.20 pm

Mr. Michael Mates (Hampshire, East): This is the first defence White Paper debate to take place since the hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) was catapulted into his present office by the somewhat quixotic early-morning departure of his predecessor. I congratulate him on the way in which he has mastered some of the complexities of a wide-ranging subject. I should like to say that he has mastered his brief, but, nice chap though he is, it is beyond him or, I suspect, anyone else. To speak for the Labour party on defence matters is an almost unmasterable brief. Nevertheless, I wish him well in what must be the most uncomfortable seat in the shadow Cabinet.

Before I come to the substance of my remarks, I want to say a word about the rationalisation of the Royal Ordnance. I am not surprised that the hon. Member for

[Mr. Michael Mates]

Clackmannan spent so much time talking about that, or that the loutish tendency behind him shouted and screamed at him—anything rather than talk about Labour's defence policy. There has been no foul or fix. I think that I am right in saying that it was Sir John Nott who first tried to move Royal Ordnance in this direction when he was Secretary of State. My right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) had a go at it, too. Nobody wanted it then because it was unsuccessful, unprofitable and inefficent. The changes made over the years were enough to persuade some people that it was worth buying. It was put out to competitive tender and went to the highest bidder. One or two of the other bidders might well have been preferable customers, but the going rate was assessed in fair competition and paid.

That is the end of the matter, except to say that, sad as it is when jobs are lost—that is always sad—the following must be said. The Ministry of Defence has just let another contract of about the same quantity, guaranteeing the same amount of procurement over the next five years; Royal Ordnance, in private management, will do that with 2,000 fewer people. There is a moral in that for us all: under public ownership industry is not efficiently run, and that is the beginning and the end of it.

I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for the kind remarks that he made about my Committee and the report that we produced on the White Paper. As the hon. Member for Clackmannan constructed most of the first half of his speech around what we said, it seems that the Committee got the balance about right. In the nine months of its existence in this Parliament the Select Committee on Defence has had a busy year. We produced nine reports on a wide range of subjects. I hope that they are of help to the House and show that we are genuinely trying to do the job that we were set up to do. We have visited troops in Northern Ireland and in Belize. We have been on a carrier in the North sea that was taking part in an exercise, and, most recently, we visited exercise Teamwork in north Norway—a large NATO amphibious exercise. That was all in addition to introductory visits to the three headquarters—Wilton, Northwood and High Wycombe. So it has been a busy year for the Committee, and I am grateful to my colleagues on it for the extra work that they put in to make all the visits and reports possible. I know that I speak for them all when I say that we are grateful to the staff who worked so hard to allow us to produce the amount and quality of reports that we have issued.

There have been nine reports, some more controversial than others. I suppose that the one that hit the headlines the most was the one about the surface fleet. A number of my hon. Friends will no doubt speak about the Royal Navy's capacity, so I shall confine myself to saying that, despite the MOD's reply to that report, I see no reason to change a word of it. I hope that the fruits of what we have done, culminating in the acknowledgment by the Secretary of State that our estimate of the ordering rate required was correct, and his commitment to meet it mean that what was a challenge—it was not a crisis—to the Government's intent has been properly met.

I shall confine my remarks to the widest issue in the White Paper and the report that we wrote on it—the size of the budget and its forward commitment. That obviously presents the greatest difficulty. It will not have been lost on the House that certain talks have been taking place in seaside towns—perhaps even in London—in the past week or so. I do not believe everything that I read in the press, but I am sure that my right hon. Friend has had to fight robustly for the funds that he thinks he needs to carry out the job that the Government have given him. If my spies are correct, I think that he is not doing too bad a job fighting defence's corner.—[An HON. MEMBER: "Could do better."] Let us wait and see what emerges. Time will tell how successful he has been. This is a serious matter and we should not laugh about it.

If my right hon. Friend has been locked in mortal combat with the Chief Secretary, I hope that when he went to see him he took with him not Mr. Gorbachev's statements but some of the reports that our Committee has produced over the years. We are establishing a track record of making forecasts that are more often right than wrong. In our report on the White Paper of 1985-86 we said:

> "The principal conclusions we draw from our survey of the defence budget . . . to 1988-89 are:—
>
> —that following the ending of the commitment to annual growth of 3 per cent."

there would be a slight reduction. That is now common knowledge. We further said

> "that management of the budget and improved efficiency alone will not avoid consequent cuts or delays, particularly on equipment;
>
> —that there is a risk of an adverse effect on operational capability, but not in itself amounting to the ending of a major role or commitment;
>
> —that any further economies will have a direct effect on capability".

Some of us suggested that from about 1989 onwards the hard decisions about which the Secretary of State has told us almost every time he has visited the Committee would become pressing and would have to be taken.

That is why it is so important that, even though the atmosphere is better and siren voices are saying and will say in this debate that now is the time to stop spending on defence, that Mr. Gorbachev is a nice man and that the Russians do not intend to threaten us further, we must still look at what they do, not at what they say. It is against the background of my right hon. Friend's remarks about the Russians' rate of build and their daily increasing offensive capability that we must set our needs for a defence budget. Although my right hon. Friend could never have said that to us, this was a crunch year.

It is important for all of us who care about our country's defence not to slip from the very high standards that we have set ourselves for nearly a decade. That is why I am certain that common sense will prevail, if it has not already prevailed. We look forward to hearing that our commitments will be met not because of some arbitrary increase or decrease in budget but because the Ministry of Defence is determined to get the best value for money. The procurement executive is doing that and saving millions of pounds. We have a team of Ministers determined to see our commitments, some of which are growing while others, mercifully, are receding, carried out by fighting troops of all three services backed by a Government who are really behind the job that they are doing.

That is the criterion by which I feel sure my right hon. Friend carried on discussions with his colleagues. It is axiomatic to say that they have listened to a sensible argument. The worst argument of all, the worst decision, would be for us to come down from our plateau of efficient

operation of defence forces for the sake of a ha'porth of tar. We must allow the defence budget the money that it needs to fulfil these commitments.

6.31 pm

Mr. Eric S. Heffer (Liverpool, Walton): I regret, Mr. Speaker, that you were unable to select the amendment standing in my name and the names of some of my right hon. and hon. Friends. Some Conservative Members may think that, because some of us are passionately in favour of unilateral nuclear disarmament, we want to leave our country without defences. I have great memories of what war did to my family. I had an uncle in the first world war who refused to fight with weapons and decided to become a medical man in the war. He was killed in battle and received the Military Medal as a result. My father was wounded three times in the first world war. His leg was shattered and to his dying day he had difficulties with that war wound. Many of my uncles were involved. None of my brothers were involved in the second world war, because they were dead by the time it started.

Not unlike some other hon. Members, I did not have a gallant and wonderful war. I spent four and a quarter years in the RAF and like many others I was lucky to survive. I have always regarded the time since the end of the war as borrowed time. It has been a bonus to continue to be alive. I make those points because many people who take the stand that I take have been accused of not believing in the defence of our people and our country. That is absolutely untrue. I was proud to be in the Royal Air Force and I am proud to have been in the Royal Air Force Association since the war. I am not saying that we are not concerned about the future of our people. It is precisely because we are concerned about it and about the future of mankind that we take our point of view.

I think it was Arthur Koestler who said that once the atomic bomb was dropped the whole nature and character of war was changed. He said that we no longer lived in the situation that we had before that bomb was dropped. That is true. I do not know what hon. Members who were alive at the time felt when that bomb was dropped. I remember the horror that people felt about a whole city being practically wiped out and about all the people who were killed or maimed. I remember the horror of the second bomb. From that time, we have lived under the shadow of the atomic bomb and we must think in those terms.

I note that the Government clearly see the changes that are taking place in the Soviet Union. Their White Paper says:

> "We are now at last beginning to see signs of change in the Soviet Union, reflected elsewhere in Eastern Europe. At home, Mr. Gorbachev has set in train a series of wide-ranging reforms. Abroad, he has argued the need for 'new political thinking' in the nuclear and space age, and has laid stress on the growing interdependence of the countries of the world community."

That is right, but I have never believed that the Soviet Union wants to dominate the world. Over the years I have been one of the greatest critics of the internal regime in the Soviet Union. I would never have wanted to live in a society where the state apparatus and the party machine dominate the lives of everyone, and in which there is no free discussion, dissent and argument. If I had lived in such a society, I would probably have been one of the first people to find out what the inside of a Russian concentration camp was like, because I believe passionately in free debate and discussion. If we do not have that, life is not worth living.

As I say, I have never believed that the Soviet Union wants to dominate the world. We have reached the present position precisely because over the years people in the West took the view that Soviet troops and armour were ready at any moment to march into and dominate western Europe. The Soviet Union marched into various parts of eastern Europe because it wanted to create buffer states. The Soviet Union suffered—my God, how it suffered—in the second world war, in which 20 million of its people were destroyed. The Soviet Union will never forget that war. We would not be here now—certainly I would not be here—if the Soviets had not lost so many people, because we would have been living under a German fascist dictatorship.

Mr. Brazier *rose*——

Mr. Heffer: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will forgive me if I do not give way. I do not want to break the flow of my argument.

At one time, I was the only Opposition Member who attacked the Soviet Union for going into Afghanistan. I was the first Opposition Member to say that I did not agree with what happened in Afghanistan. The Soviet Union was wrong, and I argued all the way that it was wrong. Now that the Soviet Union has recognised the stupidity of going into Afghanistan and is withdrawing its troops, are we suggesting that it is about to land massively in Britain, in Westminster, with armoured troops to dominate this country? It is an absurdity, and the Government have gone part of the way to accepting that it is an absurdity, so why are we not going the rest of the way? Why are we to be stuck for ever with this?

The INF treaty has not changed the position very much. It has changed, but to what degree? At the height of the cold war, we argued that it was vital for us to get rid of nuclear weapons, but when we began, on an international scale, to reduce such forces, we said that we did not need to get rid of our nuclear weapons because it was being done on an international scale. It is even more important now that we do it than it was in the past. It underlines the argument that we were using. It does not detract from the point that we were making: that is the real issue.

Earlier, Conservative Members sneered when I asked whether our second amendment was to be selected, and they asked which side of the Labour party I was on. I regret that my hon. Friend the Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) talked about a peace party or a war party. I do not believe that anybody in our party is in the war party, and I have never believed that. I do not believe that any member of my party wants to see warfare or to see nuclear weapons or is, in any case or at any time, in favour of nuclear weapons. There is an honest argument about how we get rid of those nuclear weapons. It is not a question of whether we are in a war or a peace party. We all want to get rid of nuclear weapons.

Sometimes, Conservative Members want to get rid of nuclear weapons, but at the same time they want to build them up, back those who are making them and get more and more of them. I have been disgusted by the Prime Minister. She goes around the world making wonderful speeches. Repeatedly in this House, she has said how much

[Mr. Heffer]

she welcomes what Mr. Gorbachev is doing in the Soviet Union and how she welcomes his openness and how she can do business with him. Then she says that we should not trust the Russians or believe what they are doing, and that we must continue to build up our nuclear weapons. In the last part of his speech, my hon. Friend the Member for Clackmannan was right to say that, while the United States of America, together with the Government, is rebuilding and developing nuclear weapons—with which none of us agree, which we do not want and which we are exposing—it is also saying how much it is in favour of what is happening in the Soviet Union.

Such people should remember that Mr. Gorbachev and those like him who want to get rid of nuclear weapons so that the Soviet Union can build its economy on a new basis, rather than on a war basis, need the assistance, sympathy and support of everyone because the generals and the Right wing are looking over their shoulders. They do not want changes; they want things to go on as they have been. The Government have been helping such people by taking the attitude that they have taken.

My party conference had a serious debate on nuclear weapons, and not for the first time. Ever since the first party conference I attended, 30-odd years ago, we have been having that debate. I remember us debating it, and the rank and file—I suppose I will have to put it in those terms—won the debate on one occasion, when Mr. Gaitskell was there. He got that decision knocked over in the next election. *[Interruption.]* We make decisions in our conference. We do not go along and cheer the great leader, or leaderette, or whatever she is called. We had that debate, and we have been having it consistently, and we did not arrive easily at our decision. It took us a long time and much argument and discussion, but we finally came to that decision. I am delighted that this year my party conference reiterated a policy decision that we have now had for a number of years.

The second amendment is in line with that decision. We tabled that amendment before the Labour party conference reaffirmed the decision, so confident were we that the decision would be carried. We had no hesitation in tabling it. We are arguing for the cancellation of Trident. I did not quite understand what my hon. Friend the Member for Clackmannan meant when he said that practically all the money for Trident had been spent, so that we were deluding ourselves. It is always a good idea to read the relevant documents before coming to debates such as this so that one knows what they say. On page IV of its third report, the Select Committee on Defence says:

"The programme continues to include a substantial contingency provision—£1,251 million or some 20 per cent. of the remaining expenditure . . . As far as the progress of the *Trident* programme is concerned, the conclusion of the Comptroller and Auditor General in July 1987 is still valid".

I know that this was written in April of this year, but it was still valid then.

The Committee report continues:

"the bulk of the expenditure still has to be incurred, and the sterling cost of the US part of the programme is vulnerable to any future unfavourable movement in exchange rates. The US missile development programme is significantly more advanced than the United Kingdom Trident programme and there is no indication of any US problems which would jeopardise the UK programme. However, some sources of risk to the UK programme remain, particularly in the building works and AWRE capital programmes and also as a result of shortages of specialist staff in MoD weapons system software".

The point is:

"the bulk of the expenditure still has to be incurred".

The Committee also says:

"Thus expenditure during the coming two years will be £1,866 million, or on average £77·75 million a month."

What could we do with £77·75 million a month if we cancelled Trident straight away? We could use that money to help the Health Service or other services, and some of us do not believe that, having got rid of nuclear weapons, we should use the money saved for building up the conventional side of the weaponry. I shall rest my case on this point.

Mr. O'Neill: I am grateful for the comradely fashion in which my hon. Friend has addressed my remarks. However, I should point out that the public expenditure White Paper published in January this year says that by 1991-92 all but £1·8 billion of the cost of Trident will have been expended. We shall have to take it that the Government will continue until then. These were the figures that I was using, and we shall have to agree to disagree on our sources.

Mr. Heffer: That often happens with disagreements, but, even on the basis of those figures, we are arguing that it should be cancelled. If the Government remain in office, it will not be cancelled, but even the figure given by my hon. Friend the Member for Clackmannan could be put to good use instead of being spent on weapons of destruction. Let us just think about that. All the money that we use on those weapons is sheer waste. How wonderful it would be to provide people with decent homes——

Mr. Tony Banks: With education.

Mr. Heffer: Exactly—with education. My hon. Friend is making my speech for me. He is absolutely right on all those points. That would be wonderful, instead of using the money on weapons which, in the end, may never be used and which, after a period, will go out of existence because they will be outmoded. Let us think of the money that could be used to help people—that is our argument. That is why we shall continue to argue that case and why I regret that I shall be unable to vote for the amendment tabled by the official Opposition. I have set out what I believe in and what my party believes in, and we shall have to look seriously at the official amendment. At the present moment, I should not like to say what I will do.

6.53 pm

Sir Antony Buck (Colchester, North): I am grateful for the opportunity to follow the hon. Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer). I have great respect for him, but I profoundly disagree with him on defence and with the amendment to which he has put his name. He suggests that the money spent is wasted. It is not wasted. That "defence" money has preserved peace in Europe for the longest period that Europe has ever had. It is not wasted, for the same profound reasons that caused the previous Labour Government to maintain a nuclear deterrent. Those reasons are valid today and were put forward by a Government whom the hon. Gentleman supported.

I do not doubt the hon. Gentleman's patriotism. His popularity is self-evident, judging by the way his billets doux are coming in. His patriotism—I hope to have his

attention—is not in doubt, but Conservative Members and probably a majority of his hon. Friends think he is profoundly misguided. It is sad that he is seeking to deal with yesterday's situation. As a result of the unity of purpose between many Opposition Members and Conservative Members, Europe has experienced its longest period of peace, and we are all devoted to maintaining that peace, although we disagree about methods of so doing.

In one respect this is a sad occasion because Sir John Biggs-Davison, the late Member for Epping Forest, is not here with us this evening. I hope that I will be forgiven for mentioning him because I was with him in Angola just before his death and, looking back through past *Hansards*, I see that he has made valuable contributions to our defence debates. For Conservative Members, he was the acceptable face of the Royal Marines. The hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown), the ex-Royal Marine who leads the Social and Liberal Democrats, is not entirely acceptable to us.

My hon. Friend and I were together in Angola in difficult circumstances. That trip will no doubt be billed as a parliamentary jolly, but it comprised two middle-aged politicians—my hon. Friend suffering from cancer and the effects of chemotherapy treatment and myself with minor ailments, such as back trouble and others that I will not mention in such a serious debate—in a grass hut in Angola. All hon. Members were fond of and shared respect for my hon. Friend, and they will be glad to know that we learned a great deal and had a great deal of fun. Sir John laughed so much about the marvellous instructions for the outside lavatory facilities next to the grass hut in which we slept. There was a "thunderbox" with a straw hut about it. The firm instructions were, "Before you sit down, look inside to make sure there isn't a snake or a scorpion there." That was perhaps the acceptable face of a parliamentary jolly.

We watched the UNITA forces—this is perhaps a little more in order than my last remark—tackle an assault course with great vigour; vigour worthy of the Royal Marines of which our former hon. and gallant Friend was a member. As they came over the assault course, robust non-commissioned officers were firing, "Bang, bang, bang," at their feet. We both stepped forward to look at this as we thought they were firing blanks. We were told to step back quickly because it was live ammunition and it was nearly a case of two Members of Parliament being shot in the foot by their friends, although I shall not comment on that further.

That was a classic occasion and John came back undermined, no doubt, by the chemotherapy that he had undergone, but invigorated in spirit by the trip. He stayed on for a little while in South Africa, but I had to come back. It was a matter of enormous distress to all of us that, because his health had been undermined by the treatment and the robust time that we had had, he succumbed so rapidly to pneumonia and other ailments. The sympathy of the House goes out to his family as the regard in which he was held was not confined to Conservative Members or to the Royal Marines, but extended to Opposition Members and to those who were not of his political persuasion. They all respected his integrity.

I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister, when he winds up the debate, will deal with the future of the amphibious capability of our armed forces. That was dear to Sir John Biggs-Davison's heart and is dear to me and many other hon. Members. We must now decide whether Fearless, Intrepid and other parts of our amphibious capability should be maintained and, if so, how. Perhaps the Minister will be able to update the House on how that will be done, as the devotion of hon. Members on both sides of the House to the Royal Marines is considerable.

That matter concerns our local and domestic, but very important, capability, I should like to mention next a broader matter before dealing with other matters involving our forces. This is our first debate without Lord Carrington as Secretary-General of NATO and it is appropriate for the House to pay tribute to the work that he has done.

Mr. Duffy *indicated assent.*

Sir Antony Buck: I see the hon. Member for Sheffield, Attercliffe (Mr. Duffy)—like me, a former Navy Minister—nodding agreement.

We should pay tribute to what Lord Carrington has done in the defence sphere over so many years and to his important work in NATO. It is not an easy task to keep together a disparate organisation such as NATO with so many different constituent members.

The only matter over which I have had a minor disagreement with Lord Carrington—"quarrel" is perhaps too strong a word—was over the geographic limitation of the operation of NATO. I have always thought that there was something to be said for recasting NATO as the shield of the western world—a world with western values—rather than confining it to the geographical guidelines of NATO. There has been flexibility of approach through the establishment of special deployment forces which can go outside NATO, but I should be glad to hear from the Minister about the Government's thinking on this aspect of NATO's affairs.

Best wishes and firm support go out to the new Secretary-General of NATO, to Mr. Wörner, certainly in toto from this side of the House and, with respect, in the main, from Opposition Members too. It is appropriate that we send—this is the first opportunity that we have had to do so—a message of support for and confidence in the new Secretary-General. It should be an exhortation of encouragement to him and an affirmation of our support.

We are extremely lucky that there is such tremendously high morale in the armed forces. Some hon. Members have suggested that there is disunity and demoralisation, but that is not so. I have no doubt that if a Labour Administration were returned, the morale of the armed forces would plummet. I accept that there is not a monopoly of concern about defence matters on the Government Benches for I know that Opposition Members care about defence. The difficulty is that in the Labour party there is a substantial minority whose defence policy is akin to that of many Scandinavians—fortunately, fewer now—which is to send a telegram stating, "We surrender."

Mr. Tony Banks: That is not true.

Sir Antony Buck: We have debated the issue in my constituency, where I found that there were unilateralists who took almost precisely that view. I accept that they were few in number.

Mr. Banks: The hon. and learned Gentleman referred to the Labour party.

Sir Antony Buck: The hon. Gentleman is a Whip, and no doubt he has engaged in a more accurate count of those in his party who take such a view. I concede and hope that there are not very many.

Mr. Banks: On invitation, I shall visit the hon. and learned Gentleman's constituency on any occasion, if he will have me, to debate the issue. He must understand that what he has suggested is not the policy of the Labour party. It is not even the policy of those who say that we should not have nuclear weapons, that we should relinquish them unilaterally. We believe that the country is best defended by being united within. We shall not merely send out a surrender note.

Sir Antony Buck: I am delighted to have that exhortation of support for firm defence policies. I accept that the hon. Gentleman takes that view. Unfortunately, a minority—I am prepared to accept that it is a small minority of those who have allegiance to the Labour party—do not take that view. I shall be delighted if the hon. Gentleman will come to my constituency. If he does so, my majority will zoom. I shall be delighted to have him in my constituency at any time.

We should all be proud of our armed forces. It would be inappropriate, however, if I were not to say a word about Northern Ireland. I do not think that any armed forces other than ours could have sustained the Northern Ireland burden. Certainly no other armed forces could have sustained it with such forbearance and expertise. A message of support for the activities of those in our armed forces should go forward from both sides of the House. Their self-restraint and performance is something of which we should all be proud.

I see our armed forces being maintained at the present level. It is important that we ensure that they are properly and fully equipped with the latest equipment, whether in the Navy, the Air Force or the Army. We must have an assurance to that effect from my hon. Friend the Minister when he replies. I am sure that he is as determined as my right hon. and hon. Friends to see that they are so equipped in future.

I represent a garrison town, and I have been in close touch with the armed forces over many years. I know that they are in good heart. We must ensure that they are sustained by a continuation of proper support by way of equipment and otherwise. If my hon. Friends the Ministers are in difficulties with the Treasury, they had better inform us fairly soon. There will be many supporters of maintaining a proper level of defence expenditure. That may not be sufficient to provide everything for which the Chiefs of Staff ask, but we must ensure that the efforts of the armed forces are sustained by the provision of first-class equipment. That is their entitlement. I am sure that many hon. Members on both sides of the House will be determined to ensure that that happens.

Meanwhile, I thank my hon. Friends on the Front Bench for what they are doing. They are maintaining the credibility of our defence effort within NATO and they are giving just sufficient support to our armed forces to ensure that their superb expertise is supported by being equipped with the finest equipment at all levels. They are entitled to that.

7.6 pm

Mr. John Cartwright (Woolwich): Despite the fundamental differences on defence policy that have been revealed in the debate, there will be general and widespread satisfaction that it takes place against the background of much more encouraging East-West relations than we have seen for many years. We have the historic INF treaty and the progress towards a 50 per cent. cut in strategic missiles. There is the prospect of an early start to conventional stability talks. These talks offer the prospect of securing what surely all sides want to see—greater stability of security at lower levels of military deployment.

Although we welcome the progress that has been made, we must not fall into the trap of assuming that everything before us will be plain sailing. Despite the much greater sense of realism and pragmatism that Mr. Gorbachev has shown, the removal of the threat of Soviet conventional military superiority in Europe will not be easy. NATO is correct to define its negotiating position on the conventional stability talks as concentrating on the aspects of Soviet military power that are threatening to western Europe and that give rise to fears of a surprise attack.

The NATO concept of equal ceilings that limit the numbers of tanks, infantry fighting vehicles and artillery on both sides is a logical response to the current situation. If it is agreed, it will reduce much of the unease that is now felt in western Europe. The removal of the threat of Soviet armour would at the same time remove the most powerful military justification for short range and battlefield nuclear weapons. That is another argument for following up the current NATO priorities.

To persuade the Soviets to accept ceilings of 90 per cent. or 95 per cent. of NATO's current deployment will involve them accepting massively unequal reductions. Despite the INF precedent, that will not be easy. We shall not see the swift progress that some might have us believe. In the meantime, we see no obvious evidence of any slowdown in the Soviet military build-up. Therefore, it seems prudent common sense that we remain on our guard. We must maintain effective levels of defence and deterrence, while negotiating as toughly as we can to secure reductions of arms on both sides.

We have all watched the Secretary of State's spirited rearguard action against the Treasury with great interest. It seems to have taken place in hotel bedrooms and elsewhere. We are aware of the problem of the defence budget. We do not know how successful the right hon. Gentleman has been, but we know that, however successful he has been in his negotiations with the Treasury, it will not be the end of the story. Pressures on the defence budget are here to stay.

The Secretary of State has often made it clear that difficult choices must be faced in making the best use of available defence resources. Some of the choices will undoubtedly affect the capability of our forces to carry out the tasks that are assigned to them. The Government have consistently refused to review existing defence roles. They have consistently declared their determination that they will all be maintained. As the Select Committee on Defence states in its report, which is before the House, the question is how well this can be done, not whether it can be done. That seems to underline the widespread fear that defence resources are now being stretched too thinly to meet too many commitments.

The pressures are increasing. Each new generation of weapons systems will cost at least twice as much in real terms as those that they replace. We have the additional problem of manpower costs. For example, the cost of service pay and pensions has increased by 30 per cent. since 1984-85. Expenditure on equipment within the defence budget has fallen this year from 45·5 per cent. to 43 per cent. There is a risk that it will fall to a still lower percentage because of the pressure on manpower costs.

As other speakers have pointed out, we shall soon have to face the emerging problem of demographic changes—the time bomb that has been ticking away for years. In the early 1990s, the number of 15 to 19-year-olds in the population will be down by 30 per cent. When I have referred to that in previous defence debates, Ministers have said that they are well aware of the problem of demographic change, but that it can be dealt with by ensuring that the pay and conditions of the armed forces keep pace with those provided outside.

In response to that assurance, I would point out that competition for the available young people in our population will be very fierce in the 1990s and beyond. We shall need substantial pay increases to keep pace with what is offered in civilian life, so that we ensure adequate levels of recruitment and, more importantly, retain those trained personnel—key personnel—who will be in demand by civilian employers. Not only pay but conditions of service and the general quality of life in the armed forces will have to keep pace with improving opportunities in civilian life, if pressure from wives and families is not to persuade more of our key personnel to leave the armed services.

The prospect is of continued and growing pressure on the defence budget. The Government have produced one welcome response—a tougher and more commercial approach in the relationship between the Ministry of Defence and defence contractors in an effort to obtain better value for money in defence spending. I welcome that, but I cannot believe that the savings produced will be enough to bridge the gap between demands and resources.

It cannot seriously be argued that cancelling Trident would produce substantially extra resources to improve conventional defences. We can debate how far advanced the Trident programme is now, or how far advanced it will be by 1991. Cancellation now would not release massive new resources to improve conventional defence; cancellation costs would involve the nation in a massive waste of public money in converting half-built submarines into some other purpose and in scrapping the warhead production at Aldermaston—and that is in addition to the costly impact on employment levels throughout the defence industry. There is no magic solution in the cancellation of the Trident programme.

The one ray of hope in a fairly gloomy resource prospect is that all NATO members are facing similar problems. That has reactivated the old interest in burden-sharing and in rationalisation within the Alliance. The impetus comes from the United States, which is determined that Europeans should shoulder more of the burden of their own defence. That is not a new argument from the United States, but it is being presented with much more force because of the anxieties about the United States budget deficit. That American determination has been expressed in many different ways. For example, the Taft commission has toured western European capitals twice during the current year. There have been attempts in Congress to make United States defence spending conditional on greater Allied defence efforts.

Clearly, the problem will not go away, and we must take it seriously. It is sometimes presented too simplistically. Deputy Defence Secretary Taft, for example, recently split the 16 NATO nations into four divisions based solely on an arbitrary assessment of the level of their defence spending. The counter-argument from the Eurogroup is equally predictable. It is true that Europeans provide 90 per cent. of NATO's manpower; 95 per cent. of its artillery; 85 per cent. of its tanks; and 80 per cent. of its combat-ready aircraft. It is equally true that, in mobilisation strength, 7 million troops could be provided by the Europeans, compared with 3·5 million by the United States. However, such arguments do not cut much ice with the American nation, which is convinced that it is carrying too much of the burden of defending Europe and that it should be showing rather greater interest in other parts of the world.

There is a need to break out of what has been a fairly sterile argument about input figures for defence spending contrasted with output figures of force levels. NATO's secretary-general, Manfred Wörner, warned us in July this year that the

"burden sharing debate must not be allowed to degenerate into a numbers game or a trans-Atlantic slanging match".

That is sensible advice. There is no point in wasting a great deal of time and effort searching for some magical equity between each of the Alliance partners. That would be as elusive as searching for the philosopher's stone.

NATO technicians were reported to be hard at work on a burden-sharing formula as long ago as 1951. We do not have a lot to show for their efforts in the intervening 37 years. That is partly because rationalising our defence efforts depends on political will, and there is an understandable fear that national sovereignty will be threatened. Faced with current pressures, we cannot go on with unseemly arguments about who is spending most, who is doing most and who is freeloading. We need a rational assessment on who can do what best on behalf of a united NATO Alliance.

Within the Alliance, we now have a NATO executive working group which is examining the roles, risks and responsibilities within the Alliance to try to improve our collaborative defence effort. That offers us the opportunity to make some real progress at long last. The aim was well defined by Professor David Greenwood of Aberdeen university in a paper that he produced earlier this year for the North Atlantic Assembly, which stated:

"The Alliance must look to the distribution of tasks among its members, to remedying the fundamental inefficiency that exists because each member seeks to maintain a broad spectrum of national military capabilities. In short it must contemplate some measure of role specialisation—an intra-Alliance division of labour in the performance of roles and missions, based on the comparative advantages of different countries in different forms of defence provision."

That involves some loss of national sovereignty, but the days when any one European member of NATO could provide on its own the full range of defence capabilities have long gone. All European nations within NATO now face the same problems: growing pressures on defence budgets, falling manpower resources, and the growing and powerful United States insistence that Europeans must do more to defend themselves. The logical response is to grasp the opportunities provided by closer European defence

[Mr. John Cartwright]

integration within the NATO Alliance. The aim must not be to try to replace the United States effort but to complement and supplement it.

We have talked about these issues for many years. We cannot now escape the need to get on and do something about them. I urge the British Government to accept a leading role in seeking to establish a genuine and effective European pillar in NATO.

7.17 pm

Mr. Keith Speed (Ashford): I think that I agree with almost everything that the hon. Member for Woolwich (Mr. Cartwright) has just said. His remarks about NATO's role concentration are sentiments which all of us, whether working for the Western European Union, NATO or the Government Front Bench, accept. All of us in NATO must do a great deal more to bring that about because, as has already been said, resources are limited.

This debate is bizarre because there are two Opposition amendments—or, rather, there is an official Opposition amendment and another Opposition amendment. The Opposition Front Bench are speaking to what is apparently not official Labour party policy. It is certainly not its conference policy. The hon. Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer) made a moving speech on the second amendment. I did not agree with most of it, but I was certainly impressed by the thoughts, the philosophy and the undoubted feeling behind it which, as I understand it, represents the Labour party's conference policy and the policy upon which he and many others will no doubt be fighting the next election. I do not know what the great British public will think of all that, but I do not think that that is a constructive attitude for an official Opposition on such a fundamental subject as defence.

I turn to more constructive thoughts. I congratulate the Select Committee on Defence, of which I used to be a member, and my hon. Friend the Member for Hampshire, East (Mr. Mates) and his colleagues on a number of excellent reports, including that relating to the White Paper and the one relating to the Royal Navy and the surface fleet. Over the years Select Committees on Defence have asked the Ministry of Defence questions about the numbers of ships, the budget and the squeeze on resources that they forecast several years ago. They did not always receive answers that were relevant or carried a great deal of weight.

At the end of the day, the way to cut expenditure is either to cut commitments or, as the hon. Member for Woolwich said, increasingly to have role concentration in concert with our allies. Under this and virtually every Government since the war, we have successively increased our commitments while at the same time we have restricted and denied the resources to meet those commitments. I need only state some of the commitments for that to be self-evident. They include the British Army of the Rhine, our forces in the south Atlantic and out maritime and air forces in the eastern Atlantic. They also include the Armilla patrol and offshore patrols for oil and fisheries protection; also, as I am sure my right hon. and hon. Friends saw, a Ton class minesweeper which patrolled off Brighton as part of the security for the Conservative party conference.

We have many commitments in different parts of the world as well as to NATO. We are not entirely fulfilling our NATO commitment, and in that we are not alone as no other NATO country is doing so. However, we know that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence now faces a major and important battle with the Treasury for the last tranche of expenditure that he deems necessary. He deems it necessary, I deem it necessary and I believe my right hon. and hon. Friends deem it necessary.

I must tell my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary and his team in the Treasury that at this stage I do not wish there to be unilateral disarmament for the United Kingdom by stealth from the Treasury Bench, for the following reasons. First, there are problems with personnel. The hon. Member for Woolwich and others were right to highlight that. There are not simply problems with pay or conditions of service. Increasingly, nuclear watch keepers, technicians and pilots face real competition from the outside world. For example, a pilot who may be a squadron leader or a lieutenant-commander is aware that his salary cannot compete with that offered by, for example, British Airways or KLM. It goes further than that.

Whether we like it or not, there have been profound social changes in this country and in the western world. We have heard much about family life, which for many people means spending evenings and weekends at home, enjoying a regular existence from nine to five and spending a lot of time with one's wife and children. Undoubtedly, there are problems with particular aspects of service life stemming from foreign travel and long periods at sea. We have heard about the sea-shore ratio today with more of the Navy's front line spending more time at sea. That causes many difficulties, which reflect pressures and forces on our young men and women. Even if they have been trained in the services, they do not stay in the services or give a full return for their training.

We must address that problem, which is not unique to this country. Every NATO country which does not rely on conscription for its full professional forces faces that problem. Reference has also been made to the demographic time bomb. That problem has been grossly underestimated by the Ministry of Defence, by British employers and by others.

There are problems also with equipment, and reference has been made to a figure of about 50 frigates and destroyers. That figure has not been plucked from the air. The Select Committee on Defence examined the issue very carefully. It is an important figure. It represents a minimum required to fulfil our national and NATO commitments. It is a rock-bed minimum to fulfil our NATO force goals, as my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and his colleagues are aware.

About 50 really is not good enough. There should be 50. Fewer than 50 will not be good enough to support the present rate of shipbuilding of type 23 frigates. With the greatest respect to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, for whom I have a great deal of time, it is no use saying that we can run on some of the existing ships. A Leander frigate has 100 more crew than a type 23. That is wasteful of skilled manpower and very expensive. The chief petty officers, petty officers and junior officers are the people we find it difficult to retain at present. There are also heavy costs involved in running those old ships, which are steamships compared with the modern gas turbine type 23.

It may be argued that we can run the type 21 and type 42 destroyers longer. All those ships were designed in the 1960s. The Leanders were designed a decade before that. If the Falklands showed us anything, it was that we must have state of the art technology to deal with a state of the art battle. The type 23 is designed for that. It is designed to be our state of the art anti-submarine platform.

The present very low rate of shipbuilding is no good for commercial shipyards, which are important. We must keep that capability. It is also no good for the maritime activities of Rolls-Royce. Although it has an excellent export record, it needs to continue to supply the Royal Navy. It is also no good if we want to maintain the number of ships that the Select Committee stated was vital.

The problem with equipment goes further than the Royal Navy. The tank situation is a scandal. I am worried that we may have to go abroad for tanks. The present electronics and optics of existing British tanks are not good enough. It worries me that we have to withdraw from international competitions because our tanks are not good enough to compete with tanks of other forces. Select Committees have referred to that problem in the past.

There are areas in which we do not do our service men or ourselves a favour by pretending that all is well. We must modernise our tanks and have the minimum number of ships to carry out our capabilities. The same thing could be said about helicopters and aircraft.

My hon. and learned Friend the Member for Colchester, North (Sir A. Buck) has already referred to the long-delayed decision about an amphibious capability, on which the whole future of the Royal Marines rests. The amphibious capability will not just provide a future for the Royal Marines; it is right for NATO's northern flank and everything that we are supposed to be doing in that important part of the world. The continuing uncertainty about that capability is not doing much good for the Royal Marines, the Royal Navy or for our partners in NATO in that part of the world.

Mr. Mans: Does my hon. Friend agree that he has put his finger fairly and squarely on the dilemma regarding role specialisation and buying equipment from this country? He mentioned the importance of role specialisation earlier, yet he has just referred to the importance of buying a new British tank.

Mr. Speed: With respect to my hon. Friend, I did not refer to the importance of buying a British tank. I said that I was very unhappy because it looks as though we may have to buy a tank from the United States or Germany. I believe that we should have an indigenous armoured fighting vehicle and tank capability in this country. I am certain that we need a new tank for the next decade. If it cannot be provided from our resources, at least I hope that it can be built here, even if it must be from a design from abroad.

Our first priority must be to get the kit and equipment, which must be among the best. It cannot be second best. I was greatly impressed by the Leopard 2 and Abraham tanks. If we can produce a British tank as good as those —and I hope we can—fine, but time will not wait. There is also a constraint on money, and I know that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is aware of that.

Mention has already been made of the real problems posed by Gorbachev's era of perestroika and glasnost. Many people make the point, which was perhaps encapsulated in the speech made by the hon. Member for Walton, "Don't worry. We can afford to cut our defences. We can afford to give up our nuclear and other capabilities because all is now going to be right with the world." If that is so, why are the Soviets continuing with an enormous tank programme? Why the Oscar 2 and the Typhoon 2 submarines? The Oscar 2 submarine is not even a strategic nuclear missile submarine. It is designed to attack surface ships. It has on board cruise missiles and SS19s with a range of about 240 nautical miles. The Oscar 2 submarine is 510m long and nuclear-powered. It is virtually unsinkable by conventional weapons.

Why are the Soviets building two nuclear-powered conventional aircraft carriers? Why are they building submarines of the Akula class, one of the quietest submarines in the world and extremely difficult to detect? When we look at what is happening we see no sign, despite all Mr. Gorbachev's words, that, on military procurement, the Soviet Union is cutting down its expenditure on submarines, aircraft, rocket launchers, artillery and tanks. The Soviets are still building overseas bases in Syria and elsewhere, notwithstanding Mr. Gorbachev's speeches about closing down overseas bases and withdrawing to the Soviet Union. That is not happening at the moment.

We need at least an extra £1 billion to meet the problems faced by our armoured fighting vehicles, our amphibious capability and the frigate force. The Ministry of Defence could save considerable sums of money in a number of areas. If there were an office reduction programme in line with the dockyard and workshop reduction programme, there might be quite a saving on real estate and people. The Ministry of Defence has offices dotted all over London—some leasehold, others freehold —that must be costing a great deal of money. We all know how high office rents and capital values are in London. Does the Ministry need all those offices? We have heard a great deal about the diminishing number of admirals, generals and air marshals who are needed for the shrinking number of aircraft, ships and tanks, but what about the square feet of office space? That is one exercise that ought to be carried out.

Secondly, do we really need—all within 100 miles of each other, and within commuting distance of London —Farnborough, Boscombe Down and RAE Bedford—all very valuable real estate? They are doing an excellent job, but the functions of all three could be concentrated on two sites and one could be sold off. The mind boggles at its capital value. It would make the Royal Ordnance factory sales seem a mere bagatelle. Substantial sums of money could go into the Ministry of Defence coffers and be used for the sort of jobs that my hon. Friends and I want to have done. Getting rid of these large capital commitments has revenue implications. I suspect that a great deal more could be squeezed out of the Ministry of Defence's real estate, but that there is not very much more to be squeezed out of the front line, whether it be the soldiers, sailors and airmen or the dockyards and the support facilities. I ask my right hon. Friend to have a really good look at that point.

However, even if the Ministry of Defence sold one of the airfields or got rid of three major office blocks tomorrow, that would not solve the short-term problems. I hope that the Treasury has been listening to this debate and that it will give to my right hon. Friend the extra money that he needs this year. We are far from being out of the wood. The Alliance needs to do a great deal more,

[Mr. Speed]

not least to make sure that we have a strong hand to play within the Alliance in the conventional disarmament talks that have hardly yet begun.

7.33 pm

Ms. Joan Ruddock (Lewisham, Deptford): Yesterday evening British television showed American technicians destroying physically, under the scrutiny of Soviet observers, the first cruise missiles to be removed from Western Europe. I am certain that ordinary people around the world felt a degree of satisfaction and enhanced security at the sight of those pictures. This unprecedented step towards real nuclear disarmament is symbolic of the profound changes that are taking place around us—changes which, while superficially described in the White Paper, have clearly not impinged on the thinking of the British Government.

We are witnessing nothing less than the crumbling of the old post-war order, with its cold war certainties and rigid policies. New thinking and new expectations are challenging established totems, which would have been unheard of even a few years ago.

In the Soviet Union signs of change are increasingly evident, despite what Conservative Members have said, in the new language of modernisation and democratisation. New thinking is challenging accepted ideas not only in internal Warsaw pact relations but in the ideas of security and defence. The stranglehold that the concepts of "deterrence", "strategic superiority" and "parity" have had on super-power thinking show signs of weakening. In his book "Perestroika" Mr. Gorbachev speaks of amending the USSR's

"strategic concepts to gear them more to the aims of defence".

In his public statements he speaks of "reasonable sufficiency" as a military goal. According to United States military experts, this represents a fundamental shift from a military doctrine of offence to defence.

I suggest that Soviet willingness to make asymmetric cuts in military forces could allow a restructuring of the armed forces of both NATO and the Warsaw pact so as to preclude surprise attack. It is a shift in thinking that is clearly advantageous to the West, offering, as it does, the solution to the British Government's frequent assertion that it is the imbalance of conventional forces that determines the need for nuclear weapons. But where in the White Paper and where in the statement that we have heard tonight are the Government's plans? Where are the Government's responses to these remarkable new ideas? Perhaps the Secretary of State will enlighten us.

In the United States, too, a re-evaluation is going on, largely precipitated by its changing economic role in the world. Faced with a decline in economic pre-eminence, the United States is confronting an enormous budget deficit at the same time as there is a challenge to its world view. Recent reports suggest that the Pentagon is aiming for cuts of around $227 billion, so it would not be surprising if the $150 billion poured every year into NATO by the United States is receiving sharp scrutiny and demands that European countries should contribute more towards the costs of NATO.

Many of the signals coming from the United States are contradictory, but few doubt that America's increasing interest in the nations of the Pacific rim and its strategic interests worldwide will lead to a re-evaluation of its European role.

These discussions are echoed in Europe, not least in the Western European Union. The successful conclusion of the INF treaty has raised many questions about the kind of defence that is needed in Europe, ranging from suggestions of a third European nuclear super-power to proposals for an ultimately non-nuclear Europe.

What is the British Government's response to these times of change? I shall give two examples. Last November the Prime Minister stated:

"What I think we have to watch is that there do not grow up substructures in Europe which could have the effect of undermining the links across the Atlantic."

In May, the Secretary of State for Defence said:

"We have been looking at perestroika and at the speeches of Mr. Gorbachev and we have not found much which justifies any decrease in our efforts to keep up our defences."

The Government are in the forefront of opposition to change. I can express it no better than a man who, I believe, may be a friend of the Conservative party, Christopher Coker. In his recent publication, "Conservatives and Defence," he writes:

"The ignorance, complacency and ill-placed sense of moral and intellectual superiority of the Conservatives have prevented them from observing the changed nature of the strategic environment. As a result, they have failed to devise policies which would enable them to deal with the reality now confronting them. It is the Tories who now appear to be encouraging the most dangerous trends of all."

The Government fear, above all else, the collapse of the old post-war, cold war order—an order that gave Britain an ostensible role as a major power, a role that has never had much substance and that masks Britain's real place in the world as a middle-ranking power. Yet the Prime Minister persists in an old-fashioned subservience to the United States that not even the Americans want. There is no special relationship, other than that of dependence. Britain is dependent upon the United States for the construction, delivery, maintenance and, indeed, use of the so-called independent nuclear deterrent. Our defence policy continues to be formed on false and nostalgic premises.

I had hoped that some of the new thinking might just have crept into the "Statement on the Defence Estimates," but I found none. Instead, the White Paper devotes only a few paragraphs of grudging acknowledgment to Gorbachev's reforms and the importance of the INF treaty, followed by pages of traditional cold war nonsense about the Soviet desire to impose their will upon the world. The immense frustration engendered among Opposition Members by such attitudes is shared by many of our European partners who recognise that the British Government are standing in the way of better East-West relations. The Italian Prime Minister obviously felt that recently when he sarcastically told Britain's Foreign Secretary that the European Community could not wait for the Soviets to adopt Victorian values before talking to Mr. Gorbachev with one voice.

The White Paper—and, indeed, the Secretary of State this evening—makes the time-old assertion that NATO strength brought about the INF treaty. The fact is that that treaty came about largely through the persistence of Mr. Gorbachev, who called NATO's bluff by accepting the zero option originally proposed—and it is on record—precisely because NATO believed that the Soviet Union would never accept it. In practice, the Government's

response to the INF treaty has been mealy-mouthed. As far as we can glean—and we have only a dribble of information—the Government are wholeheartedly committed to a so-called modernisation programme that will allow compensatory deployment of new nuclear systems. That will make a mockery of the pictures on television last night and will circumvent the INF treaty. The new plans will bring in United States sea-launched cruise missiles under NATO control, develop new air-launched stand-off missiles, upgrade nuclear artillery systems with weapons of longer range and higher explosive power and deploy more United States nuclear bombers. With those new systems following so soon after the INF treaty, no breathing space is being allowed to test out new thinking and to allow for the consideration of less confrontational developments.

Perhaps the Secretary of State could tell the House why that is happening and why, in the defence Estimates, there is no explicit mention of the cost and implications of those new weapons systems. In particular, why are the Government showing their indifference to the peace process by their enthusiasm for modernising short-range nuclear missiles, even though—as my hon. Friend the Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) said—the German Government are so clearly opposed to such modernisation?

The Government also appear to have back-tracked on one of their policies. Their lukewarm support for a comprehensive test ban treaty has now been reduced to support for the principle of such a treaty. Perhaps the Secretary of State could say why, together with the United States and France, Britain voted in the United Nations against resolution 42/26B last November, which called for a cessation of nuclear testing. The resolution was supported by the Soviet Union and it was passed in the United Nations. Since then, several countries have called for an amendment conference to be convened to discuss converting the partial test ban treaty, to which Britain is a signatory, to a comprehensive test ban treaty.

Will the Government now give a more positive response to that initiative? Will the Secretary of State say whether they will back the call for an amendment conference? I guess that it is more likely that he will tell the House, yet again, that verification is a problem. I must tell him that it is now commonly agreed that seismic tests can detect explosions down to a threshold as low as 1 kilotonne. Even if he cannot bring himself to believe the scientists, he might at least acknowledge that by the time any such treaty were concluded the rapid advance in technology would mean that verification would satisfy even him.

It is clear that the Government's policy offers nothing new or radical, just more of the same old incantations that we have heard from the Conservative Benches tonight. Yet, no matter how loudly the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State keep chanting those messages, they cannot arrest changing perceptions. Even Conservative Members appear not to be immune. In a recent poll almost half of the Conservative Members who replied expressed support for Gorbachev's declared objective of a nuclear-free world by the year 2000, and 98 per cent. showed support for the START proposals for a 50 per cent. cut in strategic systems, despite the implications for Britain's purchase of Trident. The right hon. and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan) has displayed previously unsuspected radical tendencies with his call for a Europe free from short-range nuclear weapons and a tank-free central Europe. Furthermore, in a recent Gallup poll, 61 per cent. of Conservative voters were opposed to modernising nuclear weapons and wanted more negotiations for further reductions. The Government are way out of step with the wishes of their supporters, let alone the country.

Instead of nostalgically clinging to outdated ideas, Britain should be in the forefront of post cold war thinking. That is our major challenge. Although it may be hard for Conservative Members to understand, we are dealing as much in the realm of ideas as in arguments about hardware. As the recent Brundtland report said,

"We must learn to think globally and in a long-term perspective. We share the responsibility for a common future. We must change our perceptions so that sustainable development and the conservation of our planetary heritage comes to the forefront."

We can no longer afford the luxury of simple nationalism and of ignoring the effects of our actions upon our neighbours. National security no longer means just protecting our nation from the threat of invasion. It must mean dealing with the much greater and more real threat of environmental disasters—global warming, ozone layer depletion and acidification of forests and lakes. Those are the real threats, not some archaic ideas about Soviet hordes sweeping across Europe.

Our future foreign and defence policies must be based on notions of common security, not just national security; of respect for different ideologies and cultures, not primitive fear of difference; of breaking down the barriers that lead to concepts of the enemy, not setting them in concrete. In any society based on notions of peace and justice there can be no place for weapons that depend on a threat to destroy the world. Nuclear deterrence is no longer a credible policy. As Olaf Palme stated in his report,

"States can no longer strive towards strengthening their security at another's expense. It is only possible to achieve it through joint effort."

Unenlightened self-interest lies at the heart of the Government's policies. It is no wonder that their enthusiasm for arms reductions is so lukewarm. The Government are not, and never will be, the party of multilateral disarmament or, indeed, any sort of disarmament, because their ultimate goal is not the denuclearisation but the renuclearisation of Europe—preferably with, but, if not, without, United States involvement. In contrast, the Labour party knows that many concrete steps could be taken now to further disarmament and that many are already on the agendas of other west European countries and of the Soviet Union. Most are viewed with suspicion, if not hostility, by the Government.

Within NATO, we could make a major contribution to the peace process by divesting ourselves of British nuclear weapons. We could join the majority of non-nuclear NATO countries. We could encourage other countries, notably West Germany, which are already uneasy about modernisation and NATO dependence on nuclear weapons, to move towards a non-nuclear policy. Within NATO, a timetable could be set on a step-by-step basis for a reappraisal of NATO's strategy and a meeting of the proposals that were made in the Soviet Union.

As part of that new thinking, it is inevitable that we loosen our ties with the United States and plan our future within Europe. However, it will benefit no one if Western Europe were to replicate super-power relations by becoming a third nuclear-based power. It is already worrying that the Western European Union is committed

[Ms. Joan Ruddock]

to increasing harmonisation of Europe's security based on nuclear weapons. The alternative, supported by everyone in the Labour party, is to build on the INF treaty, fully to exploit the opportunities of nuclear and conventional arms reductions and to move towards a vision of common security. As a spur to such efforts, I suggest that the House remembers that we, the Americans, the West Europeans and the Soviets hold hostage the majority of the people on this planet. They suffer destitution, poverty and early death as a direct or indirect result of our policies.

The Government are ill-equipped to deal with these challenges. They have no new ideas. They are becoming isolated in Europe because of their inflexible stance on nuclear weapons and their cold war mentality. They are an obstacle to progress on arms control agreements and to the growth of peace and mutual understanding in Europe, which is what our people want and what the White Paper fails to serve.

7.51 pm

Mr. Michael Jopling (Westmorland and Lonsdale): I have never agreed much with what I have heard the hon. Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock) say. She told us tonight—I wrote it down—that she thought the INF treaty had been achieved because Mr. Gorbachev had called NATO's bluff. That is the most arrant piece of nonsense that I have heard for a long time.

I must begin by apologising to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence and to the hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill). I was unable to be in the House for the last few minutes of my right hon. Friend's speech and for the early part of that of the hon. Member for Clackmannan. I am sorry, as I should have liked to have heard what they said.

I agreed with my right hon. Friend when he emphasised that we must not lower our guard in the NATO Alliance at this time and that we must maintain the policy that has led us to be able to look to a more peaceful future because of the strength that we have maintained. I wish that my right hon. Friend had had a little more time. He might have said a little more about the need for taking public opinion with us. The majority are with us at the moment. I disagree with the hon. Member for Deptford. It is crucial that we continue that process in the years ahead.

All hon. Members who have spoken in the debate have welcomed the international efforts to reduce the numbers of weapons of destruction around the world and to move to a greater degree of arms control. We have heard about the range of current discussions. I refer to discussions on the already agreed INF treaty, to the discussions on the proposed 50 per cent. reduction in strategic nuclear weapons, to the forthcoming discussions on conventional arms reductions and, finally, to the discussions on chemical weaponry. I shall express my concern about the events that would face us if we were to have a successful conclusion to all such talks and where such a successful conclusion would leave the Soviet bloc.

A successful conclusion to all the talks could leave the Soviets almost as potent a military force as they are now. If that is so, we must always remember that Mr. Gorbachev's years in power are finite and that there is no reason to suppose that the old and the cold in the Soviet Union will not be reinstated in power. I shall mention each of the four sets of discussions that are taking place and state where their successful conclusion could leave the Soviet Union.

First, I refer to the INF treaty. Of course we all welcome it, but its agreement constitutes only a tiny part of existing nuclear weaponry. In any case, as we know, it covers only land-based weapons. Again, as we know, Warsaw pact countries and the NATO powers are fast developing alternative weapons to fulfil their roles. A successful conclusion to the INF treaty does not greatly dent Soviet armoury.

Secondly, I refer to the START discussions. I am sure that we would all like to see a 50 per cent. reduction in strategic nuclear weapons. Even if such a reduction has not been achieved by the outgoing Reagan Administration, it would still leave a massive Soviet weaponry overkill with the 50 per cent. of weapons that would be left. In the event of a successful START agreement, the Soviets would be only marginally less a military threat in the hands of a more malevolent regime than the existing one in the Soviet Union, and we should not forget that.

Thirdly, I refer to the discussions that we hope will shortly begin on conventional arms reductions. They are the most important part of current international diplomacy. Conventional weaponry matters are of the greatest urgency, given the huge Soviet advantage in tanks, artillery and submarines, to which my right hon. Friend referred. At the moment the signs are that the Soviets may well be prepared to talk of heavy asymmetric reductions to move towards parity in conventional weaponry. Of course, we must realise that a considerable part of their huge conventional advantage is in the form of outdated equipment, particularly tanks, as was mentioned by the hon. Member for Clackmannan. That advantage is also partly manifest by gross Soviet troop overmanning.

I was recently in the United States with my colleagues from the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs. We were told of an American estimate of Soviet conventional forces in the western part of Europe. They could be reduced by 30,000 tanks—I think that is near the figure that the hon. Gentleman used—and by 150,000 men without impairing the strike power of Soviet forces in Europe. We must remember that, even if we can agree on substantial Soviet conventional arms reductions on a massively asymmetric scale, their strike power would be only marginally reduced.

Fourthly, I refer to the discussions on chemical weaponry that are taking place between East and West. There has been far too little discussion of, and attention paid to, the threat of terrible weapons that are almost as horrific as atomic or nuclear weapons. Again, the Soviets have a huge advantage. We have seen in the recent Iran-Iraq war what devastating agents of death they can be.

In the United States one can meet many people who will say flatly that an agreement on chemical weaponry is impossible either to monitor or to verify. That means that the capacity for cheating is immense.

In this fourth sector, again we have the prospect of a so-called successful conclusion to the current discussions, but it could still leave us with a massive Soviet threat.

To sum it all up, under Gorbachev the Soviets give us cautious grounds for real hope and optimism. That hope will increase if more agreements can be made and, most important, if we can see at last a reduction in the flood of Soviet defence spending and construction in preparing its military machine. It is now, and to a greater extent in the

years ahead, that it is essential that we are not carried away on a flood of complacency on the back of mass public euphoria within the NATO Alliance countries. We must never forget that we have reached this point of optimism only because of our refusal to budge from a position of strength in the years ahead. As my right hon. Friend said, if the strategy of the NATO countries had followed the lines that the hon. Member for Deptford advocated we would not have had a sigh of a chance of reaching an agreement of that sort.

We are already seeing within NATO some of the backsliders acting as though one swallow does make a summer. I shall take as examples some of those countries that have abysmally low defence spending as proportions of their GNP. Canada, with its miserable 1·2 per cent. of GNP, is already opting out of its responsibilities on the northern flanks. Spain is seeking to banish the 401st Air Wing. Denmark is refusing access to ships which it suspects might be carrying nuclear weapons. Already we are seeing this false euphoria, which we should resist. The United States, which no one could possibly call a backslider, is demanding more equitable burden sharing. Given the size of its deficits and the need for the new Administration to deal with that, it is hardly surprising that it should be seeking to reduce its NATO responsibilities and get others to step into the breach.

I have tried to show why it would be insane to reduce our defence capacity by more than we are forced to do by the current encouraging arms reduction talks. There is a massive job to do with public opinion. All of us who believe in the principles proposed by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State must do everything possible to explain why we must not throw away our strong position, which has led to such promising prospects.

I commend to the House the recent report of the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs entitled "The Political Impact of the Process of Arms Control and Disarmament", which I was happily involved in producing. The report attempts to explain that reduced defence budgets are not just around the corner. If we can demonstrate to the public that defence spending must be kept up in the years ahead, I believe that we can continue to progress towards disarmament, a fairer balance in arms between the great nations and a greater prospect of peace.

I read in the press that my right hon. Friend is still negotiating in the horrors of the annual PESC round, which I remember so well. It may be that, like the prisoner at the bar, he will be hauled before the Star Chamber court. I remember being in that most uncomfortable position for several years. On at least two of those occasions I think that my right hon. Friend was one of the judges. Therefore, my right hon. Friend is well experienced in arguing and dealing with that rather intimidating body. I hope that he will not give in and will demand that defence spending is not ruthlessly cut. I am sure that is what the Treasury is seeking to achieve, because its great desire is to wish to cut everything in sight. I hope that my right hon. Friend will ensure that our defences are not reduced, because that would be fatal at this time.

8.6 pm

Mr. Ted Garrett (Wallsend): I was not surprised when the Secretary of State chided Labour Members on the Labour party's defence policies, because I do not understand them either. I am concerned that, in the struggle within the Labour party, no one will lose sight of the essential need to defend this country—sometimes at a heavy cost. Nothing remains static in this world. The role of the armed forces is to defend this nation in its hour of need. We never know when that need will arise. In my lifetime, as in that of my hon. Friend the Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer), desperate situations have arisen.

I was in the Labour party before the war as a young Socialist, and I used to think I was a militant. I was looked upon as being rather odd because I supported the Churchill stance on rearmament. As an apprentice, I worked in an armaments factory. We used to make 25 lb field guns and light tanks with two-pounder guns and anti-tank weapons which were useless. They were pea shooters. However, with the grace of God, this nation was able partially to rearm at the outbreak of the 1939-45 war. Had we not done so, none of us would be here today as democrats.

I have always considered it my paramount duty to look at the practical side of life and—perhaps I lack the intellect—not get too involved in the intellectual discussions on nuclear rearmament or non-nuclear arms. I am disappointed with some of those who have spoken. When we are dealing with nuclear weapons, we should realise that we are not dealing solely with the Soviet-United Kingdom-American complex. How do we know that China, India, Pakistan, Iraq or Israel cannot release a nuclear weapon next week? Until that threat is negotiated away during such discussions as have been mentioned, we must face the reality of having a counter-threat.

I know that what I have said may be unpopular with some of my colleagues in the House, but it is an inherent gut feeling that my constituents in the north have. The vast majority have that gut feeling. One of the problems that faces the British Labour movement is that it cannot convince the electorate that it is a party that is prepared to defend this nation.

Having made those points, I will come back to the bread-and-butter issues.

I have been impressed by the arguments that have been made to keep the Corps of the Royal Marines intact—the House should remember that it has been threatened with abolition since 1981. It is difficult to see how morale can be at its best within that group of professional soldiers.

I have a special interest in the case of Swan Hunter, which is in my constituency. Studies have been made of the aviation support ships that will carry troops. Troop-carrying helicopters would be those ships' main capability in the event of or need for an assault. The Fearless and the Intrepid, both assault ships, are nearing the end of their lives and I was interested to learn that consideration is being given to extending their lives.

Before this two-day debate ends, I hope that the Minister will give us some idea how we are progressing in placing contracts for aviation support ships. Preferably, there should be one for Swan Hunter. In the long run, would it not be possible to consider building two, or possibly three, more assault ships if the Royal Marines are to remain a fighting unit and the unit with responsibility for NATO and the northern waters? We need such ships. It should also be borne in mind that Swan Hunter built the Sir Galahad to replace the one that was sunk, and that therefore it has the knowledge and expertise to carry out such contracts.

[Mr. Ted Garrett]

I draw the Minister's attention to page 52, paragraph 516, of the statement. I am heartened to realise that some of my worst fears about the publicity given to the armed forces because of various pranks, horseplay, bullying or whatever one may like to call it and which got into the media and were given prominence have not been realised. The paragraph appears to suggest that the adverse effects of such behaviour have not been as bad as expected. I trust that the Minister can assure me that that is correct.

Contrary to some views expressed, morale has been slightly sapped within the armed forces at this time. I think that one of the problems is that some of the units are over-stretched. For example, I would like to know whether all the infantry battalions are up to their strength of 650; I would be surprised if they were. I would like to know how many soldiers from those battalions are sent on training courses or exercises, thereby undermining the capability of those battalions.

As for welfare, I want to know how service men are to combat the rise in house prices when their terms of contract are ended and they must look to the market to find alternative accommodation. This applies to all ranks, from brigadier down to the ordinary corporal or fusilier. What financial assistance can be provided to put them back in civvy life and to help them compete in the house price market?

In view of the time, I shall cut the further remarks that I had intended to make. I hope, however, that the questions that I have put will produce reasonable replies from the Minister.

8.13 pm

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg (Hampstead and Highgate): The House has heard two remarkable speeches tonight from the Labour Benches, both sincere and both genuine. The hon. Members for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer) and for Wallsend (Mr. Garrett) made those speeches. I can only say that the views that have been expressed by the hon. Member for Wallsend are those that are expressed to me by genuine Labour voters, who say that they cannot vote for Labour candidates who espouse views like those expressed by the hon. Member for Walton.

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow) *rose——*

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg: I shall not give way, because there is not much time and many hon. Members wish to speak.

I welcome what the hon. Member for Wallsend has said. The hon. Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock), who is not with us at the moment, said that we are isolated in Europe on the question of nuclear deterrence. Alas, she has failed to read the common platform which was adopted by the Western European Union:

"We are each determined to carry our share of the common defence in both the conventional and the nuclear field, in accordance with the principles of risk- and burden-sharing, which are fundamental to allied cohesion"

The hon. Lady has also failed to recall that Spain and Portugal wish to join the WEU. To my knowledge, Spain does not have a Conservative Government and to join the WEU it must subscribe to The Hague platform. Spain is desperately anxious to join, and we are anxious to have it within the WEU.

The hon. Member for Deptford is right in one thing when she says that Britain is isolated in Europe, but she got it slightly wrong. The hon. Lady should have said that British Socialists are isolated in Europe because one has only to watch the faces of other European Socialists to see that our Socialists are out on a limb—I exclude the hon. Member for Wallsend.

It is at least 10 years since I last spoke in a defence debate. I used to be a member of the Defence Committee along with the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) and the right hon. Member for Dudley, East (Dr. Gilbert). In those days, the Defence Committee did, as it does now, a first-class job. Alas, I do not notice some of those same views coming forward tonight from the Labour Benches.

I have the great privilege of having followed my friend Sir Frederic Bennett in leading the United Kingdom delegation to the WEU. I am glad to see the references to the WEU in the White Paper, particularly in this year when Britain is in the chair of that organisation. I must say as briefly as I can that what is now being done by the Foreign Secretary and by the Secretary of State for Defence is setting an example to all who have to follow in the chair. They are making the organisation work effectively.

The WEU was very much like the sleeping princess. It was created in 1954 and virtually slumbered for 30 years except for the interest expressed by the parliamentary Assembly of the WEU. Its reactivation in Rome was designed to create a European pillar. It was intended not to be a rival to NATO, but to complement NATO's work. It should be borne in mind that France is an active participant in the WEU, which she is not in NATO, and that France played a major role in the reactivation of the WEU.

The two major events which are referred to in the Statement on the Defence Estimates and which are extremely important are The Hague platform, which bound all the members to the defence of their partners at their borders, and the use, if necessary, of nuclear weapons. Those are extremely important binding undertakings agreed by the sovereign nations who are members. One may say that those are just words, but how have those words been translated into action? They were translated into action during the recent troubles in the Gulf, when all the nations of the WEU joined in the minesweeping operation. That even included the non-naval nation of Luxembourg, which made a financial contribution to the operation and was thus involved with her other partners in this vital work.

The WEU's action in the Gulf shows what can be done in a very difficult situation. Many of us were aware that that conflict held the seeds of a third world war.

Now the WEU awaits the accession of Spain and Portugal. When my hon. Friend the Minister replies tonight, I hope that he can say that, when the ministerial council meets next month, it will be able to say that it endorses the accession of those two countries so that the parliamentary Assembly of the WEU can welcome them as full members later this year. There has been a great deal of delay on this issue, not by United Kingdom Ministers, but by Ministers generally. The parliamentary Assembly has wanted Spain and Portugal to join us for well over three

years, but only now, under the British chairmanship, is real progress being made. I hope that this will move fast enough for the decision to be taken at the November meeting.

I agree with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State that, had those who espouse the cause put forward by the hon. Member for Deptford in her previous incarnation, been successful, there would have been no INF treaty. What worried me was the view in the United States that the INF treaty was not good for Europe. I was glad, as a member of the presidential committee of WEU, to go to the Hill and talk to Mr. Taft, representatives and senators in order to convince them of the urgent necessity of ratifying that treaty. WEU played an important part in convincing the Americans of the need for an early and substantial ratification.

During our visit, we heard clear evidence from a Congressional sub-committee and others that, whoever wins the election next month in America, the burden-sharing issue will not go away. We have a responsibility because Europe has signally failed to get over in America the message of what Europe is doing in its own defence. I hope that attention will be turned to spelling out loud and clear the message that Europe is doing more than its fair share. It is satisfied to do it, but we do not want it said in America that we are hiding behind what the Americans are doing. We are in the forefront, doing an enormous amount, but the message is not getting across.

My hon. Friend the Member for Ashford (Mr. Speed), who is a colleague of mine on the WEU delegation, has already told us that, whenever one talks in America about what WEU is doing in its own defence and what NATO is doing for Europe's defence, it is greeted almost with amazement. Few people understand either the depth of commitment of the Europeans to their own defence or the financial sacrifices being made by a vast number of countries.

I have one slight quarrel with my right hon. Friend the Member for Westmorland and Lonsdale (Mr. Jopling). He was absolutely right about the role of Canada in NATO under a Liberal Government, but the present Conservative Government are making massive efforts to reverse that disastrous trend. They are moving as fast as they can with increased expenditure to try to bring Canada closer to what should be an acceptable level. The sudden volte-face of the new Democrats is interesting. They no longer say that they will pull out of NATO at once if they win; they realise, unlike the Labour party, that that is not popular among those whom they expect to vote for them.

Mr. Douglas: We have never said that.

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg: Some Labour Members wish to pull out of NATO, and we know it.

Otherwise, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State deserves our full support for his efforts to get value for money in his Department. But, as my hon. Friend the Member for Ashford made clear, we still need to make better use of Ministry of Defence assets, many of which are unused or under-used, and more attention needs to be paid to cost overruns and to the constant specification changes which have bedevilled many of the major projects that the Ministry has tried to initiate over the past decade. *[Interruption.]* I leave aside the bullets ordered by the Labour Government, which were mentioned earlier in the debate.

I look forward to my right hon. Friend trying to decide quickly on the new generation of battle tank. It is better to have something which is available and practicable than to continue hoping for Utopia, because Utopia ain't going to come, whether in the world of commerce or in defence. We need something to replace our aging tanks as quickly as possible.

It has already been said, and I make no apology for repeating it, that we owe a real debt to those who serve in our armed forces. I am glad to know that, at least on this side of the House, we give full, unqualified support to them, whether they be marines or members of the SAS doing a difficult job in Gibraltar.

8.25 pm

Mr. Thomas Graham (Renfrew, West and Inverclyde): *I should like* to express to the House the anger, resentment and concern of my constituents at the recently announced closure of the Royal Ordnance factory at Bishopton. Anger and resentment at job losses are commonly felt emotions in my area which, in recent years, has suffered major closure after major closure.

Everyone associates Renfrew, West and Inverclyde with the closure of the Talbot car factory at Linwood—a company which was bolstered by public funds but which deserted more than 5,000 of my people and then sold its assets to realise as much money as possible from a community which served it well for so many years. Coincidentally, the assets of Talbot at Linwood were largely sold to foreign countries and Talbot consolidated its profit base at its factories abroad—a familiar tale when one stops to consider the background to the closure of the ROF in Bishopton.

But while the community has barely recovered from this massive closure, it has had others heaped upon it. There was the closure of India Tyres at Inchinnan, Prescold at Hillington, Levi Strauss in Inchinnan, and massive reductions in staff at Rolls-Royce, Chivas Regal, Babcocks and a host of small factories. So the litany continues, leaving my constituency with one of the highest levels of unemployment in Scotland.

It is against the background of a community beset by job losses and with little hope that my people are trying to come to terms with the effect of the closure at Bishopton. It is against that background that the work force at Bishopton accepted loyally, and with no small measure of trust, the privatisation of the ROF when it was bought by British Aerospace. They recognised the Government's philosophy, the drive towards the free market and the abandonment of the underpinning of key defence industries through social ownership, and, with their new owners, they set themselves the task of working productively to make the new arrangements work. The work force accepted new production targets, they co-operated in decreasing unit costs and helped to implement new flexible working conditions. The installation of new plant and methods of working commissioned by the company received the full support of the workers. But it is that sort of work force in a specialised industry which demands high skills and commitment. The workers take pride in their service to the defence of their country. The industry is renowned for the long service of its employees and it has an exemplary industrial relations

[Mr. Thomas Graham]

record. To many, working at ROF Bishopton is more than just a job. It is a way of life for them, their families and the community.

To that group of loyal servants came a new employer, British Aerospace. I have the annual report of that company for 1987. It boasts wide success in many aspects of its operation, not the least of which is its relationships with its employees. It states:

"The commitment to business objectives which stems from employee involvement strategies is a key feature of the company's employment relations policy. 1987 has seen further development of the Company's communications practices which provides the business awareness upon which such involvement can be built. Joint problem-solving and consultative forums are increasing in number and impact, thereby increasing the opportunities for employees to contribute to business decisions."

The workers at the Royal Ordnance factory at Bishopton embraced that generous spirit of participation. Indeed, several other hon. Members and I joined the union and management at Bishopton at a meeting which marked the involvement of the factory, its management and workers with elected members of the community. At that "joint problem-solving and consultative forum"—to use the words of the chairman of British Aerospace—there was no mention of redundancy, rationalisation, lack of profitability, rundown and closure. But, only a few weeks later, on 6 October, the rumours started. The very mention of closure was unthinkable to the work force and alarming to the community. Sadly, the rumours were confirmed the following day in a statement from the company announcing the closure of the factory at Bishopton with the loss of 1,200 jobs.

In sheer human terms, that was a breathtaking example of the callous and cynical indifference of a private company which, on the one hand, boasts about its positive relationship with its work force and Members of the House while, on the other, it prepares detailed plans to ditch 1,200 jobs and devastate a community. We are angry about the secrecy and deception of the company, whose representatives met us a few weeks ago, not in a joint problem-solving and consultative exercise but to pull the wool over our eyes while it prepared the destruction of a factory and a way of life.

We are even more angry about the deception of the Government, who have extolled the virtues of privatisation and alleged the efficiency of the market place and the freedom of enterprise while turning a blind eye to the effects of the closure on my constituents. The entire community will be affected. Behind the 1,200 workers who will be made redundant are 1,200 families who will lose an income and lose the dignity of employment. Behind the 1,200 redundancy notices that will be issued lies the shattered pride of a community which for generations has tried to acquire the skills necessary in this essential work. Behind 1,200 lost jobs are the innumerable training opportunities lost to our children—skills lost for ever to a country proud of the tradition of defending itself in times of crisis. Behind the 1,200 severance pay slips that will be issued lies an economic loss to the entire community, with small businesses already closing due to the lack of trade. The effects of the closure will be long-lasting and far-reaching.

The platitudes of the Scottish Office are insulting because we realise, just as the community has been shown yet again in sharp relief, that the Government do not care about the individuals who make up the society that they are elected to govern. The Secretary of State has never suffered unemployment, as I and my constituents have. The Secretary of State has never had to survive on the poverty income that awaits the workers at Bishopton when they go on the dole. The Secretary of State has never experienced the numbing reality that, at his age, if he were made redundant from Bishopton, he would never work again. Yet that is the fate to which he and the Government have consigned my constituents.

The announcement of the closure not only pinpoints serious questions about the Secretary of State's personal competence to ensure that the country's defence is adequately underpinned by long-term strategic resource planning which is under the direct control of Her Majesty's Government, but lays bare the bankruptcy of the argument that privatisation is good for industry, for Britain and for our people. In one fell swoop, British Aerospace has shown us what loyalty the private sector has to our people, our defence and our industries. In one fell swoop, British Aerospace has demonstrated, first, that money knows no loyalty to this country; secondly, that profit respects no sense of national or personal pride; thirdly, that the balance sheet dictates all conscience and responsibility; and, of course, it has shown the country that the ever-seductive quick profit will undermine our security.

There can be many ideological arguments about public versus private, and academics and politicians may debate the legalities of corporate accountability. I have no doubt that in the debate we shall hear much about the adequate provision of the defence of the realm, but I say to the House, to the country and directly to the Secretary of State for Defence, "You cannot control what you do not own."

Of course, ownership has never been important to the Government, and the sense of ownership—of having a stake and a say in their jobs—which the work force at Bishopton has will be cast aside by the Government as surely as it has been cast aside by the accounting minds of the British Aerospace board. But was that not always the intention? Were not the circumstances surrounding the sale of the Royal Ordnance factories such that the Government wanted to press ahead with privatisation at any price?

What answers does the Secretary of State have for the questions asked in the *Financial Times* of 5 March 1987, which allege that the Royal Ordnance factories were fattened up for sale? What answers does he have to the allegation, substantiated by the report from the National Audit Office last November, that the Royal Ordnance factories were sold at a bargain basement price and that land assets, which were never taken into account, can now be sold off at profits of many tens of millions of pounds —going not to the Exchequer but into the pocket of British Aerospace? Does the Secretary of State accept that, with the so-called sale of the Royal Ordnance factories, the Government did not just sell the family silver; they threw it away?

Can we expect a frank answer from the Secretary of State about these matters? When we examine not just the irresponsible actions of the Government in this affair, but the lack of foresight and the lack of commitment to Scotland—where the right hon. Gentleman once served as Secretary of State—I think not. If the Secretary of State is suffering from the episodes of selective amnesia that often

assail Ministers of this Government when they change responsibilities, let me remind him of a speech that he made in his constituency in November 1986. In that speech he attacked the Labour party's defence policy. The terms of his attack may have been fresh to his constituency then, but they have been repeated by him so often and so monotonously that their meaning may escape the notice of the House now.

Let us remind ourselves of the key phrases used by the Secretary of State in his attack. He said:

"Labour's Job Destruction Plan was not just bad for security but bad for jobs also. It could have devastating consequences for local communities but nowhere more so than here in Scotland."

The right hon. Gentleman went further by coining phrases which, in the light of the giveaway of the Royal Ordnance factories and the closure of at least two vital factories, now take on a chilling reality. The "Job Destruction Plan" of which he accused the Labour party in 1986 has taken on a new and more terrifying meaning when applied to his actions and the consequences with which the people of Bishopton must now live.

But not only the people of my constituency will be affected. Every Member of the House should be aware that on 16 October 1988 a spokesman for British Aerospace said:

"There is no active consideration of sites other than those announced. Of course that doesn't mean there won't be further closures in the future as programme needs accelerate."

Will the Secretary of State give us an assurance here and now that not only will he halt the closure of the factories that are currently under threat, but he will intervene to stop the closure of other Royal Ordnance units; or are we to believe, as is more probably the case, that his very own jobs destruction plan is well under way? If the cost of a quick profit, a fast buck, is a few thousand jobs, a few thousand lives and a few hundred communities, that is the inevitable price of the free market.

I have no doubt that what will come from the Secretary of State will be an increasingly callous and unconvincing speech about the free market and the Government's non-interventionist policy. He might well try to convince the House that he has no job destruction plan, but let me remind him of his photo finish at the general election. Few people in Ayr believed him then and no one in Scotland believes him now.

Dr. Godman: As my hon. Friend well knows, I have constituents working in the Bishopton factory. What he is seeing today, with the decision taken over Bishopton, is the continuing bad faith displayed by Her Majesty's Government towards the people of the lower Clyde. It is all of a piece—it is remarkable in its consistency. With Bishopton, my hon. Friend must remember Scott Lithgow. I am pleased that he referred to the fact that the Secretary of State sits ridiculously and precariously on a tick-tack of a majority. The Scottish people are out of tune with the Conservative Government on this and other issues.

Mr. Graham: With the decision at Bishopton, we see a further dramatic reduction in Scotland's share of defence procurement—and who wins? The south-east of England has benefited in the past, but now the company's recently announced plan to shift resources to America reveals another sinister aspect of the jobs destruction plan. All that is, of course, a far cry from the Secretary of State for Scotland last week at Brighton exhorting the Tory faithful and businesses to come north to Scotland—presumably a land fit for profit. At Bishopton there is an immediate opportunity for the Secretary of State for Scotland and the Secretary of State for Defence to stop more Scottish jobs being lost. If their words in Ayr in 1986 and in Brighton in 1988 mean anything more than empty political rhetoric, they will take action now to prevent the closure, with all its devastating implications for our people and industry. Let us not be mistaken: the wider effects on industry, on the broad private sector, will be substantial.

The National Audit Office, in its report No. 505 of 11 July 1985, described the defence sector as

"one of the largest purchasing organisations in the country as well as the biggest single customer of British industry."

So what will be the multiplier effects of the closures in terms of jobs, people and communities? My people in Bishopton demand that the Secretary of State should intervene now to stop their jobs, their skills and their contribution being lost. Any hesitation, any inaction or any weak excuses can only be the final evidence to the country that the Government, with their profit motive, have no loyalty to British defence, British security, British industry, British jobs or the British people.

I have never heard anything so ludicrous in my life as British Aerospace paying £192 million when the real value is well over £1 billion. It is like telling someone who wants to buy one's furniture, "Here you are, you have bought my furniture. Take my house and garden for nothing—I'll throw them in."

8.44 pm

Mr. Jerry Wiggin (Weston-super-Mare): I commend to the House—I hope that the officials responsible will be congratulated—the presentation of the White Paper this year. Those of us who have studied White Papers for some time will remember when they were a dull and boring document. The coloured graphs and diagrams, and so on, make for much easier reading.

I propose to speak briefly on just two subjects, one because of its inclusion, and one because of its virtual exclusion. Although Westland has a much reduced work force in my constituency, I remain deeply interested in the future of the helicopter as a battlefield weapon. It is a subject on which I have spoken many times. I was therefore delighted to see the somewhat simplistic, but nevertheless heartening, diagram on page 24. Can it be that at long last the Army is beginning to appreciate the importance of the helicopter, both for moving troops on the battlefield and as an attack weapon? I say to my hon. Friends who have been discussing our amphibious capability that the helicopter can be used in that role most effectively. The simple landing platform that is required is much less costly than a purpose-built assault ship. Those who say, "But what about the weather?" will recognise that no seaborne assault can be carried out in weather conditions that would preclude helicopters from flying.

As part of the argument, occasionally it has been my practice—it will be tonight—to say a word about the vulnerability of armoured vehicles on the battlefield. That usually draws a stinging letter from GKN, which manufactures some of our new armoured personnel carriers, but it has just bought one quarter of the shares of Westland. It is ahead of the Ministry of Defence in appreciating that one can no longer turn a blind eye to one

[Mr. Jerry Wiggin]

particular arm in the complex modern battlefield. I shall quote from the press handout that was issued at the time of that important purchase:

"In Land Systems important changes are underway. These relate directly to the greater responsibility being placed on conventional land forces, and the increasingly sophisticated threats these forces will face. The response to this is revised land battlefield doctrines, which are moving towards closer integration of front line equipments, on land and in the air, to provide a strong, cohesive, highly mobile and flexible fighting force."

How difficult it is to move the military mind. History is littered with examples of armies going to war equipped for the previous conflict and therefore at a hopeless disadvantage. The American experience in Vietnam showed to the world the way in which the helicopter can give the field commander flexibility to place his troops in the most appropriate position swiftly and safely and, similarly, to withdraw them as and when required. That the tank should remain the be all and end all, backed now by millions of pounds' worth of armoured personnel carriers, ignores the undoubted ability of even quite small infantry units to knock out tanks with hand-held weapons. If one includes the whole substantial armoury directed against the tank, there cannot be much hope that many will survive long on the modern battlefield.

I am therefore appalled to learn that there is now a debate in the Ministry of Defence about replacing the aging Chieftain tank fleet—at a cost of no less than £1 billion if the press is to be believed—solely with new tanks, wherever they may come from. I say to my hon. Friends who have been arguing the merits or otherwise of buying American that there is almost no item of defence equipment that cannot be bought more cheaply in America, but that is not a good argument for so doing. I am sure that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will hear that message coming loud and clear from both sides of the House today.

Mr. Leigh: Does my hon. Friend accept that if we purchase a tank, the Challenger 2 tank made by Vickers probably has the best turret in the world, the best weapons system, the most robust hull and the best engine—the Rolls-Royce? Will he pay tribute to that tank, which is produced by a fine British company employing many thousands of people in Newcastle and Leeds in the most modern tank factories in the world?

Mr. Wiggin: As the gist of my argument is that I hope that the Ministry of Defence will not buy any tanks—or a great deal fewer than £1 billion worth—I shall not join in my hon. Friend's request, even though I am sure that what he says about that tank is correct.

If my doctrine is too revolutionary, as I suspect it is bound to be, what about splitting the money—half of it going on helicopters? That is a bad compromise, but it is better than going for a whole new generation of weapons that will unquestionably be out of date before they are in use.

I strongly welcome the creation of the air mobile brigade. Although the 25 EH 101s ordered in the troop-carrying role will not be delivered until the 1990s, I am doubtful whether much air mobility is open to the brigade, in spite of its name. The aircraft to carry it about do not exist. Every autumn there is an exercise, after which the generals express their wonder at the benefits of helicopters and then do little or nothing about converting that lesson into action.

I am sorry that Ministers brought to an end the exercise that they were conducting into the transfer of responsibility for helicopters from the Royal Air Force to the Army and the Navy. They stopped it because someone said that the change would not be economic. But this is not about economics: it is about operations. It is extremely difficult to expect ground commanders to trust their transport if it is run by a separate service. I hope that if, at any time, my right hon. Friend has a little money to spare he will reinstitute that study. He has only to talk to those involved in the Falklands and in exercises to hear them reiterate their need to have command of their own air transport.

Lieutenant General Sir David Ramsbotham, commander of the United Kingdom field army, is quoted as saying:

"The Soviets are ahead of us in their concept for employment of helicopters, having acted while we have been thinking."

That says it all. If one asks the time in the MOD, one will be told that officials will conduct a study of the matter. Never has a decision of this importance been taken in such a lethargic and languid manner——

Mr. Brazier: I thoroughly endorse my hon. Friend's views about bringing air transport under the command of those who have to use it, but I put it to him that the Soviet Union has 35,000 tanks. It has some heavy armoured battlefield helicopters—about 1,000 Hind D and Hind Es—and some lighter ones, but its main effort is still in tanks, not helicopters. So, to some extent, we must look at what the Soviet Union is doing.

Mr. Wiggin: Just because the Russians are doing it, that does not make it right.

I referred earlier to an omission from the White Paper—the scant commentary on the Territorial Army. That is symptomatic of the way in which lip-service is paid to the value of the TA and of all the reserves by the regular services. When it comes down to finding resources and manpower to assist what is a substantial part of the front line, the contribution is extremely inadequate. The reserve and auxiliary formations, as shown in the graph on page 50 of the White Paper, take up 2·2 per cent. of the defence budget, less than 1 per cent. of services manpower and 1·8 per cent. of civilian manpower. For that, the Army obtains a third of its front-line strength—50,000 men in Germany alone—the Navy a substantial part of its minesweeping capability and the Royal Air Force a number of airfield defence units.

The report of the Reserve Forces Policy Board of the United States of America devotes 180 pages to a detailed analysis of all American reserve forces. I commend it as good reading for Ministers on their way to bed. It has much to say about the importance that the United States attaches to its reserve forces.

Increasingly, the Regular Army is providing commanding officers for TA units, few of which now have territorials doing that job. For reasons unknown to me, I have heard that these territorials cannot even draw the same allowances as their regular equivalents—I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will look into that. Honorary colonels are being appointed from the Regular Army or from the ranks of retired regular officers. No longer are

they distinguished local people with a TA background. Arms directors have too big a say in this. It is being seen as a nice little perk for friends in the Regular Army. I hope that Ministers who have the right to veto these appointments will examine that point.

My right hon. Friend appreciates the serious problems created by the large number of men who leave the service every year. He recently announced that he was spending £10 million on a recruiting campaign. I welcome his obvious determination to tackle the problem, but I doubt whether even this intervention will prove completely successful.

In recent years the Regular Army has argued that because of the importance of the TA its standard of training should be exactly the same as that of the regular forces. That is a fine idea, but it ignores the demands on the individual and his family—demands which eventually drive him out. Sadly, that is what is happening. Reluctantly, therefore, I suggest that, as numbers count, a somewhat lower standard of training after the initial period would be an acceptable alternative. Instead of spending £10 million on advertising, will the MOD think about the possibility of making the regulars responsible for recruiting the reserve forces? That would concentrate their minds greatly on making the TA attractive to the volunteer and would enable a considerably greater amount of time to be spent on welfare, families and on other things that help retention. It is significant that the American forces practise this and seem to have a much smaller problem of retention than we do.

We have already heard in this debate about the demographic problem that will shortly be with us. The expanded TA can help with it, and no stone must be left unturned to ensure its continued success. If my right hon. Friend is still battling in the Star Chamber for resources, I add my voice to those of my hon. Friends in saying that Conservative Back Benchers will be determined to ensure that our forces are thoroughly funded in all their aspects and maintained at their present high standards.

8.57 pm

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): This has been an interesting debate, set against a background of constraints on defence expenditure. Several Conservative Members have alluded to the Secretary of State winning or losing battles. I suspect that, following a leak in the course of this evening, we shall read tomorrow in the press that he has partially won the battle. I do not know what figure to put on this: perhaps he or his junior Minister will give us one. Something below £1 billion—perhaps £900 million —is the figure that has been circulating as the amount that he has got out of the Treasury. If so, we should like to be told tonight, rather than reading it in the press tomorrow. I think that I speak for all parts of the House when I make that request.

We are worried about the problem of resources. In paragraph 2 of its fifth report the Select Committee said:

"When in 1986 the previous Defence Committee examined the Statement on Defence Estimates 1986, it concluded that, instead of the 'broadly level' funding expected in 1985, there would be a fall in real terms of between 4·5 per cent. and 7 per cent. in the period 1986-87 to 1988-89. Since then, defence spending in real terms has reduced from £18·5 billion in 1986-87 to £17·5 billion in 1988-89. We calculate that the cumulative real reductions in defence spending from 1986-87 to 1990-91 will total £3·2 billion. Historically, the effect of reductions in defence expenditure has borne most heavily on the equipment programme; the equipment share of the budget has fallen from 46·3 per cent. in 1985-86 to 43 per cent. in 1988-89, and is now at its lowest in proportionate terms since 1979-80."

[Interruption.] I do not dispute that. It is against that background that we view the Secretary of State's oft-repeated comments about tough and difficult decisions to be made. We know that those tough and difficult decisions are being made against the background of a commitment to maintain a strategic nuclear deterrent.

Hon. Members spoke earlier about people going to other constituencies to make speeches. During the general election, the Secretary of State came to my constituency and made a speech. I would welcome it if he came again, because that speech quadrupled my majority. Perhaps he should have stayed in Ayr, where his majority was reduced from about 7,000 to about 100. My constituency contains a vast number of workers, not on the base itself, whose work is directly related to repairing and maintaining the Polaris fleet. So far in the debate we have not heard anything about Polaris, certainly not from the Opposition. It is deplorable for the Opposition to put down an amendment to the defence White Paper and not mention Polaris. I shall deal with that later. There are constraints.

The Chairman of the Select Committee on Defence spoke about the vast number of reports—nine—that the Select Committee has produced. I shall confine my speech to Merchant Navy and Royal Navy matters. One of those reports was about the merchant fleet. There have been vast reductions in the merchant service, not just in the number of ships but in the important matter of the availability of British crews. I shall not weary the House by quoting from the report, but I should like to draw attention to paragraph 54 of the fourth report of June this year.

In that report, we dealt with reductions in the merchant fleet and in the personnel. Able seamen are very important, but so are cadets and training. We are an island nation, but we have no maritime strategy. It is farcical to reduce the number of British flagged vessels and Merchant Navy manpower and simultaneously to argue the case that if we have a conventional war somehow or other nations will help us with resupply and replenishment across the Atlantic. In his speech the Secretary of State did not mention that.

The Select Committee also produced a report about the surface fleet. The hon. Member for Ashford (Mr. Speed), who is very knowledgeable about these matters, pointed to the defects in the ordering pattern for frigates and destroyers. It is all very well for the Secretary of State to come to the House in July and in a splurge of activity say that he has ordered three type 23 frigates from Yarrows. That is welcome but there has been a break because in the previous year no ships were ordered. I suspect that, unless he has won a substantial battle with the Treasury, next year no ships will be ordered.

We have seen cuts in our shipbuilding capability. My hon. Friend the Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman) spoke about that. I suspect that on the Clyde, unless we are very lucky and retain the very small yard with which I used to be directly associated—Appledore Ferguson, as it is now called—we will have one shipyard on the Clyde, Yarrows, wholly dependent on naval ordering. That yard is designed to build three type 23 frigates. My hon. Friend the Member for Wallsend (Mr. Garrett) drew our attention to the need to maintain shipbuilding capacity in the north-east of England.

[Mr. Dick Douglas]

If ordering is carried out in a feast or famine manner, not only will the Navy be dislocated but so will the reliability and performance of shipyards. It might be argued that certain things can be done in commercial yards, but we cannot re-create overnight the sophisticated personnel in naval shipyards. The Secretary of State should come clean. The Select Committee on Defence searchingly and patiently wheedled out the fact that it is not just a commitment to "about 50" frigates and destroyers but an indication of their operability and availability. I challenge the Minister who is to wind up to tell us the number of these vessels that are available now. It will be well under 50. It will probably be nearer the 40 mark.

My interest in the dockyards concerns the refitting and maintenance of the SSNs, the SSBNs and conventional vessels. The promises made when we discussed the privatisation or commercialisation of the dockyards, particularly Devonport, have been reneged on. In particular, the one relating to the core programme has not been fulfilled, and that resulted in massive reductions in the dockyard work force. To some extent, Rosyth has escaped that, but I have told my constituents not to be complacent, because if we run on with the Trident programme the facilities at Barrow will become a competitor in the refitting and maintaining of these boats. I pointedly ask the Secretary of State whether that is in his mind, that of the Ministry of Defence or that of Dr. Leach, at Barrow. I tell my constituents not to be complacent because, unless there is either a further commitment to SSNs or a further generation of SSBNs at Barrow, there will be problems. It is reasonable to ask for some clarification about that.

There is a problem about the nuclear waste at Rosyth. By the year 2000, it is likely that there will be 10 SSNs and SSBNs to be decommissioned. Rosyth has the first decommissioned SSN, the Dreadnought. There is no discernible plan within the Ministry of Defence to dispose of these boats. There is certainly a plan to take out the reactors and the fuel, but there is no plan to dispose of the hulls. The valuable resource at the dockyard ought not to be used to tie up the hulls of these boats until kingdom come.

The Select Committee has said that it expects answers about this point to be forthcoming before we next study the problem. It is not good enough to talk vaguely about plans when there is a real problem in disposing of these vessels. We cannot do what the United States does—cut up the vessels and bury them in the Nevada desert—nor can we dump them at sea.

I am utterly bemused when I try to discover what defence policy the Labour party is trying to evolve. It is credible to say that we shall run on the strategic deterrent, and it is credible to say that we shall get rid of it, and cancel Trident and decommission Polaris, because that runs on into the 1990s. Either of these policies is credible, but we cannot sell a halfway house. The British people will not buy something in between. As an old-fashioned shop steward, I do not believe that it is a useful negotiating posture to be on record as saying that one will not press the button while at the same time trying to fool the Soviet Union into thinking that we shall use this deterrent as a negotiating ploy, either for strategic weapons or for some form of conventional weapons.

I am disclosing real difficulties, which have to be faced by my party. It is better that my party faces them now and comes to a considered and deliberate conclusion. My view is that this will be the last time—whatever the party—that we shall go through the pretence of kidding ourselves that we have an independent strategic deterrent. The boats and the warheads are ours, but the important part in between is totally American.

The decision to refit and maintain the missiles at King's bay is also a clear indication that, although we can take the missiles off the shelf when we have put them there, in a strict sense they do not belong to us. There is a rolling commitment which no one would accept in relation to a motor car. If someone wants a car repaired, after 10,000 miles, he does not say, "You can give me another one off the shelf."

Mr. Younger: I should have thought that the hon. Gentleman of all people would know that that is exactly what much of industry does with cars all the time.

Mr. Douglas: Yes, but they do it on leasing deals. Is the Secretary of State saying that there is a leasing deal on Trident? One does not do that if one owns the facility. In this case, we are not getting something new; we are getting a refurbished item. I do not want to labour this point because it is generally conceded, unless the Secretary of State wishes to enlighten us.

We shall come up against this again in the year 2000. It is better for the Labour party to face this now, to say that we will be committed to ending the United Kingdom's role as a strategic nuclear power and to begin arguing that case to the British public. That is what I had to do in the last general election. I refuse to believe that people in Rosyth, whose employment is directly related to the issue and who voted Labour, are different from people in the rest of the United Kingdom. They cannot be convinced by the force of argument that the possession of a strategic deterrent is a waste and an attrition of our valuable resources—not only economic resources, but valuable, unique, costly and scarce intellectual resources. Some of the best people whom we have employed have been taken in by our continued possession of a strategic deterrent.

I do not know what will happen when people go to Moscow, but it would be preposterous for us to try to sell some wishy-washy in-between measure. We either keep the deterrent or we say to the British people, "This is the last time. It is our commitment to get rid of it", and come clean, particularly if we have a leader who is not committed to pressing the button. It is a different argument if we have a leader like the previous leader of the Labour party, who said, "If I have to press the button, it is a sign that the deterrent has failed." However, if we have a leader who says that he will not use it, there is no reason for anyone to negotiate.

9.13 pm

Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith (Wealden): That was an honest statement from the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas). I want to add my voice to those who have expressed concern about the alleged battle between the Ministry of Defence and the Treasury.

I have no doubt that, since my right hon. Friend took office nearly three years ago, he has earned our confidence and we have respected his judgment. We have had three years of virtual standstill of budget in the face of the rising costs of military technology and manpower. We know that those three lean years have followed seven good years in which we had a much-needed expansion of our defences. Nevertheless, as we look to the future, we must be careful not to allow essential schemes for keeping our forces up to date to fall behind, as some of us suspect may happen.

There are three reasons. The first has already been mentioned. We do not know what Mr. Gorbachev will do, but we know that the conventional capability of the Soviet Union is strong and growing stronger and more efficient. Whatever may happen between the United States and the Soviet Union, we shall find ourselves playing a notable part in trying to get an agreement on chemical weapons and conventional arms. If we are to succeed, we must negotiate in strength, as we did during the INF talks.

After three years of standstill, I do not believe that what my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is asking for is extravagant. The alternative approach would weaken the effectiveness of our forces and allow structural disarmament to take the place of a properly negotiated arms control treaty in which everyone gives up something.

My second reason for expressing the hope that we shall continue to be determined to maintain the effectiveness of our contribution to NATO is a political one. We all know that the United States is deadly serious—it is obvious that it is not bluffing—about the burden that it bears. It expects us in Europe to do more than we are doing already. I cannot think of a decision that would be more badly timed than for Britain of all countries to appear to be reluctant to shoulder its responsibilities now, before the election in the United States, and before the new President has taken his place.

My third reason for backing my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is based on my belief that we should take no precipitate action following the burden-sharing debate. I believe that my reasoning is more positive than that which is based on comparisons between the spending of various countries. Burden-sharing will be a profitable debate if it is based on ascertaining how we can better organise the roles, risks and responsibilities of the different members of the Alliance. That is exactly why NATO has established a working party to examine the roles, risks and responsibilities and then to decide where there is a need for adjustments, and to make recommendations accordingly.

We know that the working party will report to the NATO Defence Ministers in December, and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will have to consider its report. That is another reason why I think that it would be wrong, out of respect for our allies, to undermine our current defence responsibilities in the interests of short-term financial criteria. We should not forget either —I listened with great interest to my hon. Friend the Member for Hampstead and Highgate (Sir G. Finsberg), who is the leader of our delegation to the Western European Union—our obligations to WEU members. We are obliged to defend a fellow member country at its borders if it is attacked. Any fundamental change that we may be forced to make if we starve our defence forces of the resources that are necessary for an adequate modernisation programme will bring into question our reliability as a staunch member of the WEU.

I remind my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State that next month, in Hamburg, we who are members of the United Kingdom delegation to the North Atlantic Assembly, which I shall have the honour of leading, will be attending the autumn session. We shall be addressed by the Chancellor and Defence Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany, and the Supreme Allied Commander. The session will be attended by parliamentarians from all the NATO countries, including prominent Senators and Congressmen. I am sure that all those who attend will emphasise the importance of the occasion.

My right hon. Friend is trusted by other NATO Ministers as a Minister who fully comprehends the significance of NATO in drawing up and funding our defence priorities. We fully support him in his arduous task of ensuring that Britain will continue to take its defence decisions with a full understanding of the long-term needs of the Alliance, which has for so long kept the peace in Europe.

9.20 pm

Mr. Frank Cook (Stockton, North): We have this round of discussions each year, and each year I feel some sympathy for the Secretary of State for Defence and his ministerial colleagues. We find that they are in the same dilemma each year. The Government seek to persuade the United States that we spend sufficient on defence, despite its protestation that a greater degree of burden-sharing is necessary. The Government seek also to persuade our NATO partners that we spend more than our fair share and that they must increase their contributions to equate with ours.

At the same time, the Government seek to persuade the Labour party that they are right to escalate expenditure on nuclear missiles and on the vehicles to deliver them and to spend less on conventional weapons and equipment. In doing that, they seek to persuade the electorate that all is well in defence provision—indeed, that all is so well that the Treasury can afford to stuff billions of pounds back into the pockets of the rich, who do not need the cash in the first place. While that contradictory melange is presented to the media, the Government seek to distract attention from those contradictions by knocking the Labour party. We have had plenty of attemps to do that today——

Mr. Mates: The Labour party knocks itself—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Cook: I shall continue. The hon. Gentleman has simply proved my point.

It is our job to examine the Defence Estimates. The need now is to put an end to all the posturing and to discuss properly the full range of defence issues in the light of changing technology, changing economy and changing global circumstances.

Before developing that theme, I should like to inform the House of my involvement this year as a participant and assessor in the pilot period of the Parliamentary Armed Services Trust. I shall try to explain the trust quickly, as I do not have much time. The scheme was started to try to give newer Members of Parliament more direct experience of the needs of the armed services, the duties we require them to perform, the equipment that we provide for that purpose and the conditions that they experience. I understand that the scheme was dreamed up by the hon.

[Mr. Cook]

Member for Ilford, South (Mr. Thorne). I pay tribute to him for his initiative and pay tribute also to the Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces for the ready way in which the scheme was accepted and for the helpful and gracious manner in which his staff have enabled the three trying hon. Members—very trying in my case I am sure—to carry out our duties. The other Members are the hon. Members for Ryedale (Mr. Greenway) and for Dorset, South (Mr. Bruce). They are looking at the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy, respectively. I was assigned to the 24th Air Mobile Brigade and have so far spent almost three weeks in total either working with that unit or with the units that support it.

The opinions that I express today have been well ventilated and truly discussed, and the examples that I use have been gleaned from exchanges on those occasions and during the many other defence visits that I have made this year. I could recount a list that would almost reach parity with that of the Select Committee on Defence. When I register my views and analyses today, I keep faith with commitments made to serving men and women of all ranks during many exchanges which have helped to make clear to service personnel, who were previously misinformed on the subject of Labour's defence policy—usually by a frequently mischievous and occasionally malicious media—what the Labour party really thinks on defence. The Labour party has always maintained that, if we are to consign young men and women to advanced areas of confrontation, we must ensure that they are adequately supported, fed, clothed, equipped, armed, trained and led. I have noticed tonight that some hon. Members, notably the hon. Members for Weston-super-Mare (Mr. Wiggin) and for Ashford (Mr. Speed), are not shy to admit that all in the garden is not lovely and that it is no good pretending that all is well. Serving men and women have not been slow to inform me of that.

In response, the Labour party maintains that we cannot expect full effectiveness and efficiency if there is a shortfall in resources and resolution. It is patent nonsense to formulate our strategy to resist the perceived threat from the Soviet bloc around a precommitment to a five-day reliance on conventional exchanges if we fail to ensure that the resources will last that long. Supplies of some munitions can be guaranteed for less than two days. Supplies of some fuel can be guaranteed for less than a day and a half and some spares, essential for mobility, are still awaited from suppliers in Czechoslovakia. I sympathise with the Minister. After all, procurement is his personal fiefdom, his personal forte and his bag. He must help carry the fight to the Treasury so that our services can be made ready to carry the fight to our attackers. I am sure that he has tried but failed, as others have failed before him, to get enough and to apportion it properly or in a way that would equip and empower our young men and women to fulfil the role that we require of them.

In leaving our young men and women short, do we expose them to an earlier death—God forbid—perhaps at the hands of our armourers as they launch our American ballistics in response to Soviet supremacy? Is this House happy to consign the cream of our youth to such kamikaze tactics? If it is, it had better make that clear tonight so that mothers and fathers can understand what is said and reform their opinions accordingly.

Apparent inadequacies can be more trivial, but in the day-to-day concerns of service personnel they can be more telling and immediate. By that I mean items like the new boot which was awaited with eager anticipation by so many units which considered it to be the answer to all foot problems. Those units which have it already would readily return to the previous issue tonight if given the preference, because it is bloody uncomfortable.

Issues of pay, allowances, accommodation and house purchase are even more telling for service personnel. As we have heard tonight, all those issues can cause resentment throughout the three arms of Her Majesty's forces, despite previous ministerial assurances that this year's review board would remove some of the causes for complaint.

Pay was always inadequate in the barrack room. It was ever so. However, comparisons between the military police and civil police reinforce the view that there are greater disparities between what is demanded of military personnel and the way they are rewarded and what is demanded in civvy street and how such a service is rewarded. Pay differentials were always said to be unjustifiable. However, comparisons between commissioned pilots and non-commissioned pilots—and flying instructors, in particular—reveal what is wrong. Until I was forcefully told by a flying instructor from Middle Wallop, I did not know that non-commissioned flying instructors receive £6 a day flying pay, whereas a commissioned instructor receives double that. That anomaly is very difficult to explain, unless one falls back on traditional explanations of RAF flying supremacy over the Army Air Corps. Differentials in travel conditions, living overseas allowances and accommodation rates are sources of bitter comment. House purchase is patently most difficult for those military units required to move more readily than their comrades in the Royal Navy or the RAF who can more easily acquire property close to more stable garrison placements.

So many of the promises made by the review board this year have failed to keep faith with the commitments. The disillusion with review board procedure is widespread, and I must report that resentment runs deep in almost every unit that I visited. Early disengagement from service in the armed forces is clear evidence of that. As the Minister is aware, many units are suffering as much as, and some more than, 30 per cent. wastage per year. That is not fantasy. It is verifiable, and to some extent it is justifiable.

The change in circumstances related to strategic need vis-a-vis the East-West balance of power is also verifiable. That brings me to the main thrust of my comments and I want to refer to points made by the hon. Member for Wealden (Sir G. Johnson Smith) and his reports on reviews currently taking place within NATO. I hope to join the hon. Member for Wealden on some of those reviews. I am pleased that I shall be joining such a review next week when I attend a three-day seminar at the NATO defence college in Rome.

It is just as important that the Labour party should be able to explain to its political opponents, as well as to its political supporters, some of the subtleties of its quest for nuclear disarmament. *[Interruption.]* Some hon. Members find that amusing. One or two of them have been so misinformed as to equate the Labour party's views on disarmament with difficulty in amassing votes at elections.

I remind the House that in 1983 I was a parliamentary candidate for the first time in my life against someone who had been a Member of this House for 21 years. He was the

author of a pamphlet called "The Case for Cruise." He had regularly attended seminars in America, at which he had said why we should retain our nuclear stance. Despite his 21 years as a Member of this House and his nuclear commitment, he was placed third in the poll. I was placed first. There is no difficulty over acquiring votes while professing an anti-nuclear stance. We maintained the same unilateral nuclear disarmament policy in 1987. I stood as a candidate against even younger Tory opponents and even more vigorous middlemen but I increased my majority fivefold. Anti-nuclear policies do not lead to disaffection among voters in the north-east—at least, not in my constituency.

We should put an end to the posturing and consider all the options. It is improper and unreal to take any individual defence factor and to consider it in isolation. Nothing could be more dangerous. I hope to contribute constructively to NATO's strategic review and to put forward the nuclear disarmament view. If we approach the problem by considering the existence of the threat, its nature, size, the direction from which it may come, how we should prepare for it and how we should equip our young men and women and train them instead of considering the restricted amount of money that the Treasury is prepared to make available, we may be able to adopt a bilateral stance and go some way towards meeting our genuine defence needs.

This week I spent two whole days in Northern Ireland. I was in the Castlederg salient with the commanding officer, Light Infantry. I experienced at first hand some of the conditions that our young men and women have to tolerate. We are asking them to do a bloody awful job on our behalf. There appears to be no political solution on the horizon, yet the conditions in which those personnel operate are disgraceful, the hours that they work are unbelievable and the conditions in which they sleep, at least near the frontier, are unspeakable. Yet they are the lucky ones. They have a positive role to play, which they understand and perform admirably, brilliantly and with a determination and commitment that is indescribably exemplary. Along with them, in permanent resident postings, they have their families—young wives, many with young children, living on bases with perimeter wires that are totally secure. They are afraid to go out beyond the perimeter wires and into the broader community because of the kind of retaliatory action that may be taken against them by hostile communities. When I say hostile, I really mean hostile. It might be fine and funny to criticise the dilemma that the Russians face in Afghanistan, but it is sobering to experience the same degree of real, vile hostility within the United Kingdom.

I plead for a comprehensive review that will make us examine each and every condition that we foist upon the young people who give us good service. I refer not only to pay, pensions and the ability to leave the service after 22 years wishing to obtain a house in our society—conditions that do not condemn a regimental sergeant-major to take a job as chauffeur to a civic head simply because that is the only way that he can get council house accommodation —but to conditions that provide such people with the equipment that allows them to do the job for a little longer than the five days that we demand before we make a nuclear response. We must ensure that the back-up reserves that we offer them are adequate.

The hon. Member for Weston-super-Mare spoke about the TAVR. I must honestly report that some officers who have been in charge of TAVR units for as long as two years confidently tell me that there is no way that the men can do the job, that there is no way that they will turn up for parades on time, and that there is no way that they will accept rebuke for any sort of misdemeanour. Yet other officers have said that anyone who has suggested that to me is failing in his duty because it means that he has organised the training badly and not motivated the forces. I have no doubt that there is an element of truth in both those statements. I offer them to the Secretary of State because we must take the truth from both and ensure that we remedy any wrongs.

Mr. Mans: Does the hon. Gentleman agree that every rank in all three services is now paid more in real terms under this Government than when I was a serving RAF officer during the previous Labour Administration?

Mr. Cook: I am pleased that the hon. Gentleman has had the opportunity to register the resentment that he obviously felt when he was a serving officer. During the past seven months I have spoken to serving officers, NCOs and rankers, and I am reporting what they have told me. If the hon. Gentleman does not want to accept that, I challenge him to join the Parliamentary Armed Services Trust, preferably in a branch of the services in which he did not serve, and listen to some of the criticisms. I am confident that he will hear even more than I heard.

I have asked for a review that begins from the basis of the need of our defence commitment, not from the greed of the Treasury, and from the need of the people who ask us to perform that role on their behalf. I ask for it to be carried out quickly and in conjunction with the NATO review.

9.38 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement (Mr. Tim Sainsbury): I welcome the hon. Member for Stockton, North (Mr. Cook) on his first contribution from the Labour Front Bench during a defence debate. I am sure that most hon. Members were glad to hear his remarks about the armed forces parliamentary scheme and his experiences of it. I hope that the House will be grateful for his support for the members of our armed forces.

The hon. Gentleman expressed sympathy with my right hon. Friend and his Ministers, and we are glad of his concern for our welfare and his sympathy for us. However, the sympathy that we feel for him and his hon. Friends on the Front Bench who have to debate defence on behalf of the Labour party is a great deal deeper. Perhaps I should also welcome the first speech from the hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) as a leader of what I must say appears to be a divided army. The hon. Members for Wallsend (Mr. Garrett) and for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas) would classify themselves among those who would sign "Bemused of the Labour party" when it came to what was, or indeed what was not, their own party's policy.

We heard a deeply sincere speech from the hon. Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer). Nobody who heard that speech would doubt his sincerity. What most of us doubt is the truth of the views that he holds. He may be in the majority in his own party but, as was pointed out to him by an Opposition Member, he is not in the majority in

[Mr. Tim Sainsbury]

the country, as the last general election decisively showed. I shall return to some of the comments from the hon. Member for Clackmannan.

Some issues were raised during the first day of this important debate, particularly matters relating to pay, recruitment and retention, which I shall leave to my hon. Friends the Minister of State for the Armed Forces and the Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces who hope to catch your eye tomorrow, Mr. Speaker.

Many hon. Members have commented on the possible outcome of the current PESC round and the implications for the Defence Estimates. I refer particularly to my hon. Friends the Members for Hampshire, East (Mr. Mates) and for Wealden (Sir G. Johnson Smith) in that connection. They and others will not be surprised that, on this important point, I cannot add to what my right hon. Friend said in his opening remarks. Equally, many hon. Members have spoken about the importance of obtaining for our forces the best equipment while at the same time getting value for money. My hon. Friend the Member for Hampstead and Highgate (Sir G. Finsburg) referred to that point. I hope that we shall not have to wait another 10 years for his next contribution to a defence debate.

It was Cato the Elder who was reputed to have used the same phrase in every one of his speeches, "Delenda est Carthago"—Carthage must be destroyed. In one sense at least, I should seek to emulate him by saying in every speech that I make from the Dispatch Box that value for money must be obtained. I think that "Utilifas ex vectigali publico maxime est capienda" would more or less cover the point. If I may return the vernacular—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. It is in order. I think that some hon. Members would like it to be translated.

Mr. Sainsbury: The sense is that value for money must be obtained. It is essential to extract maximum benefit from public taxation. I am sure that we would all agree with that sentiment.

One of the most important ways that we have of getting that drive for value for money in procurement is competition, and we are maintaining our sustained efforts to secure full benefit from competition. In 1983-84, the proportion by value of contracts let on a competitive basis was only 38 per cent.—that, of course, was up from the level that we inherited from the Labour Government—whereas, in each of the past three years, over half our business has been done by competition.

Naturally, we must expect variations in the figure from year to year, mainly due to fluctuations in the value of large contracts for items such as nuclear submarines, for which competition at the prime contractor level is not feasible. In such cases, however, we insist on the greatest possible competition for the award of sub-contracts.

Our drive to reduce the number and value of contracts let on a cost-plus basis has also been significant. The value of contracts let on that basis—cost plus percentage fee—fell from 15 per cent. in 1983-84 to only 7 per cent. in 1987-88. Each of those contracts is now subject to a cost ceiling, so that we are no longer entering into open-ended commitments.

Of course, because of the length of procurement cycles, it takes time for the full benefits of increased competition and our more commercial approach to work through. Typically, it might take two to three years between the signing of a production contract and the receipt of and payment for the first piece of equipment arising from that contract, and it is only at that stage that the real savings are seen.

Underpinning our drive for greater competition are the steps that we have taken to provide ourselves with a greater choice of companies by seeking wherever possible to widen our supplier base. We continue to encourage small firms to break into the defence market, and the amount of direct defence business won by small firms is running at £1,000 million a year. That figure excludes the substantial sub-contract work that they also undertake. The efforts of our small firms advice division have encouraged several thousand small enterprises to seek out defence business. Our competitive base is therefore in very good health, and we shall maintain our efforts to ensure that it remains so.

The benefits to the defence industry of increased domestic competition are evidenced by its growing competitiveness in international markets. That is shown by our outstanding export record. Defence exports have tripled in real terms since 1979.

I am sure that the House will join me in congratulating our defence suppliers on their recent export achievements. Foreign sales represent a most valuable addition to the order books of United Kingdom companies, while the consequent longer production runs help to reduce the unit cost of our own purchases. In addition, some of the overseas sales enable the development costs of equipment, which are often very substantial, to be recovered from a much increased volume of sales. They also, of course, create a large number of jobs for British workers.

Sir Antony Buck: Does my hon. Friend agree that it would be appropriate to pay a tribute to his own defence sales organisation and to the alteration in the attitude of the corps diplomatique, which is no longer orientated against sales? Therefore, trade is no longer a dirty word and many of our ambassadors are in fact orientated towards selling for Britain.

Mr. Sainsbury: I am grateful to my hon. and learned Friend for his comments. I shall be paying a tribute, as he suggests, later in my remarks, but what he has said is very true.

There are a number of other aspects of our drive for value for money to which I should like to refer, but before I do so I will respond to some of the other points which have been raised in the debate.

The hon. Member for Clackmannan welcomed our greater use of competitive tendering, but it appears that he was somewhat equivocal about the consequences of that policy. He seems to welcome lower prices, but he cannot accept the consequential adjustments of the resources, both men and materials, to the size for efficient production. Surely he cannot want the Ministry of Defence to subsidise and so perpetuate inappropriate or inefficient production, which seemed to be the tenor of some of his remarks.

Mr. O'Neill: What I was trying to point out was that there is a danger in adopting an unduly simplistic approach to competitive tendering. There must be some flexibility, which I have not seen in some of the Government's approaches to the problem. It is necessary

to have competitive tendering as part of a coherent strategy in terms of the Government's relationship with the defence industries.

Mr. Sainsbury: It may not be apparent to the hon. Gentleman, but I assure him that we bear in mind the long-term interests of the Ministry of Defence in our policy of competitive tendering. We are finding it the most effective way of obtaining value for money, and we intend to continue with it.

My hon. and learned Friend the Member for Colchester, North (Sir A. Buck), my hon. Friend the Member for Ashford (Mr. Speed) and the hon. Member for Wallsend raised a question about our amphibious capability. I confirm that the Government remain committed to maintaining an amphibious capability in the longer term. My Department has just received the results of three feasibility studies carried out by industry that have looked at the option of replacing the assault ships Fearless and Intrepid. They will now be evaluated alongside a study completed last year that looked at the option of extending the lives of those ships. No decision will be made before next year, but it will be made in good time before the ships reach the end of their planned lives, which is not until the mid-1990s. We hope to make in the near future an announcement on the invitation to tender for the aviation support ship.

My hon. and learned Friend the Member for Colchester, North, my hon. Friend the Member for Ashford and the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West sought an assurance on escort numbers—and I am happy to give it. Our commitment is to maintain a force of about 50 destroyers and frigates. We will order enough ships to sustain that size. I was glad to announce an order for three new type 23 frigates this summer and I look forward to announcing a competition for another batch order for type 23s next year.

Dr. Reid: Does the Minister recall that, during the Secretary of State's speech, it was pointed out that the ordering rate of 1·6 per annum is less than the 2·6 recommended by the Committee? The Secretary of State pointed out that part of this difference at least can be related to the quality of the new orders that are going out and to the quality of the new fleet. When it comes to a comparison of numbers, can the Minister explain how surface fleet quality should be an important factor in balancing those numbers, but that when it comes to comparing the number of tanks held between the Russian forces and our forces on the western front quality is apparently dismissed?

Mr. Sainsbury: Quality and quantity are both important, and they apply to our surface fleet. I refer the hon. Gentleman to what was said during our debate on the Royal Navy earlier this year.

Mr. Douglas *rose*——

Mr. Sainsbury: Time is running short; I must go on.

Several hon. Members, including the hon. Member for Clackmannan, mentioned the disposal of Royal Ordnance plc to British Aerospace. My right hon. Friend has set out quite clearly the competitive background to the sale of Royal Ordnance, but I would like to spend a few moments on the property aspects of this matter. As someone who was once an adviser on property management to Her Majesty's Government, I can appreciate why those who are perhaps not familiar with the complexities and uncertainties of property development should be puzzled by the contrast between the price paid by British Aerospace and some of the sums quoted in the press as the value of the redundant sites. The fact is that some of those figures are highly speculative and take no account of the major offsetting costs which would have to be set against proceeds. In my view, those figures are likely to turn out to be greatly exaggerated.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): What are they?

Mr. Sainsbury: Wait for it. The hon. Gentleman has not been in the Chamber for most of the day, so perhaps he can wait for what I have to say.

The first and most important point is that the speculative figures that have been quoted appear to be based on what I believe to be totally over-optimistic assumptions about the planning permission that might be obtained for sites, which, although developed, are in the metropolitan green belt. They also overlook the considerable closure and transfer costs to which my right hon. Friend referred.

The speculative figures overlook the substantial costs that would be necessary to provide road access and services to the sites. They also overlook the costs involved in carrying out the cleansing and decontamination work that would be necessary in view of the long previous use of those sites for ammunition. They do not take into account the fees, expenses and delays that are inevitable in complex redevelopment proposals.

The information memorandum issued before the sale made it clear that major rationalisations would be required, and would be costly. Bidders were aware that there was the possibility of developing the Waltham Abbey and parts of the Enfield sites.

Mr. Allan Rogers (Rhondda): A little earlier, the Minister said that he was an adviser on property management to the previous Government.

Mr. Sainsbury *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Rogers: Well, an earlier Government.

We accept that the Minister is an expert in property management. In that case, would he like to try to quantify the so-called offset costs that he and the Secretary of State have mentioned so nebulously? My hon. Friend the Member for Renfrew, West and Inverclyde (Mr. Graham) demolished the Government's case on this issue. The only way in which the Government will be able to stand up in this scandal and to hold their head up high is if they can quantify the offset costs. When will the Government be able to do this?

Mr. Sainsbury: The hon. Gentleman is displaying the difficulty of those who are not familiar with the process of understanding the costs. Obviously, nobody would set about quantifying those costs—*[Interruption.]* The hon. Gentleman asked a question, so perhaps he will wait for the answer—without both a detailed study of what was involved and calling in the experts. One would first have to determine what planning permissions might be available. We do not know; nobody knows. Therefore it would be a waste of time to quantify the costs.

Mr. Rogers *rose*——

Mr. Salmsbury: The hon. Gentleman has had his say and there are many other points to be made. I strongly suggest to the House that the issue is different from that suggested by some Opposition Members.

The Select Committee raised an important point about its concern for reliability and maintainability. The Government, in reply to that valuable report, underlined how significant we believe these issues to be.

Good reliability and maintainability are the two key constituents of equipment availability, which would be crucial to our armed forces in any future conflict. Furthermore, improvements in reliability and maintainability reduce support costs, making it possible to transfer resources to the front line. With this in mind, we are now pursuing several initiatives in this area as part of our overall value-for-money policy. With competition now well established, attention is turning increasingly to the need for contractors to produce more reliable and more easily maintained equipment, on time and to cost.

To do this we have to base our procurement decisions on a sound assessment of both the initial purchase price and the through-life support costs, as the Select Committee said. It is important that we seek to place the onus for achieving the required levels of reliability and maintainability, along with the other requirements of the specification, on the contractor.

We are also seeking ways of making industry accept a greater share of the responsibility: there is a wide range of options, from reliability incentives to the provision of spares support on a fixed price basis. We are making a determined effort to ensure that industry realises that we are committed to achieving reliability, and it will be an increasingly crucial element in the control milestones we set for projects as they move through development into production and into service.

Our pursuit of value for money extends beyond equipment. The application of competition to the defence support services, as my right hon. Friend has made clear, has also allowed us to secure considerable gains in terms of enhanced efficiency and greater value for money. Excluding the royal dockyards, contracting out of defence support services has resulted in savings of over 13,000 posts and net annual savings of some £50 million since 1979. We shall continue with our drive to increase that annual level of savings.

Another aspect of value for money to which we are giving Department-wide attention is relocation, which we see as potentially a key factor in our continuous search for economy and improved efficiency. My hon. Friend the Member for Ashford referred to an office reduction programme, which would find sympathy with many. I can confirm to the House that the relocation initiative announced by my right hon. Friend the Paymaster General in March is being energetically pursued as a matter of good management and best use of resources.

The successful transfer of 1,400 jobs to Glasgow under the 1979 dispersal programme is almost complete, and I am pleased to be able to report a high general level of satisfaction among those—about a third of the total number of staff—who moved north of the border. We are now examining a range of further relocation possibilities which, among other things, should significantly reduce the amount of work that must remain in London. It is, however, often overlooked that the majority of our civilian staff are already located outside London and the south-east, and this number will be increased still further.

The House will readily understand that extensive consultations are required before any final decision can be taken on the transfer of work to a new location, but this is an area of departmental management to which my right hon. Friend and I attach considerable importance. It holds out the prospect of a happy combination of useful gains in operational efficiency and substantial cost savings.

The wide-ranging search for better value for money through better designed and more reliable equipment, through better project management, through collaboration with our allies and through clearer and more flexible management arrangements is made effective by the hard work and skill of the people who implement it. As the Statement on the Defence Estimates makes clear, competition makes demands on the Procurement Executive's staff as well as on defence contractors. Therefore, I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the commitment and skill of all those involved in helping to bring about these changes in industry——

It being Ten o'clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed tomorrow.

Glenochil Prison

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn—*[Mr. Heathcoat-Amory.]*

10 pm

Mr. Martin O'Neill (Clackmannan): When I requested an Adjournment debate at the beginning of the recess I did not think that my wish would be granted as speedily as it has been, and I immediately express my gratitude, although I question the timing a little. But as it is only the second time in nine and a half years that I have been granted an Adjournment debate, I do not suppose I have many grounds for complaint.

The subject of my debate is the disturbances at Glenochil prison in my constituency. In recent years the prison has had a chequered history—often because of matters unrelated to its general administration—and over the years many hon. Members on both sides of the House have tried to correct misapprehensions and misunderstandings about the regime in that institution.

The problems that arose in the summer, although sadly all too common in other Scottish institutions during the past two or three years, occurred for only the first time at Glenochil. They involved vandalism, disturbances and a breakdown in discipline, and they required what seemed at the time, to some people at least, stern, if not oppressive, corrective action.

I must refer to the strenuous efforts of the staff, and especially the man whom I am proud to call my friend —Gordon Jackson, the governor—who, with his staff, has sought to re-establish discipline, which is the first priority in any prison regime. I pay tribute, not only to the prison service, but to the directorate and the Minister for the courageous decision that they took when the recess began to allow the press into the prison to assess for themselves the conditions in which the prisoners were living and who was responsible for those conditions. When the press saw for themselves the conditions and the manner in which they had been created, it was all too clear that the blame rested not with the prison authorities but with elements within the prison who were trying to disrupt the life and work of the prison service.

At the same time, I recognise that some of the problems that caused the disturbances flowed directly from the somewhat crude and simplistic approach to the relocation of prisoners that was implicit in the grand design. That involved the movement within the Scottish prison service of a number of prisoners, some of whom were disruptive, to institutions that were incapable of receiving adult prisoners of the temperament that they subsequently displayed. In the case of Glenochil, which had specialised in the care and treatment of young offenders, in the first stages at least, the grand design programme was ill-conceived. However, I recognise that there had to be changes in the distribution of prisoners within Scotland. There were areas of overcrowding, and at the same time areas of under-use, so the programme was necessary, but my complaint is that it was carried out in a hurry, without adequate preparation.

The prison service, not least at gubernatorial level, is aware of the problems that confront the prison system. In Scottish prisons we now have a class of prisoner who is in for crimes that involve large sums of money, usually raised through the drug trade. The prisoners have access to people and to forces outside the prison which seek to influence the families of other prisoners. That power is used to undermine the authority of the governor and his staff. The new approaches that are being developed, in intelligence gathering, identifying changes in behaviour patterns in the prison and the simple but time-consuming and often frustrating business of trying to stop or at best to discover the flow of narcotics into the institutions, have come from the experience of people such as Governor Jackson at Glenochil and his staff.

At the beginning of the recess I took out an insurance policy by putting down a marker for an Adjournment debate. At the time I was aware that the prison was not under the control of the staff and that there were areas that could only be called "no go areas", but I was also aware that the governor and his staff had a plan which they thought they could carry through and that by September or October they would be back in control of the institution. When I saw the governor a couple of weeks ago, before he fell ill, he told me that he was happy at the way in which things were progressing. He felt that the programme to restore discipline and control in the adult section of the prison was going smoothly.

Since that meeting I have been approached by the Scottish Prison Officers Association branch in the prison. It expressed grave concern about a change in the regime, which it does not think is in the short-term interests of the institution. The Minister contacted me at the weekend to inform me of his intention to visit the prison and invited me to accompany him. For reasons that he may understand, because of the business that preceded this debate, I was unable to accept the invitation.

The substance of the prison officers' complaint was this. The detention centre is an institution which I have long attacked because the short, sharp shock programme of sentencing was grossly inappropriate to the needs of young people and young offenders. The inmates were being transferred to the Polmont institution—we still call it Polmont borstal. It used to be in my constituency. The premises previously inhabited by young offenders were being used as a remand centre for young offenders under 21 who were awaiting trial and sentence.

I have heard that the prison staff are concerned about the speed with which these changes were carried through, about the lack of notice and of the training that they felt they would require for the new circumstances. They have also told me of their concern about the building. Many of the young people who are awaiting trial—we cannot yet call them young offenders, as they are innocent until proven guilty—often behave little better than vandals. They have taken advantage of the thin walls between the prison cells and have broken through from on cell to another. As the Minister knows, we are discussing a discreet entity in one section of the complex at Glenochil, and this grouping in the institution has been imposed on it at short notice, and without the necessary training or proper architectural preparation. That is a recipe for disaster, about which the prison officers are extremely concerned.

The officers have been corresponding with the Minister and, if I had not known that I was to have this opportunity to raise the matter, I should have written to him too, but I hope now to hear at least part of the story this evening.

I recognise the strenuous efforts that have been made by the Scottish prison service during the summer to try to correct the tragic circumstances that obtained in the early summer as a result of the disturbances. Stability has been

[Mr. Martin O'Neill]

largely restored, but keeping order and running a prison are not necessarily the same things. I hope that we can start from the foundations that have been laid over the summer and that a more relaxed and meaningful regime, which will benefit both prisoners and the safety of prisoners and staff, can be established. Staff satisfaction is severely limited now because they have had to operate in difficult conditions, which they have done with a remarkable degree of restraint, for which they have not been given the credit they deserve.

I should not do my views on the Scottish prison service and system justice if I did not say that overcrowding is one of the basic problems in our prisons. We send too many people to prison because there are no other places for them to go. A report has been issued, but it would not be appropriate to debate it this evening. I note in passing that the time that we have in this House in which to debate penal issues is all too limited. All parties in the House take the view that there are no votes to be gained in prisons: prisoners do not vote. There is not enough public concern about the prison system. When it is felt, it tends to relate to crises such as prison riots, the taking of hostages and suicides. I have had my share of those at Glenochil. Once such difficulties have been resolved, at least in the short term, the public gaze is averted and people carry on as before.

The Minister has shown flexibility in his handling of some of the Scottish prison system's problems, and I pay tribute to him for that, but he must take on the biggest problem of all—our judicial system, which sends far too many people to prison and to institutions which are often not suitable for the prisoners or for the offences of which they have been found guilty. The latest round of reorganisation that the Minister has undertaken has been painful in Glenochil. The situation will take some time to improve.

I am sure that the hon. Gentleman has been left in no doubt about the local feelings on the matter. He must now start to look at a prize bigger than just discipline and stability—the prize of a prison system that is effective and humane. We still have some way to go until we achieve that. I hope that the Minister will be able to give us the up-to-date position in the prison and that he will join me in paying tribute to the staff who this summer took on an extremely difficult job and carried it out with a degree of restraint that was truly remarkable.

10.15 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton): I am glad to join the hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) in paying tribute to the governor and staff of Glenochil prison, and I thank the hon. Gentleman for his generous remarks. We have brought forward a consultation paper on fines and I hope that it will meet the points that he made at the end of his speech. I agree with the inference in his speech that it is important to match a prisoner to an appropriate regime. In terms of grand design, Glenochil was designed as an adult training prison with good, modern facilities, and prison staff are trained to cope with any and every inmate, both adult and young offender.

The hon. Gentleman spoke about drugs. Staff in the Scottish prison service are conscious of the need to prevent illicit drugs being smuggled into and used in prison establishments. Some measures have been or soon will be introduced to try to combat this problem. Among these are the introduction of closed-circuit television systems in visiting rooms and the use of sniffer dogs and strip searches which have been in use. I congratulate the hon. Gentleman on securing the debate. His concern is well known to me. He came to see me and the director of the prison service earlier in the summer and he highlighted some points that were of considerable value to us.

I visited Glenochil prison only yesterday. I met representatives of the local branch of the Scottish Prison Officers' Association and also saw the chairman of the visiting committee, Councillor Watt. I toured both the main prison and the detention centre. In particular, I visited A hall, where I spoke with the prisoners and saw conditions at first hand. On Monday, I also went to Polmont young offenders institution where I saw the local branch of the SPOA and met the prison service chaplains and discussed the way forward with them. I was also able to pay a visit to the prison service college and saw the training courses for new recruits.

I should like to answer straightaway the concerns of the hon. Gentleman about the recent change in the use of Glenochil detention centre. The background to the change was a very serious situation towards the end of September at Barlinnie which developed quite suddenly. Admissions to Barlinnie prison rose sharply, leading to a degree of overcrowding and stress which I regarded as unacceptable. The prison department looked at a number of possible solutions, but none was entirely satisfactory. The best option appeared to be to transfer the young offenders then located in the Glenochil detention centre to Polmont, and, in turn, to move a number of under-21-year-old remand prisoners from Barlinnie prison to the Glenochil detention centre. This was not an easy decision to take. However, there was a serious situation at Barlinnie with overcrowding, and we had to look at ways in which the service as a whole could help. I felt that the decision to make these temporary changes was the right one in the wider public interest.

I stress that the changes are temporary. Later in the year, when the numbers in Barlinnie allow, it is our intention to transfer the young offenders from Polmont back to the Glenochil detention centre buildings. By that date I anticipate that the detention centre as such will have ceased to exist. We are working towards 1 November as the date for the introduction of the new generic sentence for young offenders, at which point all detention centre sentences will become young offender sentences. It is our intention to return a brisk young offender regime to Glenochil, which will incorporate the more positive aspects of the detention centre regime.

The transfer of the detention centre inmates took place after discussion with the governors of Glenochil and Polmont. I have explained the reasons for the urgency with which the changes were introduced. This meant that it was not possible to consult the trade union side in advance, as would be our normal practice. However, officials visited Glenochil on 30 September and held discussions with representatives of the local branch of the SPOA. The situation in relation to the movement of young offender inmates was explained to them and they accepted that Glenochil had to play its part in the wider prison system.

I have been able to discuss the detention centre changes in recent days—only yesterday—with both the SPOA local branches involved. Members of the local branch at Glenochil have three concerns.

First, they felt that remand prisoners were more prone to disruption, as the hon. Gentleman said, and they expressed concern about the future of the detention centre. I was able to give them assurances that it is our intention that Glenochil should revert to holding convicted young offenders once the situation at Barlinnie had eased.

Secondly, they were concerned about the staffing, both in the detention centre and in the main prison. The prisons department has agreed a staff complement for the detention centre, involving the provision of extra staff on detached duty, and I was able to assure the local branch that that agreement would be honoured.

The department monitors closely the staffing needs of Glenochil as a whole. The average number of staff in post since April has been 233 and equates with the complement of figures agreed with the governor. Currently, however, the number of operational discipline staff in post is 237. A further appraisal of staffing needs was completed earlier this month and the department will shortly be discussing its findings with the senior management at the prison.

The third concern of the local branch was for the physical fabric of the detention centre. They felt that it was prone to damage—the hon. Gentleman touched on this—by the young remand prisoners. This is obviously a point of which we were aware when the change of use was agreed. I understand that, to an extent, the fears expressed have not materialised and that no major damage has been caused to the detention centre so far. Management staff at Barlinnie are helping by sifting inmates before they are sent to Glenochil, and they have agreed not to transfer major security problems there. Conditions for the inmates are very much better at Glenochil, since each inmate has his own room, rather than being located three in a cell, as was the case at Barlinnie. Although the representatives of the Glenochil local branch pointed out these concerns to me, I was much impressed by their readiness to assist, their selfless dedication, and their recognition that Glenochil had to play its part in the interest of the service as a whole.

I visited Polmont last Monday and discussed the position in relation to the detention centre inmates with the governor and the SPOA, and both intimated that the arrival of the detention centre inmates at Polmont had created no problems for them. The inmates had become readily integrated into the Polmont regime.

The main part of Glenochil prison houses adult male offenders with a medium security classification. Since the incident at the adult prison in May, the governor and his staff have been working towards the introduction of a progressive regime. The pace of progress has, however, had to be dictated by the need for the governor and his staff to remain firmly in control at the prison.

When I visited Glenochil yesterday, I was able to see at first hand the conditions. I should say that everything has been done to ensure that the inmates receive their due entitlement to exercise and visits, even during the immediate aftermath of the incidents, when conditions were very difficult. The majority of the adult offenders are being allowed periods of association, during exercise and recreation. Three of the prison's workshops have reopened and about one third of the inmates are at work on a regular basis. It has also been possible to reopen vocational training and educational classes for a number of inmates, and there is limited use of the sports facilities in the gymnasium.

A minority of inmates—mainly those in A hall, which has the most difficult prisoners—are receiving only limited periods of association, when exercise is taken. In addition, 13 prisoners, all in A hall are being held out of association under the conditions of rule 36 of the Prison (Scotland) Rules 1952. Staff in A hall are no longer wearing riot gear. I spoke to staff and inmates in A hall. The relations between staff and inmates have improved, and the hall was quiet. There is now a system of progression at the prison and inmates who behave can move to a less restricted regime. Overall, I can report that gradually the prison is returning to normal. Glenochil is calm and staff have restored control and good order.

However, it will take time to restore the full range of privileges and opportunities for inmates. Change can be introduced only as quickly as staff feel confident to proceed. The incidents in May were a very significant betrayal of the trust which management and staff had previously shown inmates. Inevitably, in such circumstances, the restoration of trust and confidence is a gradual matter, but I have spoken with both management and staff and I know that they are working at this as a matter of the highest priority.

Perhaps I might say something now about the physical fabric of Glenochil. A programme of window replacement is well under way. Resources devoted to this have recently been trebled, with the approach of winter. One hall has already been completed and the other three halls should be finished within a month. A rolling programme is under way to refurbish the many cells which were damaged. I have seen the new type of cell and was very impressed. Facilities and furnishings have been upgraded, and I believe that this was welcomed by the inmates to whom I spoke. At the same time, the opportunity has been taken to strengthen a number of the cells which were damaged in May.

The refurbishment programme obviously has the highest priority in the interests of the health and well-being of inmates. We are also looking urgently at ways of improving the external security, so that opportunities for outside recreation and exercise can be restored. I can also report that the prison is much tidier than when the press saw it in May. Inmates are now co-operating better, and less litter accumulates. Also tidying up and cleaning operations are carried out regularly, and daily if possible, depending on weather conditions. Inmates are now prepared to work with staff on keeping the prison clean.

I welcome this opportunity to debate conditions at Glenochil prison. I am grateful to the hon. Member for Clackmannan. I pay tribute to the professionalism and responsibility shown by all the staff at Glenochil. There was no justification at all for the disruption and damage carried out by inmates at the prison. Such activities benefited no one. They are a betrayal of trust. Their immediate result is a loss of opportunities and privileges—not to mention a deterioration in the accommodation—for all inmates. The process of restoring opportunities and rebuilding trust cannot be accomplished overnight. I am confident, however, that management and staff are taking all the necessary steps and are now well on course for a return towards normal regimes for the large majority of inmates.

[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton]

I should like to say something about the events which occurred at Glenochil in May. There had been a number of incidents at the prison since its use was changed to hold adult offenders in June 1987, but none as serious as those which occurred on 5 and 6 May. During rioting over the ensuing days, in which the majority of inmates took part to varying extents, 40 cells were completely wrecked, over 300 windows smashed and considerable damage, estimated at around £200,000, was caused to the fabric of the prison.

Hon. Members will recall the background to these events. They occurred during a week in which there had been some unrest in the prison system, including an incident when an officer was taken hostage at Perth prison. That incident was resolved, but Glenochil prison remained tense. On 4 May an isolated incident occurred, when, it is alleged, an inmate assaulted a member of staff. The prison was in a state of unrest and in the evening a fire was started. The following morning it was decided that inmates should be restricted to their halls while police were investigating. At lunchtime there was an attempt to take a member of staff hostage. The governor ordered that all inmates return to their cells. Inmates in two of the four halls refused. When the governor again asked the inmates to return to their cells and the inmates again refused, they were returned forcibly by prison staff. Prison staff did this using approved techniques of control and restraint and during the process nobody was hurt. I may say that when I was at Polmont prison service training college on Monday I was able to see the training of prison officers to deal with this type of disturbance. The training is thorough and to a very high professional standard. Once the inmates had been returned to their cells, they commenced on a programme of destruction, as I have described.

There was no justification at all for these acts of destruction. The inmates had no legitimate grievances to justify their behaviour; they simply refused to obey prison officers' orders and then became abusive and violent. Nobody benefited from the inmates' actions. Before the incident, the policy of the governor and his staff had been to provide inmates with access to all privileges and facilities at Glenochil on trust. If an inmate betrayed this trust, privileges could be withdrawn.

Following the disturbance, the immediate priority was to reassert control and reimpose good order at the prison. It was clearly necessary for management and staff to reassert the principles of custody and control, which they did.

It has been suggested that the imposition of the restricted regime punished all inmates, including those who might have taken no part in the incidents. However, my information is that a majority of the inmates took part in the disruption, to varying degrees. It will be appreciated that, in the confused circumstances which prevailed, it would have been very difficult for staff to distinguish between those who may have participated willingly, others who may have participated unwillingly and those who took no part at all. Control had to be re-established, and the imposition of a general restriction was the only practicable way forward.

The basis of the new progressive system is now in place, and slow but steady progress is being made in restoring opportunities and facilities for inmates. I should like to pay tribute to the professional way in which the governor and staff have coped with difficult circumstances. I am impressed by the caring and responsible attitudes which staff have shown. I think it would be fair to say that staff regarded the disruption in May as a very serious betrayal of trust on the part of inmates. Clearly, once control had been reaffirmed, the process of returning the prison to normal has had to take place at a measured pace. The confidence and trust which previously existed between staff and inmates cannot be restored overnight; this will take time. I am satisfied, however, that order has now been restored now that the process of introducing more positive regimes is proceeding at a satisfactory pace. Indeed, I saw at first hand yesterday what was being done in the way of reopening workshops, vocational training, education and indoor sports facilities. Again, I thank the hon. Member for Clackmannan for his remarks.

The motion having been made at Ten o'clock, and the debate having continued for half an hour, MR. SPEAKER *adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.*

Adjourned at half-past Ten o'clock.

House of Commons

Thursday 20 October 1988

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

BRITISH RAILWAYS (NO. 2) BILL
Read the Third time, and passed.

TEIGNMOUTH QUAY COMPANY BILL *(By Order)*

YORK CITY COUNCIL BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

CARDIFF BAY BARRAGE BILL *(By Order)*

FALMOUTH CONTAINER TERMINAL BILL *(By Order)*

PORT OF TYNE BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

AVON LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*
Orders for Second Reading read.
To be read a Second time on Thursday 27 October.

LONDON LOCAL AUTHORITIES BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*
Read a Second time, and committed.

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL BILL
Ordered,
That notwithstanding that the Birmingham City Council Bill was taken into consideration by the Committee on the Bill before a report from the Attorny General on the Bill had been presented to the House pursuant to paragraph (1) of Standing Order 158 (Bills affecting charities or educational foundations) the proceedings of the Committee be deemed to have been taken in compliance with that Standing Order.—*[The Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

BARLOW CLOWES
Return ordered,
of the Report of Sir Godfray Le Quesne Q.C., to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on Barlow Clowes.—*[Mr. Newton.]*

Oral Answers to Questions

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Aboriginal Whaling

1. **Mr. Harris:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will take further action to restrict aboriginal whaling.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Mr. Donald Thompson): We will go on insisting in the International Whaling Commission that the taking of whales by aboriginal communities continues to be very closely regulated. And the numbers permitted to be taken should be consistent with scientific advice on the status of the stocks. We will also continue to press for any necessary improvement in monitoring such whaling or in hunting methods employed.

Mr. Harris: While welcoming the tremendous international interest in the efforts that are taking place to rescue the three whales off Alaska, may I ask whether my hon. Friend agrees that the best way in which we can save the whale population as a whole is through organisations such as the International Whaling Commission? Does he think that possibly the time has come when we should stop whaling altogether?

Mr. Thompson: The United Kingdom Government's record on whaling is second to none, and we support the International Whaling Commission in all its efforts. However, many aboriginal communities still live off the whale and depend on it for their whole lifestyle. It would be wrong to think of those communities becoming dependent on the state rather than on their own commerce and industry. Nevertheless, I agree with the broad thrust of my hon. Friend's suggestion.

Mr. Tony Banks: I associate myself with the views of the hon. Member for St. Ives (Mr. Harris). I am sure that there is enormous support on both sides of the House for the banning of all whaling. As certain aboriginal communities clearly depend on whale hunting, would it not be appropriate for countries such as our own to give them adequate financial compensation, so that they will not have to make any sacrifices in achieving something that we want? It will be very useful if the Minister can send a message to the United States Government, commending them for their noble efforts in trying to save the three grey whales in Alaska.

Mr. Thompson: I am sure that those associated with the United States Government read *Hansard* very carefully and will be pleased and surprised to learn of that last comment by the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks). They need not have me slingshotted all the way across to Alaska. Besides, I have enough to do.

I cannot entirely agree with the hon. Gentleman's first suggestion, which was that we should put aboriginal communities on the dole, as it were, rather than let them follow their natural and long-established commercial practices. There is a time period over which we can change old-fashioned industries to modern ones. As we in the House all know, that pays dividends in the long run.

Common Fisheries Policy

2. **Sir Michael Shaw:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his assessment of the effectiveness of current policing of the common fisheries policy.

The Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Mr. John MacGregor): As my hon. Friend knows, the United Kingdom Government have always taken the lead in advocating effective measures for enforcing the common fisheries policy. There are clear signs that other EC member states are now taking the steps necessary, as we have done, to achieve proper enforcement.

Sir Michael Shaw: Is my right hon. Friend aware that, while the industry as a whole appreciates that better steps

are now being taken, in some countries those steps are being taken from a very low base? There is still anxiety, particularly in this country, about the reduction in quotas, which is causing real hardship to many of our fishermen.

Mr. MacGregor: We take steps to reduce quotas only when scientific advice suggests that it is necessary for the long-term conservation of stocks, which is clearly in the interests of our own fishermen. As for enforcement, I am sure my hon. Friend has noticed that the Netherlands, for example, has made a big increase in the manpower of its inspection service, has strengthened its control system, is improving restrictions on its fleet's capacity and effort and is taking a number of its fishermen to court. There is no doubt that considerable efforts have been made in that country.

We are very vigilant. A recent problem related to reports of quota hopping by one or two member states, but I am glad to say that action on that was agreed at yesterday's Council.

Farming Unions

3. **Mr. Geraint Howells:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met representatives of farming unions to discuss the state of the agriculture industry.

Mr. MacGregor: I meet representatives of the farming unions frequently to discuss agricultural matters. For example, I have met many of them from different parts of the country, including the president, on various occasions in the last fortnight alone.

Mr. Howells: What plans has the Minister to ease financial pressures on our agriculture so that it can compete on equal terms with its counterparts in Europe?

Mr. MacGregor: I am aware that in some sectors of the industry there are problems of declining incomes, and that others, such as the pig industry, also have real difficulties —although that is the case throughout the European Community. On the other hand, some sectors have experienced improvements in incomes in the past year or so, and in one or two earlier years. The overall picture is not one of declining incomes.

Obviously there have been pressures as we have dealt with the reforms of the CAP—which the hon. Gentleman, I think, agrees are necessary—but in this year's price negotiations we secured a better outcome on green currencies for the United Kingdom than for any other country, and it will come into operation on 1 January. That of itself will add £120 million to United Kingdom farm incomes.

Mr. Marland: Is my right hon. Friend aware that there is genuine concern among British farmers that our green pound may not achieve parity by 1992? The fear is that if it does not do so by then some Socialist Eurocrat may decide to freeze values as they are, in which case it would never do so. Can my right hon. Friend reassure the farmers that he will maintain pressure for devaluing the green pound?

Mr. MacGregor: Yes, I can. As my hon. Friend knows, the Commission and the Council have both committed themselves this year to the phasing out of MCAs and their elimination by 1992. I have made it clear that I strongly support that, and that I do not believe that there can be a proper single market in agriculture unless it is done. I assure my hon. Friend that I shall use every appropriate opportunity to continue working to that end.

Mr. Martyn Jones: In view of his further rejection of direct income aid at the last Agriculture Council—which, I believe, took place a couple of days ago—has the Minister any plans to help hill farmers in my constituency to keep up their incomes, which are among those that are diminishing?

Mr. MacGregor: I was by no means alone in making some strong criticisms of the Commission's current proposals for a direct income-aid scheme. Many other Ministers, incuding those from some of the bigger countries, also chimed in with different criticisms. I believe that the current proposals would not be cost effective, are not directed at the right ends and do not fulfil all the conditions that we were asked to carry out.

Rev. Ian Paisley: Will the Minister inform the House of the present position on his promise that he would work towards the elimination of pigmeat MCAs? Is he aware of the proposals now being ventilated in Europe concerning changes in sheepmeat and beef regimes, which would result in serious agricultural conditions in Northern Ireland? Will he keep in mind that feed stocks for the intensive sector in Northern Ireland are now soaring almost out of control, and that the intensive farmers are in great difficulties?

Mr. MacGregor: I argued strongly, and with some good arguments, for the elimination of pigmeat MCAs as quickly as possible. There was still a blocking minority on that, but I am sure the hon. Gentleman will be delighted to know that, as a result of the changes that we did secure, pigmeat MCAs will be down to zero on 1 January if sterling remains at its current level. That is a big change from a negative MCA of 28 points only about 18 months ago.

On the hon. Gentleman's second point, the proposals have just been presented to the Council. We had a brief discussion about them earlier this week and I believe that it will be a long negotiation. I shall certainly be fighting hard for all the United Kingdom's legitimate interests.

On the third point, the particular problem has been the American drought and its effect on soya, which has had an effect on feedstuffs for the intensive livestock sector—a problem that exists throughout the EC and elsewhere. I understand the problems that that unfortunate element is creating for our producers.

Dr. David Clark: When the Minister met the farming unions' leaders, did he discuss with them the Commission's proposals to abolish the sheep variable premium and the consequential increase in the ewe premium? Will he confirm that the ewe premium will be based on a European, not a British, level, and that many farmers will get only half as much as they are expecting? If that is the case, how will the Minister ensure that we keep sheep farming in the hills and keep the areas attractive for people to enjoy and live in?

Mr. MacGregor: As I said earlier, I think that we shall have some complex negotiations on the sheepmeat proposals. There were criticisms from many sides, so I suspect that we shall see changes as they go through.

However, it is early days to be sure about that, as we have had only the most preliminary reactions. It is clear that budgetary discipline has to apply to the sheepmeat sector as to any other, and costs have been rising considerably. However, within that overall requirement, I am determined to ensure that we secure the best possible arrangements, which may well include the continuation of the variable premium. We have still to negotiate that. I am determined to ensure that we secure the best possible arrangements in the new regime for the United Kingdom sheep producers.

Mr. Charles Wardle: Can my right hon. Friend reassure NFU members who are milk producers that Britain's highly efficient Milk Marketing Board will not be subjected to the reforming zeal of EC bureaucrats?

Mr. MacGregor: From time to time there have been problems in ensuring that the Milk Marketing Board conforms with Community requirements, but, as far as I can recall, the main issue in that respect does not arise from the EC, but may follow from a court case in Northern Ireland, on which I cannot comment because it is sub judice. That is the issue to which the Milk Marketing Board may have to address itself before too long.

Milk Quotas

4. **Mr. Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has had any representations regarding the implementation of the Agriculture Act 1986 concerning compensation for milk quotas.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I have received a number of representations on this subject.

Mr. Taylor: Is the Minister aware that real hardship is being caused to tenants by excessive delays in the payment of compensation by some landlords? Does he agree that that could be best tackled by requiring interest to be paid on that compensation?

Mr. Thompson: I know very well the hon. Gentleman's concern for the matter in general and for some of his constituents in particular—and why not? I have with me the relevant correspondence. The matter is best settled by arbitration. Some cases will have to go to court, and that is the time when interest can be discussed.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: I wrote to my right hon. Friend the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food on a specific question and asked him to take it up personally with the Chancellor of the Exchequer. In some parts of the country the commissioners of Customs and Excise are trying to charge value added tax on those compensation payments, which is wholly outwith the undertaking given by the previous Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when they were introduced. Can my hon. Friend tell me what progress the Minister has made in his representations to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on that important matter?

Mr. Thompson: My right hon. Friend received my hon. Friend's letter last night and we have managed to have only the briefest of discussions on it. However, my right hon. Friend will be writing to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and others on that important matter.

Mr. Molyneaux: Has the Ministry entirely forgotten about the additional quota that was allocated to Northern Ireland, which seems to have been misappropriated and distributed over the whole of the United Kingdom?

Mr. Thompson: These questions seem to run on for a long time in Northern Ireland. I think that I have answered this question on about four previous occasions. The answer has not altered. I can see no hope of a future re-distribution.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: In view of the substantial decline of the surplus of dairy products, does my hon. Friend envisage that there will be further cuts in the milk quota?

Mr. Thompson: The substantial decline in milk products came about on purpose. Therefore, we shall monitor very carefully the supplies of milk, butter, skimmed milk powder and other dairy products and, in consultation with our European partners, review the position.

Water Pollution

5. **Mr. Pike:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what further steps he is taking to reduce water pollution from farm sources; and if he will make a statement.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Mr. Richard Ryder): In our response to the Environment Committee's third special report the Government announced a number of measures to deal with the farm pollution problem, including a commitment to draw up regulations to ensure proper containment of silage and slurry.

Mr. Pike: I congratulate the Minister on his first reply from the Dispatch Box. I am sure he will be aware that in many parts of the country nitrate in the water supplies is already at an unacceptably high level. There are problems in the aquifers, which will show up for some considerable time. What steps do the Government intend to take to introduce protection zones and to encourage the proper use of nitrates by farmers and environment-friendly farming?

Mr. Ryder: I thank the hon. Gentleman for his kind words. The Government are looking at a range of options. We have not yet reached any conclusions, and before we do we shall consult various bodies. We look forward to finalising those conclusions in the relatively near future.

Mr. Conway: Does my hon. Friend agree that the attitude of the National Farmers Union and the Country Landowners Association to nitrogen pollution is positive? We are getting fed up with the Opposition kicking the farmers round the block all the time. The farmers—not the whingers opposite—are the true safeguarders of the environment.

Mr. Ryder: My hon. Friend is quite right. I particularly welcomed the speech made last month by Mr. David Naish, the vice-president of the NFU, in which he warned farmers that by continuing to pollute the rivers they were undermining their reputation in the countryside. Also, I draw attention to the fact that the maximum fines

available to the courts for farmers who pollute the countryside are £2,000 and that many courts are not using those full penalties.

Mr. Duffy: Is the Minister aware that farming pollution has risen steadily in Yorkshire and Humberside in recent years and that the Yorkshire water authority has been hampered by that extraordinary section in the Control of Pollution Act 1974 that he apparently has in mind? Is the Minister saying that his right hon. Friend intends to repeal that section, which has enabled farmers to evade prosecution if they pleaded acts of omission arising from good agricultural practice? A similar defence was not available for industrial spillage.

Mr. Ryder: The hon. Gentleman has misunderstood my reply. I was reminding the House that £2,000 is the maximum penalty for polluting the countryside and that the courts are not using the maximum penalty. In the south-west, which has one of the worst pollution problems, the average fines that are dished out by the courts are £140, so it is quite clear that those penalties are not being used.

Mr. Michael Brown: I congratulate my hon. Friend on his appointment. After so many years, we are delighted to hear his voice again in the Chamber. Does he agree that there is a far greater danger of water pollution from fluoride than from nitrates?

Mr. Ryder: I thank my hon. Friend for his kind remarks. He knows that my views on fluoride do not coincide with his.

Mr. Ron Davies: I offer the Minister the Opposition Front Bench's congratulations on his appointment.

As the Minister clearly recognises that there is a problem with nitrate pollution, can he explain why the Government are embarking on a programme of cuts in research and development, much of which is directly related to optimising fertiliser application and therefore minimising pollution risks? Will he confirm that if the Barnes report is accepted, about 1,000 scientists, many of whom work on environmental protection, will be sacked? In view of the Prime Minister's recent conversion to the cause of environmental protection, does he think that he ought to ensure that his Department's actions support her views?

Mr. Ryder: I thank the hon. Gentleman for his kind words of welcome.

In part, the answer to the hon. Gentleman's question depends on the amount of industry funding. I emphasise that Britain has an excellent record in this sphere—we spend more money than any other country in Europe bar Germany on research into pollution. We aim to keep up to that mark.

Bass

6. **Mr. Summerson:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what steps he is taking to protect the bass nursery stocks.

Mr. Donald Thompson: As I announced on 27 July, we shall increase the minimum landing size for bass and introduce restrictions on the use of gill and similar nets with a mesh size between 65mm and 89mm. These measures are to take effect from 1 January 1990. There will be further consultations with local interests about establishing nursery areas to protect juvenile bass stocks.

Mr. Summerson: I thank my hon. Friend for that reply. He will be aware that sea bass is a slow-growing fish and that it is essential that stocks be conserved. Will he therefore consider the matter rather more urgently and designate nursery areas for these fish to come into effect before 1990?

Mr. Thompson: The matter is complicated because of the various sections of the community who have an interest in bass stocks and catch bass. I think that it will take a couple of years before we can reconcile the various interests.

Mr. Ward: My hon. Friend will be aware that fishermen on the south coast are not convinced of the need for the measures that he is about to introduce. More important is the fact that the measures will not apply to our EEC partners. That seems to be one more example of unfair competition with other members of the Community. On reflection, will my hon. Friend agree to withhold the new measures until they are applied throughout the EEC? Will he ensure that fishermen in places such as Poole are given the maximum, not the minimum, time to make the adjustments?

Mr. Thompson: You, Mr. Speaker, have just heard both sides of the argument. It is vital that bass stocks be protected from as early a date as possible after proper negotiations. We must try to persuade the Europeans to come along with us while we are trying to persuade some of my hon. Friend's constituents to be more enthusiastic about the future of the industry on which they place such great reliance.

NFU Horticulture Committee

7. **Mr. Jack:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the chairman of the National Farmers Union horticulture committee; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. MacGregor: My noble Friend the Parliamentary Secretary last met the chairman of the NFU horticulture committee on 20 September, when the main subject under discussion was horticultural research.

Mr. Jack: My right hon. Friend will be aware of the considerable concerns expressed in horticulture about his proposals for revised funding arrangements. This is a highly competitive industry. Can my right hon. Friend give me an assurance that any changes to the funding arrangements will be phased in to allow the industry adequate time to adjust to the new regime?

Mr. MacGregor: There is a later question on the Order Paper about research and development generally, but it is entirely right to ask the industry—whatever the sector—to undertake more of the near-market research. I recognise that a higher proportion of horticultural research and development has been classified as near-market because a high proportion of the work is close to commercial application. We are engaged in intensive discussions with the horticulture industry on this point, and I can tell my hon. Friend that timing is one of the matters that are being discussed.

Ms. Armstrong: I wonder whether the Minister will give some definition of precisely what is meant by near-market research for horticulture? Most of the horticulturists whom I have met in my constituency are bewildered. They have pursued the matter with the Ministry, but they are no nearer to understanding precisely what it is that they have been asked to do. They feel, and I support them, that 60 per cent. from the industry within the next three years is the death knell for it.

Mr. MacGregor: That is a big exaggeration. The broad definition of near-market research is that it is work that offers the possibility of commercial exploitation or application within a short enough time to justify investment by industry. That is what is happening in many industries outside horticulture and agriculture. We have specified in detail the kind of research projects that we believe come within the definition of near-market research. That is one of the subjects that is also part of the discussion with the industry—to agree on which of the projects should come within the definition.

Mrs. Roe: Is my right hon. Friend aware that Hatfield polytechnic has recently launched a unique, new BSc degree course in horticulture, in collaboration with Writtle agricultural college? It is the first horticultural degree course that has been mounted outside the university system. Will my right hon. Friend take the opportunity to congratulate all those involved in the initiative, which will provide a steady stream of highly trained experts to ensure that horticulture is equipped to meet the challenges of the 1990s and beyond?

Mr. MacGregor: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for raising that matter. I am happy to congratulate those involved.

Many sectors of horticulture are facing expanding markets. It is important that they are competitive and that they meet the changing requirements of consumers. I am sure that the higher the skills involved, the better placed the industry will be.

Ministry's Centenary

8. **Mr. Lord:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what plans his Ministry has to mark its centenary during 1989.

Mr. MacGregor: The Ministry will be arranging a number of events which will be co-ordinated with the programme for Food and Farming Year, which also takes place in 1989. There will be exhibitions in London and in the regions, a centenary history of the Ministry and a special centenary appeal in aid of the Save the Children Fund.

Mr. Lord: I thank my right hon. Friend for that answer. Many hon. Members can probably remember the days of food rationing—[HON. MEMBERS: "Speak for yourself".] I am not speaking personally. Will not the celebrations present us with an ideal opportunity to congratulate all farmers on the magnificent efforts that they have made over the years to provide the country with sufficient food—always at the urging of Conservative Governments?

Mr. MacGregor: I entirely agree. One of the problems is that because we have had to grapple with the farmers' success and the penalties that that has brought, with surpluses and the CAP, there has been too much public emphasis on the problems of the CAP and not enough on the contributions that have been made by our farmers and food industry over the past 40 years. Especially in the past few years, the range and quality of food have been improving and the price increases of food are well below the general level of the RPI. There is a good record on production, quality, price and exports, and I believe that 1989 will give us a good opportunity to put that case across.

Mr. Grocott: Will the Minister find time to reflect in the centenary year that for most of the past 100 years Britain's food policy was determined in Britain and not in Brussels? Does he agree with me that consumers were better served when the policy was determined in Britain?

Mr. MacGregor: It is the case that we have moved faster towards self-sufficiency in those products that we can grow in the past 10 years than in earlier periods. Our farmers have used the opportunity of entering the Community to continue to expand our food production.

Sir Charles Morrison: To ensure that the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the industry can celebrate their bicentenary, will my right hon. Friend mark his Ministry's centenary by ensuring that he extracts from the Treasury adequate resources for agricultural research, in the interests both of farm production and of the countryside?

Mr. MacGregor: My hon. Friend will know that a large contribution is made to agriculture, food and fisheries research and development from public funds at present. The sum is currently running at about £200 million a year, which is a substantial contribution.

Mr. Skinner: I wonder whether, when this centenary is celebrated, a plaque will be unveiled on the wall of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and whether tribute will be paid to this industry, subsidised during the whole course of its 100 years. Will the Minister tell us what the exact amount of subsidy has been over the past 10 years, during which the Prime Minister and the Cabinet have talked about leaving matters to market forces, and during which time more than £10 billion has been ploughed into the industry from the taxpayer?

Mr. MacGregor: The figure has been too high, especially in relation to the production of surpluses. That is why we have been playing a leading part in the Community in achieving the reform of the common agricultural policy. As a result of our recent efforts, savings of more than £1,000 million will be made over the next four years in the United Kingdom alone, compared with what would have happened had we not undertaken the reforms.

Farm Diversification Grants

9. **Mr. Paice:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what types of projects have been most popular among farmers applying for farm diversification grants.

Mr. Ryder: Good quality holiday accommodation accounts for just over 30 per cent. of applications and recreational and educational facilities for about 20 per

cent. Food processing, farm shops and livery are also popular choices; indeed, there is a widespread interest in most of the enterprise for which grant-aid is available.

Mr. Paice: I thank my hon. Friend and welcome him to his new post, but may I suggest that many of the ventures that he described—indeed, probably all of them—could lead to many farmers falling foul of the planning legislation and that there is a great need to give guidance to farmers on planning and for a much more open-minded approach on the part of many planning and highway authorities?

Mr. Ryder: I thank my hon. Friend for his kind welcome. I agree with his judgment of farmers' appreciation and understanding of planning laws. It is precisely for that reason that we shall be publishing a farmers' guide and leaflets dealing with the planning system later this year. I very much hope that they will help farmers to understand the planning system better.

Mr. Allen McKay: In diversification, what emphasis is being given to organic farming?

Mr. Ryder: The answer is, "None at the moment."

Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith: How sure is my hon. Friend that the most popular diversification grant will not go towards housing, and what safeguards can he give?

Mr. Ryder: I can give my hon. Friend an assurance that diversification grants do not go towards housing. On the other hand, I would point out that there is one grant which to the best of my knowledge, has not been made so far, and that is a grant for martial arts.

Sea Fish Industry Authority

10. **Mr. Worthington:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the chairman of the Sea Fish Industry Authority; and what subjects were discussed.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I have not yet had an opportunity, since assuming my new responsibilities, of meeting the chairman of the Sea Fish Industry Authority, but look forward to doing so soon.

Mr. Worthington: I hope that the Minister will meet the SFIA chairman very soon, and that during that meeting he will impress on him the need for him to meet the leaders of fishermen's organisations and to involve them fully in the training programmes that are to be mounted. The Minister will be aware that the European Community is urging that there should be training programmes across the EC, but it is crucial that those training programmes should meet local needs. Will the Minister do what I ask?

Mr. Thompson: I am glad to welcome a question such as that. I agree with every word of it in thought and substance.

Dr. Godman: When the Minister meets the chairman of the Sea Fish Industry Authority, will he offer that gentleman the assurance that the Government have no intention whatever of abandoning the vessel building scheme? May I point out to him that there is growing concern among fishermen that the Government intend to abandon the scheme, except to provide replacement vessels for vessels lost at sea. Will he, here and now, dispel those genuine and growing fears of our fishermen?

Mr. Thompson: The Government put no restrictions on people building their own boats. However, there is an EC moratorium on the priorities for boat building. We have to consider the size of the British and European fleets. It would be ridiculous to continue building bigger, better and faster boats with greater capacity for a diminishing fish stock. We must put conservation first and boat building second.

Set-aside Scheme

11. **Mr. Andrew Mitchell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what the response of farmerss has been to the set-aside scheme launched in June.

Mr. MacGregor: The response has been satisfactory. I will be announcing figures of applications and registrations as soon as they are available following the 21 October closing date

Mr. Mitchell: Does my right hon. Friend accept that there may be substantial environmental benefits from a temporary policy of land set-aside? All too often, modern farming practices can result in the destruction of our great national landscapes and habitats.

Mr. MacGregor: I very much agree that there are big opportunities through set-aside for those environmental benefits. In drawing up the scheme I was very careful to have environmental conditions written into it which will help to ensure that. One interesting point from our early analysis of applications received is that the most popular choice so far is permanent fallow. I hope that farmers who undertake set-aside through permanent fallow will use the opportunity to improve the conservation value of land set aside in precisely the way that my hon. Friend has described.

Mr. Cryer: Are the Government thinking of introducing a set-aside scheme for factory owners whose factories have been set aside under this Government, causing the loss of 2 million jobs in less than 10 years? Will the set-aside scheme giving farmers up to £100 an acre for watching the grass grow apply only to farmers? Is it being denied to City institutions with offices in Mayfair which are taking Government money? They do not even see the grass grow—they are too far away.

Mr. MacGregor: It applies to all those who actually farm the land. There is a cost involved in looking after land and keeping it in good agricultural condition as well as environmentally attractive. The set-aside payments recognise that cost.

Country Landowners Association

12. **Mr. Marland:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the president of the Country Landowners Association; and what subjects they discussed.

Mr. MacGregor: I last met the president of the Country Landowners Association on 5 October. We discussed various matters of mutual interest.

Mr. Marland: My right hon. Friend will know how enthusiastic the Country Landowners Association is that voluntary set-aside should succeed. Although it is now almost too late for arable farmers to register for set-aside, is there a message that my right hon. Friend would like the CLA and hon. Members to convey to arable farmers who would like to register at this late stage?

Mr. MacGregor: Yes. I know that the CLA has been very helpful. I have been seen press reports that suggest that the president of the CLA has applied to set aside part of his land. The CLA is also helpful in assisting us to monitor—indeed, it will do some monitoring for us—what some people fear might be a problem in relation to tenants on set-aside land. I do not think that there is a problem yet, but the monitoring will be helpful. Although registrations have to be in by the closing date, that is only to help farmers who may wish to apply for set-aside in future years. It will still be possible for them to do that, but it will be more difficult if they do not register.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: How does the Minister respond to the CLA's latest proposals for an automatic system of compensation for land blighted during nuclear incidents such as Chernobyl?

Mr. MacGregor: We are looking at several proposals made by the CLA, and my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary will meet the CLA at the end of the month.

Mr. Gale: Bearing in mind the recent anniversary of the October hurricane, did my right hon. Friend take the opportunity to discuss with the CLA the number of trees still lying on the land, particularly in Kent? Was he able to reassure the CLA that his efforts will continue unabated until the trees are removed and new trees are planted in their place?

Mr. MacGregor: I have not only discussed that with the CLA, but, to coincide with the anniversary, I have visited many areas that have been affected. Although I recognise the difficulties, substantial efforts have been made by woodland owners and others to do the clearing up, and I believe that by early next year we may well see half the clearing up done. There is also a good prospective take-up of the schemes that we have introduced to help with replanting.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Beaumont-Dark:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 20 October.

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House I shall be having further meetings later today, including one with the Premier of the State of South Australia.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: Does my right hon. Friend accept that the television and radio strictures upon Sinn Fein, the propaganda arm of that evil machine the IRA, have been widely welcomed in the country, as it has in the House, among thinking and feeling people? Will my right hon. Friend also accept that that is only one step on the road to its defeat, because anybody standing for public office in the United Kingdom should have to swear an oath renouncing violence and upholding the primacy of Parliament and the ballot box?

The Prime Minister: I am grateful to my hon. Friend and agree that the measures announced yesterday have been widely welcomed in the country by people who do not wish terrorists to have direct access to the broadcasting media. On the second point about those who wish to stand for local elections taking an oath to renounce violence, a similar proposal was put forward previously by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. If we go ahead with it, we shall do so by way of legislation and introduce it at the earliest opportunity.

Mr. Kinnock: In the argument between those who want to raise child benefit and those who want to freeze it, on which side is the Prime Minister?

The Prime Minister: The right hon. Gentleman knows full well that child benefit is reviewed every year. He knows that there will be an anouncement at the proper time. He knows what the proper time is, and he must await it accordingly.

Mr. Kinnock: Child benefit was reviewed last year and resulted in its being frozen. I am not asking for detail from the Prime Minister, I am asking for a statement of principle from her. Does she want to raise child benefit, or does she want to freeze it? How can a Government give £3 billion to top-rate taxpayers and not give an undertaking to increase child benefit?

The Prime Minister: This year, as the right hon. Gentleman is aware, we directed £200 million in net extra resources to families in income-related benefits, especially for the children. That was against the £120 million that uprating child benefit this year would have cost. If the right hon. Gentleman wants a general increase in child benefit, it would also go to the topmost people on top tax.

Q2. **Mr. John Greenway:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 20 October.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Greenway: Is my right hon. Friend aware that her recent remarks in Bruges and in Brighton last week reflect the opinion held by the overwhelming majority of people in this country and, if the truth were known, throughout Europe? Does she agree that other European Heads of Government would do better to concentrate on practical measures towards economic progress and their agriculture policies rather than harp on about ideological European union ideas?

The Prime Minister: Yes. The speech was greeted by an avalanche of support, as well as some criticism. I firmly believe that the best way to secure forward movement in the European Community is by active co-operation between sovereign states. Furthermore, we have concentrated on practical measures, and in doing so have often been way ahead in achievements—beyond those who talk in woolly terms about European union.

Mr. Ashdown: Inflation is now running at four times the level of that in West Germany and is 50 per cent. above the

EEC average. Interest rates in Britain are nearly twice as high as they are in France and three times as high as in West Germany. Wage rates in Britain are rising two and a half times as fast as in France, and as an average are 50 per cent. higher than in the EEC. What grounds can there be for the Government's smug complacency about the economy?

The Prime Minister: I understand that the hon. Gentleman put a lot of work into his question, but he seems, at one and the same time, to be criticising both higher inflation rates and higher interest rates. Does he not know that the way to get inflation down is by higher interest rates?

Q3. **Mr. Burt:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 20 October.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Burt: Does my right hon. Friend agree that no responsible Western Government would allow the right to strike or trade union activity to interfere with the security services? Bearing in mind the disruption caused at GCHQ and the genuine efforts that the Government have made to deal with legitimate trade union concerns, is my right hon. Friend aware that the overwhelming majority of British people will fully support the necessary action that has recently been taken by the Government at GCHQ?

The Prime Minister: Yes. The original decision that we took on GCHQ was upheld by the highest court in the land and the European Court of Human Rights. As my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, said in the House yesterday, about 10,000 man days were lost at GCHQ in the period 1979 to 1981 as a result of industrial action that had nothing to do with GCHQ. We have made strenuous efforts to accommodate those who did not uphold the new conditions of service. Only about 18 did not, while 7,000 people accepted those conditions. The action that we have taken is correct.

Ms. Short: Will the Prime Minister please explain what will seriously be achieved by not allowing the British people to hear and understand why both communities in Northern Ireland engage in violent conflict? At the time of the Anglo-Irish Agreement she promised reforms to reduce the alienation in Northern Ireland, but we have not seen them. We are now promised a series of measures that many of us believe will increase the conflict. Does she have a strategy to remove the causes of the violence, or will she allow it to rip under a blanket of censorship?

The Prime Minister: It would be a great help if we received full support for the measures that we have taken against terrorism, including the support of the Labour party for the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

Mrs. Roe: Following the Labour party's abject failure over the Dundee episode, does my right hon. Friend agree that Ford's recent announcement of investment at Bridgend shows that foreign firms believe in this country, which is good for jobs and for Britain?

The Prime Minister: Yes. We all welcome Ford's decision to site its main engine investment in this country. We were very concerned when forces in the trade union movement—though not in Scotland—stopped Ford from going to Dundee. I am delighted that it has decided to make much investment in this country, which is a vote of confidence in the United Kingdom Government.

Q4. **Mr. Roy Hughes:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 20 October.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Hughes: Will there be any reconsideration of the Government's proposal to impose charges for eye tests? Does the right hon. Lady appreciate that there is particular worry about the plight of pensioners who, because of charges, will be deterred from seeking tests? Is she also aware that, because of that, there is a serious risk of an increase in the number of cases of glaucoma? Does the right hon. Lady realise that there is considerable concern on this issue among her Back Benchers? Bearing in mind the right hon. Lady's eye affliction some time ago, can she tell the House whether she shares that concern?

The Prime Minister: Those on low incomes will not have to pay the charge, as the hon. Gentleman is well aware. It seems reasonable that those who can afford to pay should pay about £3 twice a year on dental charges or up to £10 on spectacles, although competition among opticians may result in virtually no charge. The hon. Gentleman is aware of the enormous increase in prosperity this year. Indeed, the Labour party voted against tax reductions, including some that would have affected older people. It would seem reasonable that those who can afford it should pay this small, modest charge for something that is fundamental to their health.

Mr. Paice: Will my right hon. Friend confirm that if she were to undertake a 10-day speaking tour she would do so during the recess? Does she assume that the only reason why the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) waits until we reassemble is——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Member can ask questions only about the Prime Minister's responsibility. She is not responsible for that matter.

Q5. **Mr. O'Brien:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 20 October.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. O'Brien: The Prime Minister is well aware of the unfairness and cruelty that will be inflicted on people on low incomes when the poll tax is introduced. Is she aware of the unfairness and cruelty that will be inflicted on a pensioner couple when they will have to pay twice the poll tax while their income will be only 50 per cent. more than that of a single pensioner? Will the right hon. Lady do something to arrest this cruelty that will be inflicted on people on low incomes?

The Prime Minister: Community charge is the way of paying for a part of local government services. It is therefore an obligation that falls on all citizens unless they are unable, because of low income, to afford the whole amount, in which case they will get an 80 per cent. rebate. In the last resort, they will get an average of 20 per cent. of the community charge on their social security benefit to enable them to pay it. The hon. Gentleman loses sight of

the fact that it is a citizen's duty to pay towards the cost of local income and that there are full rebates for those on low incomes.

Q6. **Mr. Stanbrook:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 20 October.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Stanbrook: Will my right hon. Friend consider the suggestion that the ultimate solution to the problems of Northern Ireland lies in a re-drawing of the border, generous resettlement grants, its restriction to those British who wish to remain British, and thereafter its treatment on exactly the same terms as any other region of the United Kingdom?

The Prime Minister: We have not considered that approach. I do not think that it would work. There have been countries and incidents where it has worked in the past—for example, with Greece and Turkey afer the first world war—but previous efforts to do this in Northern Ireland have failed. We must carry on with our present pledge to the people of Northern Ireland, which is that there will be no change in their status, except at their wish and through their express consent and the express consent of the House. Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom and must be governed in that way.

Q7. **Mr. Haynes:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 20 October.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Haynes: Does the Prime Minister remember lecturing the nation—something that she does quite regularly—on spending money that it does not have? Why, then, do she and her Chancellor encourage people to spend money that they do not have?

The Prime Minister: I congratulate the hon. Gentleman on being able so frequently to secure the last question at Prime Minister's Question Time. I do not know quite how he does it.

I do not think that it is right to encourage people to borrow more than they can afford—nor, I believe, does the hon. Gentleman. The steps that we have taken on interest rates will reduce borrowing and increase saving, and that is necessary both to get inflation down and to reduce the trade deficit. It is the right step to take.

Barlow Clowes

3.30 pm

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister of Trade and Industry (Mr. Tony Newton): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a statement on Barlow Clowes.

Many people have been badly affected by the collapse of the Barlow Clowes operations. The extent of the suffering and distress has been fully set out in the letters I and my colleagues have received from Members of both Houses and direct from those concerned. We share the deep concern expressed on all sides, and sympathise with those who have suffered loss.

The story is very complex: it stretches over many years and involves many different participants. The House will recall that, following my right hon. and noble Friend's statement on 13 June, he appointed Sir Godfray Le Quesne QC to prepare an independent report on the facts of the Department's handling of this matter. My right hon. and noble Friend is today publishing Sir Godfray's account, subject to minor deletions made on legal advice in order to avoid possible prejudice to criminal proceedings. His report is one of the most open and exhaustive ever volunteered by a Department of State into its handling of a matter of this kind, and contains a full account of the Department's role.

I should make it clear to the House that, while the Government attach importance to maintaining the normal rule that officials' confidential advice to Ministers should not be made public, we have decided that, in the quite exceptional circumstances of this case, it is in the public interest to include the submissions to Ministers and other material which would not normally be published. In accordance with normal practice, the names of officials involved have been excluded.

We are extremely grateful to Sir Godfray Le Quesne for the thoroughness and speed with which he produced his report. In accordance with his terms of reference, the report is purely factual. The Government have studied it with great care and have taken legal advice, including that of leading counsel, and I would now like to set out to the House the key events and our conclusions.

It is only possible to judge the events that occurred in the light of the regulatory system in place at the time. The legislative framework within which all but the final events of this case took place was based on an Act of 1939, which was consolidated in the Prevention of Fraud (Investments) Act 1958. There was very little change in the way it operated until 1983. Then, against the background of Professor Gower's much broader review of investor protection, commissioned in 1981, the Government introduced new regulations. These regulations required, among other things, first, much more information about prospective licence holders; secondly, a certificate from a qualified auditor as to the firm's ability to operate as a going concern during the lifetime of the licence; and thirdly, regular financial monitoring returns, verified by a qualified auditor, covering the proper holding of client money and investments. The regulations were designed to enable the Department to rely on the verification of prescribed information by qualified auditors and solicitors.

Sir Godfray's report shows that Barlow Clowes first came to the Department's attention in 1975-76. It received advice which, due to a misunderstanding within the Department, did not adequately cover the point at issue and it did not then apply for a licence to deal in securities. The consequences of this have been carefully examined. Had it applied in 1975-76, it is almost certain that a licence would have been granted, given practice at the time. If Barlow Clowes had received a licence in 1975-76, the first monitoring return of the sort I have described would have been required by the end of December 1984. In the event, Spicer and Pegler certified in July 1985 that it had obtained verification of the clients' investments and cash, and that the statement of clients' funds gave a true and fair view of their composition as at 28 December 1984. There is no reason to think that the fact that Barlow Clowes was not licensed in 1975 had any material effect on the course of subsequent events.

The partnership again came to the Department's attention in late 1983. The review and tightening up of the system in 1983 had brought large numbers of unlicensed dealers to light. Wholesale prosecution would have been unjustified and, as Sir Godfray's report explains, it was the policy to bring unlicensed firms into the regulatory net and to take other action only where there was evidence of wrongdoing or that investors' funds were at risk. The Department originally believed that the partnership was applying for membership of the National Association of Securities Dealers and Investment Managers (NASDIM), which would have meant that it did not need to be licensed directly by the Department. When it became apparent that the partnership was not doing so, the effective choice open to the Department lay between prosecution of Barlow Clowes for not holding a licence—the only sanction provided by the legislation—and licensing the firm if it could meet the regulatory requirements. As Barlow Clowes was a partnership, the Department—even where grounds existed—had no powers to investigate it or to apply for a winding-up order, nor was there any provision for intervening to protect investors' funds if a licence were refused.

The Department therefore decided to seek to bring the partnership within the regulatory framework. In doing so it had four main aims. The first was to subject the partnership to the conduct of business rules (strengthened in 1983), the second to secure examination of its affairs by qualified auditors, and the third to persuade the firm to incorporate a limited company so that the powers available under the Companies Acts would become available. Fourthly, it was also necessary for Barlow Clowes to make arrangements which satisfied the Bank of England that the partnership was not in breach of the Banking Act 1979. When all these objectives had been met, licences were issued in October 1985 to the partnership and the company. In issuing the licences the Department made clear to the Barlow Clowes' solicitors that it had been heavily influenced by the assurances received from or through them. The Department also took full account of the report from Spicer and Pegler on clients' funds as at December 1984.

In 1986 new licences were issued to Barlow Clowes after it had submitted applications accompanied by the verifications and auditors' certificates required by the legislation. Although the majority of the powers under the Financial Services Act 1986 did not come into force until 29 April 1988, stronger and wider powers of investigation contained in that Act became available on 18 December 1986.

By the time of Barlow Clowes' licence applications in 1987, the Department had received material from the stock exchange and others that caused concern about Barlow Clowes' United Kingdom business. The Department did not at that time have the power to apply for a winding-up without first conducting a statutory investigation. Even if there had been such a power, there was not at that stage sufficient evidence to be confident that an application to wind up the company would be successful.

The Department had three courses open to it. It could refuse the licence. This would have stopped the company from lawfully taking on new business. But because the Department could not apply for a winding-up, there would have been no way of securing existing investors' assets. This action could therefore have precipitated a disorderly collapse of the business, which would have damaged existing investors' interests—[HON. MEMBERS: "But that happened anyway."]

The second course was to grant the licence but immediately to issue notice of intention to revoke it. The company could have referred that to the licensed dealers tribunal, which would have meant that it could carry on trading until the tribunal had decided the case.

The Department therefore adopted the third possible course. This was to institute an investigation under the powers newly available under the Financial Services Act and to issue a new licence, subject to review, pending the outcome of that investigation. The investigation proceeded but even six months later, in April 1988, with all the information the investigators had by then uncovered, there were legal doubts whether sufficient grounds existed for a winding-up petition to succeed. By May 1988, the combination of the investigation and new information on the company's solvency had yielded enough evidence to secure a winding-up order.

We are informed by the liquidators of Barlow Clowes Gilt Managers that on current information investors are likely to receive in excess of 75p in the pound, and they are hoping to make a substantial distribution before Christmas.

I now turn to Barlow Clowes International. This company was based in Gibraltar, and was not licensed. Any offshore company dealing with expatriates, and not holding itself out as dealing in securities in the United Kingdom, would not need a licence. The question, therefore, is whether the Department had reason to believe that BCI required a licence. As Sir Godfray's report shows, no firm evidence came to the Department indicating that this was so, and the information provided by the United Kingdom company from 1984 to 1987 indicated that BCI serviced expatriates and non-residents. During this entire period there were no complaints from investors, no questions about whether BCI was licensed, no approaches from intermediaries that would have revealed that BCI was dealing with United Kingdom residents.

From 1984 the Department decided that, as part of its licensing function, it would adopt a policy of sample monitoring of advertising in the national and financial press. No advertisements from BCI came to light as a result of this monitoring. Subsequently, it has emerged that a single advertisement was placed by BCI in one general supplement of *The Times* devoted to Gibraltar. This was not picked up by the sampling system. It has since transpired that BCI received business as a result of advertisements placed by authorised intermediaries, not in the general or financial press. These advertisements did not mention BCI, which was named only in subsequent private correspondence. No example of such correspondence was referred to the Department before the Barlow Clowes collapse.

The liquidators of Barlow Clowes International predict that there will be sufficient funds realised to make a distribution in excess of 30p in the pound. The complications in BCI will take some considerable time to resolve but the liquidators are hoping to make a small interim distribution early in 1989.

I should now like to turn to the main conclusion that the Government draws from Sir Godfray Le Quesne's report. Within the constraints of the old legislation and the information available to the Department at the time, the Department's general handling of the licensing of Barlow Clowes and Partners, and Barlow Clowes Gilt Managers Ltd., was careful and considered and its actions reasonable. Barlow Clowes International had no licence: only since the company collapsed has it emerged that its activities were such that it probably should not have operated without one. Sir Godfray's report shows that the Department did not have reason to know this.

I must also inform the House that the legal advice the Government have received on the question of liability to investors with all these businesses is clear. The Government have no legal liability.

In view of the hardship that has been caused, the Government have considered carefully whether there is a case for ex gratia compensation. The facts set out in Sir Godfray's report in the Government's view provide no grounds for concluding that the Department's handling of the matter was unreasonable or caused the losses experienced by investors, and therefore provide no justification for using taxpayers' money to fund compensation.

We are aware that the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration has said he is considering whether to investigate complaints of maladministration in the Department's handling of the matter. My right hon. and noble Friend has today sent him a copy of Sir Godfray Le Quesne's report. If he decides, in the light of that, to carry out an investigation, the Government will, of course, co-operate fully with him and consider carefully any report he may make.

My right hon. and noble Friend is also sending copies of Sir Godfray's report to the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, the Securities and Investments Board and FIMBRA, for them to see whether there are matters for them to consider.

It is all too clear from the account of events in Sir Godfray Le Quesne's report, and from the points I have made so far, that there were a number of significant weaknesses in the legislative framework of the Prevention of Fraud (Investments) Act 1958, even after the regulations were greatly tightened in 1983. There were no provisions for injunctions to stop unauthorised businesses or breaches of the rules, or powers to restrict business, safeguard assets or appoint trustees. Nor was it possible to investigate unincorporated investment businesses. The Government have acted to correct those weaknesses in the Financial Services Act 1986, whose main provisions came into effect in April this year. These improvements do not mean that the present system of investor protection is completely risk-free. No regulatory system can eliminate fraud or guarantee investors against loss. But the

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legislative framework has been radically revised and strengthened since the chain of events covered by Sir Godfray's report took place.

Hon. Members: Resign.

Mr. Tony Blair (Sedgefield): For the 11,000 investors in Barlow Clowes who have waited for more than four months for this report, who expected not only a factual narrative but some accompanying conclusions from Sir Godfray and who hoped, not for a set of ministerial excuses but for a statement of ministerial responsibility, this report will come as a profound and bitter disappointment. Their sense of grievance will be all the greater in that Sir Godfray's report is not the report that we were promised.

Will the right hon. Gentleman comment specifically on the following words of the Secretary of State:

"This is an inquiry to determine the facts of what actually happened within the department and to determine whether or not the department is to blame in any way"—[*Official Report, House of Lords*, 13 June 1988; Vol. 498, c. 11.]

Why do we not have such a report? [HON. MEMBERS: "Yes, we have."] We have not. Why, instead of an independent objective judgment of the facts, have we been given the Government's shamefully partisan, self-serving interpretation of the facts? Does the right hon. Gentleman not know that it is all very well to refer to the parliamentary ombudsman, but that what the investors wanted above all today was some sense of finality—not to be shunted from one investigator to another in a game of ministerial pass-the-parcel?

As for the Minister's claim that Sir Godfray's report shows that the Department was not negligent, I ask him to deal specifically with the following points. From my brief examination of the report I believe that it bears out each one of them. Is it not true that when the licence was first issued to Barlow Clowes in October 1985 the Bank of England had raised objections to the company, and that NASDIM, the City watchdog, had said that Barlow Clowes was unsuitable for a licence? Is it not true also that the DTI had been given assurances and had discovered that they were false? Barlow Clowes had then been trading illegally for more than 12 months under the Prevention of Fraud (Investments) Act 1958. How on earth was it given a licence in 1985?

Is it not right to say that in 1986—and I ask the Minister to answer this point specifically—the stock exchange expressed misgivings? The deputy head of the Bank of England's banking division said that he thought that there was a possible "fraud". The accountants to Barlow Clowes said that they thought clients' money was being misused. The monitoring returns submitted to the DTI were, according to the Minister's own inspector, seriously inadequate—but the licence was reissued.

In 1987 the stock exchange inquiry report stated, as Sir Godfray says, that there were "serious doubts" about whether Barlow Clowes was fit and proper. The police investigated Barlow Clowes, according to Sir Godfray. The Inland Revenue investigated Barlow Clowes. The DTI sent in its own inspectors. Yet in October 1987, when virtually every single body, private or public, with any responsibility for regulation was shrieking warnings at the DTI, the licence was reissued.

Is it not further the case that when the monitoring returns came in from Barlow Clowes in December 1987 —as, again, Sir Godfray finds—they were unsigned, unaudited, and then the firm was allowed to trade for a further six months, taking in millions of pounds, until in May this year the new SIB shut down in three weeks what the Minister's Department had left open for three years? What about the "disorderly collapse" that happened then, in May 1988? I may tell the Minister that in the light of all that, confirmed by Le Quesne, his denial of any negligence on the part of his Department is so brazen that it is risible.

I turn to the question of the ombudsman. Will the Minister undertake that the Government will abide by any compensation order made? Does he agree that the ombudsman should look also at the offshore investors, who, I may tell the Minister, had their funds managed in the United Kingdom, advertised in the United Kingdom, and run by residents in the United Kingdom? Will the Minister also, even at this stage, accept a proposal that I believe would command support from all quarters of the House—that the Government are bound to have some liability and should be using their good offices now to convene all those with a potential liability so that the spectacle of long, drawn-out legal proceedings can be avoided and a proper lifeboat scheme mounted? Is that not both a fair and a wise course?

Finally, I may tell the Minister this. The file in my hand is only of letters that I have received from investors over the past few months. Many right hon. and hon. Members will have received similar letters. Those who sent them are not get-rich-quick speculators. I doubt that many of them are drawing £1,000 per week for living expenses. They are Britain's new class of investors. They are the elderly couple with an accumulated nest egg. They are the young couple who have been left a small inheritance, perhaps from the sale of their parents' home. They are the mine workers or steel workers made redundant. Is it not the case that they are the very people whom the Government have encouraged into the market place of investment? The question asked by thousands of Barlow Clowes investors who are victims of malpractice today is echoed by millions more in this country who fear that they may be victims of malpractice tomorrow. Will the Government stand by them, or will they let those investors fall? Today, they have their answer, but we on the Opposition side of the House will not let them down.

Mr. Newton: Let me seek to comment on the points made by the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) in the order in which he raised them.

First, it was made entirely clear in Sir Godfray's terms of reference that the purpose of his inquiry was to establish the facts on which judgments could be made. Inescapably, in a matter of this kind, those judgments will differ. Manifestly—and I understand this—the hon. Gentleman's judgment differs from the Government's judgment, which I have outlined to the House. However, it is a comprehensive description of the facts, which I believe will assist everyone in the House in considering in detail—and I hope that people will study the report in detail—the sequence of events against the background of the legislation existing at the time. I repeat that that is a very important point.

I well understand that people would have preferred some sense of finality, to use the term employed by the hon. Gentleman. But it is in the nature of an event such as

this—with all the potential that it creates for legal action of various kinds—that it is very unlikely that one single statement can bring the sense of finality that he has sought. I certainly do not pretend that my statement could have done that today.

The hon. Gentleman raised a good many points about the detail of particular comments at particular times, which are set out clearly in the report. Let me make two observations that I do not consider were properly reflected in his remarks. First, as is very clear from the report, the majority of those comments did not come in the form of anything that could be construed as evidence in the context of the action that the hon. Gentleman suggests that we should have taken. *[Interruption.]* I hope that all hon. Members will study the report. It is very clear that in general what came to the Department consisted more of rumour and speculation than of evidence. The Department's duty was to seek to establish evidence on which proper decisions could be made, and that is what it sought to do.

Let me make it absolutely clear that there was no question of the Securities and Investments Board precipitating action that the Department had been unwilling to take. It was decided, in the light of powers that had become available at the end of April 1988, under new legislation passed by this Government, that the best way of producing an orderly conclusion—an orderly winding-up of Barlow Clowes—was for the SIB to take the action that it accordingly took.

There was some laughter in the House when I referred to the issue of a disorderly collapse, which was the likelihood under the previous powers on the occasions to which the hon. Gentleman has referred. The suggestion was made, I think probably from a sedentary position below the Gangway, that what happened was a disorderly collapse. Let me make the difference clear. What happened was a collapse in which a proper winding-up order was made in circumstances in which equitable dealing between all the investors in the companies could be secured. A disorderly collapse would have occurred if the Department had taken action that would have precipitated a position —*[Interruption.]* I hope that the House will listen to this point—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Newton: —which would have caused the collapse in circumstances in which no action could have been taken to safeguard and freeze the assets. The more sophisticated investors would have got all their money, and the rest would have got nothing. That is what I mean by a disorderly collapse, and that is one of the risks that the Department was concerned to avoid.

It is not for me to suggest what the Parliamentary Commissioner should investigate, how he should investigate it or what he should conclude, but I have no doubt that he will have noted the hon. Gentleman's comments.

Lastly, the hon. Gentleman asked me what view the Government took of the need to ensure proper protection for that growing army of investors that we are rightly proud of having brought about. The answer is that we have already passed a comprehensive Act which has dramatically improved the framework of regulation in this whole sphere—and that comes after a period in which the Labour Government, as far as I can discover, did nothing whatever with a framework that went back to 1939.

Sir William Clark (Croydon, South): Is my right hon. Friend aware that most hon. Members will have sympathy with him in handling this case when he was not in the Department when all these things happened? Does he agree that when the DTI had its reservations about Barlow Clowes, without winding it up with a disorderly collapse or whatever, the advice from the civil servants to Barlow Clowes should have been "Don't take any more investments from the public until we have satisfied ourselves that you are safe and sound as an investment instrument"?

The report refers to expatriates, but, in all kindness to my right hon. Friend, I can assure him that the investors in Barlow Clowes who live in my constituency are not expatriates. Consequently, for civil servants to suggest that the overseas fund was being used only by expatriates really is beyond belief.

Secondly, many invested their money unwittingly not knowing the full facts, yet those facts were known by the Department, which had reservations. Not giving that advice must be a dereliction of duty. Can my right hon. Friend assure the House that whichever officials were responsible for that dereliction of duty are no longer in that section?

Mr. Newton: First, there must have been a risk, which would have weighed with the Department, that action during most of the period of the kind for which my hon. Friend asked in the first part of his question would itself have contributed to the company's collapse, and that would necessarily have been a disorderly collapse, given the legal framework at the time.

Of course, I am not suggesting that my hon. Friend's constituents, or the many others who so unhappily have been caught up in this wretched business, are expatriates, because manifestly they are not. The issue is whether the Department could reasonably have been expected to know that those non-expatriates were being invited to invest in Barlow Clowes in the way that subsequently transpired. In the passage of my statement on the advertising that took place and the way that that was done, I think that I have shown why, in my judgment, the Department could not reasonably have been expected to know.

On the question of facts and civil servants, I should tell the House that the permanent secretary at the Department —it is a matter for him to investigate rather then for Ministers—has considered whether the facts set out in Sir Godfray's report give rise to a case for disciplinary action, and has decided that they do not.

Mr. David Steel (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale): Are Ministers in the Department satisfied that the people in the Department who are having to deal with these sharks and the rumours and speculation—to use his own phrase—which were drawn to the Department's attention, have sufficient expertise and qualifications to do so?

Secondly, the Minister tells us that the Government are advised that there is no legal liability, but does he agree that a particular feature of this tragic collapse is that many of the thousands of investors were elderly people, such as my own constituents, who put all their redundancy pay

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into the fund believing that they were buying British Government securities with the DTI's stamp of approval? In those circumstances, is there not a moral liability?

Mr. Newton: It is precisely because we had doubts about the overall adequacy of the previous regulatory system that such an immense amount of effort went into producing the Financial Services Act 1986 and to bringing it into effect. An important part of that Act is to improve the regulatory system by bringing to bear on it the expertise of those who really are involved in the field. Hence, the establishment of the Securities and Investments Board, and, of course, FIMBRA, regulating the sort of people about whom we are talking in important respects of the statement.

I have made the position on legal liability clear. I have also made it clear that the Government have considered the issue of compensation on other grounds but arrived at the conclusion that I gave in my statement.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. There can be hardly an hon. Member whose constituents are not involved in this, including my own. May I ask those hon. Members who are called not to repeat questions that have already been asked and, furthermore, to ask single questions rather than a range of questions?

Mr. Michael Grylls (Surrey, North-West): Does my right hon. Friend agree that those who press for compensation to be paid by the Government should bear in mind that compensation will come from taxes paid by all taxpayers and we should be cautious before we go down that route? However, is it surely not right that there should be a thorough investigation into the role of the financial intermediaries who made such rash recommendations, and, perhaps, the auditors, who should have known what was going on in Barlow Clowes throughout?

Mr. Newton: I obviously acknowledge my hon. Friend's first point. Whether it would be right to ask taxpayers to compensate is an issue to which the Government gave close consideration. I hope that my hon. Friend and the House will realise that in making the statement I labour under the difficulty, among others, that further action of various kinds may well arise from the facts revealed by the case. The point that my hon. Friend has in mind is perhaps best covered in the statement by my having said that my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State has referred the report to the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales and to other regulatory bodies. I think that my hon. Friend will understand that I cannot go much beyond that, but I am sure that his point will have occurred to others.

Mr. Robert Sheldon (Ashton-under-Lyne): Is not the point encapsulated by one of my constituents who, at the age of 50, put all his redundancy money into Barlow Clowes, having gone to an intermediary, been informed that this was Government gilt-edged, that the company had its certificate and that its certificate had been renewed? Is not there clearly some sort of duty upon the Department to make some sort of compensation to such people?

Mr. Newton: I agree entirely with the right hon. Gentleman that the problem is encapsulated in the case that he has set out. However, I am afraid that I cannot agree that on the basis of the account of the Department's actions within the legislative framework—I am sorry to have to emphasise this again—that existed at the time the Department's behaviour gives rise to a case for asking taxpayers to fund a compensation scheme.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton (Macclesfield): I warmly welcome the factual content of my right hon. Friend's statement, but does he accept that many hon. Members find his conclusions completely unjustifiable and confused? How is it that the Department granted a licence to a group of companies about which it had been warned by me, among other hon. Members, and when clearly, before granting the licence, there was inadequate monitoring, incompetent accountancy advice and inadequate auditing? Despite all that, the Department still gave the licence. Is it not correct to say that this was not an official decision but a political decision because the Department knew that something was wrong with the company and if it did not grant the licence some people would lose, whereas if it did grant the licence people might come out of it all right? Was not it a gamble—a gamble that went wrong for which the Government should accept liability?

Mr. Newton: I can readily accept, because it is made clear in the report, that at certain points in time decisions were put to and taken by Ministers, not by officials, which is entirely right. That is not at all the same as saying that they were political decisions in the sense that my hon. Friend rather implied in his remarks. They were decisions made in good faith on the basis of the information available and applying a necessary judgment about the balance of advantage and disadvantage, including to investors in general, arising from different courses of action. I have explained why judgments were made which led to the decisions that were taken at the time. I hope that my hon. Friend will study the report with care, which I recognise he has not yet had time to do, before continuing with suggestions of the kind that he made in his question.

Mr. Alfred Morris (Manchester, Wythenshawe): Is the Minister aware that it was the case of my constituent, Mr. Leslie Mullard, aged 75, and his wife, who have lost £65,000, which went to the ombudsman as a test case, and of the reply to me from the ombudsman of 8 July? If the Government are not prepared to offer compensation, will they at least give a plain assurance in the House today that they will abide by any recommendation for compensation which may be made by Sir Anthony Barrowclough? What does the Minister say about the remark of the right hon. Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit) that he was minded to refuse the licence? How could the offshore fund have existed without the licence for the onshore fund?

Mr. Newton: I was of course aware, because it had been reported in the press, although I am not sure that it has been confirmed by the Parliamentary Commissioner, that the right hon. Gentleman had referred a case to the Parliamentary Commissioner. I have no doubt that a number of other cases have been referred to him as well. I made it clear in my statement, and I readily reiterate it, that the Government will co-operate, as they rightly should, and that they will consider with great care any report that the ombudsman may make. Beyond that, I am not prepared to engage in speculation about the

hypothetical conclusions of a report that we do not yet know is going to be written without any opportunity to consider what it says.

Mr. Norman Tebbit (Chingford): I remind my right hon. Friend, and I ask him to make it plain, that although I was not at the Department at the time that the licence was granted and that although it was reported in the press —and no doubt it will be dealt with in the report of the inquiry—a document during my time at the Department said that I was minded not to grant a licence. As anybody who has been in Government will know—I realise that few of those who sit on the Opposition Benches have been in Government——

Hon. Members: Is it in your book?

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Tebbit: As anybody who has been in Government will know, such an expression is a commonplace expression in correspondence, whether a Secretary of State has or has not minded himself to grant a licence. [AN HON. MEMBER: "Wriggling."] The hon. Gentleman says that I am wriggling. I think that he has forgotten that the correspondence said that I was minded not to grant a licence. What I am making plain is that I cannot take credit for having made a decision not to grant.

Mr. Newton: I think that I would simply like to thank my right hon. Friend for his observations.

Dr. David Owen (Plymouth, Devonport): Popular capitalism, which this Government and many hon. Members support, surely depends on trust in institutions. How can we trust an institution, in this case the Department of Trade and Industry, when we know that the Bank of England and the stock exchange raised very serious questions? Can the right hon. Gentleman really come to the House and say that, given the background to these events, its actions were careful, considered and reasonable? Is it not time for this House, as an institution of Government, now to demand ex gratia payments for these small investors?

Mr. Newton: I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will —as I am sure he will—read, in the case of the Bank of England in particular, the text of the letter that it wrote, which is contained in the report. The suggestion in that letter on which I think his comments rely is of the form that "it occurs" to the writer that something may be the case. I think that the right hon. Gentleman will accept that that is not a basis on which a Department could launch action that would precipitate the collapse of a company or, in this case, a partnership. As for the stock exchange, my statement made it absolutely clear that once the concern began to have some flesh put on it, which was only at a relatively late stage, the Department not only took it seriously but set in hand the action that ultimately brought about the winding up of the company.

Mr. Stephen Day (Cheadle): Is the Minister aware that over 400 investors in my constituency have been affected and is he also aware that the majority of these people are not City whizz-kids? They put their life savings into Barlow Clowes largely because of the guarantee that they thought they had of a DTI licence. Will the Minister comment on the fact that if the Financial Services Act 1986 had been fully in operation when Barlow Clowes collapsed, many of these investors would probably have been protected by the fund that was established under the provisions of that Act? As the Government recognise the principle and the need for such funds to be available in those circumstances, will they not accept that principle and do something about it, not because they are legally required to do so but because they have a moral duty to help people who are now in extremely dire circumstances?

Mr. Newton: It is certainly the case that, had the full framework of the Financial Services Act been in place, the position would have been a great deal better than under the legislation as it existed at the time. I cannot quite endorse the precise proposition that my hon. Friend has put to me. It would have depended on whether or not this or any other firm was duly authorised under the Financial Services Act. In the light of what we now know, it appears to be highly unlikely that that would have been the case, but what is very clear indeed is that the new legislation —the improved regulatory system—should make it very much less likely—even though, in the nature of things, it cannot make it totally impossible—that events of this very unhappy kind for my hon. Friend's constituents and others will occur again.

Mr. Brian Sedgemore (Hackney, South and Shoreditch): Is it a fair summary of the Minister's 17-minute statement that for a long time members of the DTI knew that Barlow Clowes were criminals but could not prove it and that when they could prove it and had the option of prosecuting or granting a licence they chose to grant a licence? Is that the acceptable or the unacceptable face of Thatcherism?

Mr. Newton: The short answer to the hon. Gentleman's question is that that is not true. When he has had a chance to read the report I think that he will recognise that that is not true.

Mr. Anthony Nelson (Chichester): Is my right hon. Friend aware that his very full and detailed statement will be studied with care not only by Barlow Clowes shareholders and investors but by investors throughout the country in many other concerns? I put it to my right hon. Friend that the lesson to come out of this is that we should not wait for the horse to bolt before we close the stable door. Whether it is the Department of Trade and Industry or the Securities and Investments Board, I think that investing members of the public would like to feel that at an earlier stage of the proceedings the whistle was blown on fraudsters and rip-off merchants such as this. When this matter was discussed in the House during the passage of the Financial Services Bill, hon. Members on both sides of the House argued the case for the Securities and Investments Board to be able to play a much more incisive and investigative role in these matters, but that argument was resisted by the Government who said, "We are too afraid of a more powerful body overseeing the City." I believe, as do many other people, that the time has come for a rethink.

Mr. Newton: First, I agree with my hon. Friend that there is material in this report and in the sequence of events for large numbers of people to study. I hope that the report will be studied by many intermediaries and by all those who are concerned with the regulatory system. Secondly, if my hon. Friend is suggesting that we waited for the horse to bolt before we shut the stable door, may I make the

[Mr. Newton]

simple point that this Government, after decades during which no previous Government had tackled this problem, set up the Gower committee on investor protection in 1981 and introduced new regulations under the existing legislation in 1983. The Government have now produced a comprehensive framework. Far from waiting until the horse had bolted, we have got on with the job and a new framework is now in place.

Mr. James Lamond (Oldham, Central and Royton): When the Minister remembers that many thousands of small investors have lost at least a quarter of their capital, some of them perhaps 75 per cent. of it, together with the income that they derived from it, and when he recalls the crocodile tears that have been wept over the years, by the Prime Minister in particular, over the erosion of old people's capital by inflation, and also the very substantial "lifeboat" that was launched in the past to assist the banks who got into trouble, does it not smack a little of hypocrisy for him now to speak of protecting taxpayers' money in order not to compensate the small savers who have lost their savings?

Mr. Newton: The hon. Gentleman will, I hope, recall from my statement that I made it clear that we considered very carefully—I mean that—whether it would be proper to compensate for just the sort of reason that he has outlined. We came to the conclusion that, on the basis of the facts set out in Sir Godfray's report, we could not properly do that.

Sir Peter Emery (Honiton): My right hon. Friend will recognise the concern felt on both sides of the House, which is justified, but we must not reach a judgment until people have had time to study the report. Sir Godfray was asked:

"to investigate . . . with particular reference to . . . the monitoring of the activities of the licence holder."

We have not heard anything from my right hon. Friend about the activities of the licence holder, which many of us believe were extremely dubious. If he conducted his business in a doubtful way, ought that fact not to be made clear from the Dispatch Box? If it is believed from the report that there are liabilities attaching to the auditors and to the financial advisers, can the Government bring together those who are liable—many of whom are insured, so the insurance factor will deal with the liability—so that we can finalise the matter quickly and not have it drag through the courts for years and years?

Mr. Newton: I note my hon. Friend's latter suggestion. I hope that people will read this extremely comprehensive report thoroughly. With regard to monitoring, my hon. Friend will realise that he is taking me back to the ground, over which I skated delicately some questions ago, concerning possible issues of liability in various directions arising from the report. My hon. Friend will realise that I cannot speculate or comment further on that, having made it clear that the report has gone to the relevant regulatory bodies.

Mr. Jack Ashley (Stoke-on-Trent, South): The Minister has given us his interpretation of the facts and mentioned a possible reference to the ombudsman. May I suggest that he goes much further and assures the House that, if the ombudsman finds a different interpretation of the facts and also finds maladministration, there should be full compensation? If he does not, the right hon. Gentleman is saying that the Government will accept the ombudsman's findings only when they suit them.

Mr. Newton: I do not think that I have implied any such thing. I have said very clearly that we shall consider carefully any report which the Parliamentary Commissioner produces. I repeat what I said to the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris)—I am not prepared to engage in speculation about hypothetical reports before we have had a chance to study them.

Mr. David Howell (Guildford): We shall obviously have to examine the report in great detail and not rush to instant judgments. Is my right hon. Friend aware that he does not sound quite right, and nor, from what he says, does the Le Quesne report, when he makes such a clear distinction between the Barlow Clowes UK portfolios and its Gibraltar portfolios? Is he aware that some investors had their funds switched between the two, often without their knowledge, and that there was not the clear distinction that seems to be implied in the report? Will my right hon. Friend take that into account? My right hon. Friend is aware that the reference to the ombudsman will take several months, so will he not rule out the idea of temporary support and help for real hardship cases while this affair drags on?

Mr. Newton: With regard to the latter part of my right hon. Friend's question, I cannot add to what I have already said about the compensation issue as a whole. Of course I accept—it is clear with hindsight—that funds were switched from one portfolio to another and that a number of things that happened should not have happened. The issue that Ministers have had to consider is whether the Department, exercising its regulatory functions, could reasonably have been expected to know that that was happening when it was happening. That is the point to which my comments were directed.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I appreciate the House's anxiety about this matter but I have to balance it against today's business. There was great distress among hon. Members last night who were unable to speak in the debate on the Defence Estimates. I shall therefore allow questions on the statement to run for a further 10 minutes when we shall move on to business questions. I shall endeavour to ensure that hon. Members who cannot be called to ask a question on this statement will be called then.

Mr. Joseph Ashton (Bassetlaw): Is the Minister saying that his Department monitored only sample advertisements in the financial press? Was it unaware of massive advertising in trade union magazines and others aimed at professional and managerial people nearing retirement or taking large lump sums on redundancy? Was no check made on those advertisements to establish how many people might be caught?

Mr. Newton: I think that I made it clear in my statement that the Department's monitoring rested on sampling the national and financial press. Some of the advertising to which the hon. Gentleman refers was not covered by that sampling system. I am advised that there are about 8,500 periodicals and publications in Britain which carry heaven

knows how many advertisements. I think that the hon. Gentleman will understand that monitoring each and every advertisement in each and every publication would be a task on a scale which would present great difficulties.

Mr. Ian Gow (Eastbourne): Is it really the Government's view that no fair-minded person reading Sir Godfray's report could believe that any blame, let alone any negligence, attaches to my right hon. Friend's Department? If the Parliamentary Commissioner should decide to investigate a complaint of maladministration against his Department, is there any information over and above that already provided by his Department to Sir Godfray which could be provided to the Parliamentary Commissioner?

Mr. Newton: I am certainly not aware of any additional information which the Department could make available because—I hope I need hardly say it—the Department has made available to Sir Godfray for his inquiry all the information and papers that it has on this subject. That is not to say that nothing further could conceivably emerge from other quarters. We have co-operated with Sir Godfray in good faith, just as we shall co-operate with the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration if he decides to investigate.

The report sets out a set of facts on which, necessarily, a judgment has to be made. As I have said to one or two hon. Members on both sides of the House, it is obviously possible for judgments to differ, but I have given the Government's judgment on these facts.

Mr. Harry Ewing (Falkirk, East): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that I have a great deal of sympathy for him as he has been landed with this problem although he had no ministerial responsibility during the course of events which led to his statement?

It is extremely important that the right hon. Gentleman should take up the point made by hon. Member for Croydon, South (Sir W. Clark) about civil servants in the Department, and the announcement from the Dispatch Box that the permanent secretary is examining whether civil servants should be moved or removed. Is he aware that it is highly undesirable for Ministers to come to the Dispatch Box and make such statements about civil servants? If heads are to roll, they ought not to be civil servants' heads but ministerial heads.

Mr. Newton: I thank the hon. Gentleman for his initial comments but, to judge from the rest of his question, I think that he may have misunderstood what I said. I was asked about the position of civil servants. I made it clear that that is a matter ultimately for the Head of the Civil Service, but in the first instance it is one for the permanent secretary to the Department of Trade and Industry. I said what conclusion the permanent secretary to the DTI had come to.

Sir Peter Hordern (Horsham): Will my right hon. Friend confirm that in the face of warnings from the Bank of England and the stock exchange his Department issued a licence in 1987, and that it did so on the balance of advantage, to avoid turmoil? What is the position of those investors who would have been saved had the Department taken action in 1987 and refused a licence, but many of whom invested their life savings thereafter? Does my right hon. Friend really feel that no moral responsibility attaches to the Government in that case?

Mr. Newton: My hon. Friend has rightly made a point that came up on numerous occasions in my statement and during the questions on it. Any decision on these matters had to be made on the basis of a balance of considerations and the consequences that would flow from alternative action. I hope that he will weigh the possibility at least —perhaps even more—that had Ministers made a different decision at the time we should be debating not his point about those who invested subsequently but instead the plight of those who had suffered from a disorderly collapse of the kind that I outlined earlier.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): Is not the real reason why the Government do not want to pay compensation that the matter has implications for investors in Investor Discount Brokerage, Afcor Investments and Harvard Securities, all of which have closed down over the past 12 months? In each case, investors allege—and have sent evidence to the Department—that Department inspectors had refused to act when they clearly should have acted to protect investors' interests.

Mr. Newton: No, I do not accept that interpretation in any way. As I said in my statement, the Government have carefully considered the case for compensation against the background of the facts revealed in Sir Godfray's report and decided that against that background it was not possible for us to conclude that taxpayers should be asked to fund compensation.

Mr. David Shaw (Dover): Does my right hon. Friend accept that, from the point of view of anyone with experience of the investment industry, there is no question but that his Department acted in accordance with the correct and proper procedures, from all that he has said? However, the real issue surely is that the blame must lie substantially with the firms of accountants and solicitors that gave false assurances to his Department. I note that he did not say that he was referring the report to the Law Society, and I trust that he will assure us that he is. He must surely accept that the real question is not where the blame lies but how quickly old-age pensioners—the elderly investors who might die before they can get their money back—will receive compensation. Will my right hon. Friend look at the legal procedures and all the problems that those investors will face in getting quick compensation?

Mr. Newton: I referred in my statement to the estimates that we have been given by the liquidators in respect of this country and Gibraltar, both of the current position and of the timing of any payments to investors. In particular, the liquidator of the United Kingdom operation hopes to make an interim distribution before Christmas. I hope that that will be some encouragement to my hon. Friend. We shall certainly do anything that we can to ensure that the process is completed as soon as possible.

On my hon. Friend's first point, I refer him to what I said earlier in these exchanges about the position of the various advisers involved. I have no doubt that the Law Society will have its attention drawn to his remarks.

Mr. Bill Michie (Sheffield, Heeley): The Minister has outlined the long period of fiddling by Barlow Clowes and the dithering of the Department of Trade and Industry but then said to the House that there would be no compensation for those affected by this illegal action. On

[Mr. Bill Michie]

behalf of those of my constituents who have written to me, I must ask how the Minister and the Government can justify allowing £1,000 expenses a week for Clowes when some of the victims are now having to manage on social security.

Mr. Newton: I can certainly give the hon. Gentleman an undertaking that we shall do everything in our power to encourage the liquidator—the decisions in these matters are his—to ensure that the expenses are kept to a minimum. I do not accept the hon. Gentleman's description of the Department's handling of the matter, which was a very difficult matter involving complex issues. As I have said repeatedly, the matter involved courses of action all of which were bound to have some disadvantages. I believe that reasonable judgments were made at the time against the background of the information available at the time and in the context of the legal powers available at the time.

Mr. Tim Smith (Beaconsfield): Could my right hon. Friend do a little more than take note of the suggestion made by my hon. Friend the Member for Honiton (Sir P. Emery)? Given that people who have just lost all their life savings are not the best placed to take legal action, and that the Department relied heavily on assurances given by Spicer and Pegler and Herbert Smith, could he not get together some of the professional advisers to decide whether there should be some sort of out of court settlement?

Mr. Newton: I note that that suggestion has been made for a second time. However, in the circumstances and for reasons that my hon. Friend will understand against the background of my remarks, I do not think that I want to go further on the role of the various special advisers involved.

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): After the Minister's long statement and all the answers that he has given I am still not clear how to advise my constituents who invested in Barlow Clowes and felt safe to do so because the DTI had given the company a licence in 1985. Will the Minister amplify what he said in reply to my right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris)? Is some kind of compensation one of the options that he will eventually consider when he gets the ombudsman's report or should my constituents and all the other investors now abandon hope of any compensation and realise that they have been abandoned by the Government?

Mr. Newton: I should make clear what I said in my statement about the current expectations of the liquidators concerning the amount that will be returned to investors. As I suggested, in the case of the United Kingdom operation in particular, that amount is expected to be really quite substantial. I am sorry, but beyond that I cannot add to what I have already said about the Parliamentary Commissioner and the report that he may possibly produce.

Mr. Alastair Goodlad (Eddisbury): Does my right hon. Friend accept that the sorry sequence of events that he has recited will give no comfort to the unfortunate victims of the affair, who may have hoped for compensation from his Department, for which there are clearly no grounds whatever, or for ex gratia payment, for which there are clearly no grounds whatever——

Mr. Robin Maxwell-Hyslop (Tiverton): There are excellent grounds.

Mr. Goodlad: —but that in what my right hon. Friend has said about the position of the solicitors, accountants and intermediaries of all sorts there are grounds for hope? More generally, does my right hon. Friend accept that in the regime following the enactment of the Financial Services Act 1986 events such as these could not be repeated?

Mr. Newton: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for the first part of his remarks. I should perhaps make it clear that I have not—in the sense in which he implied—said anything about the accountants or the solicitors. I have also made it clear that there are issues which will need to be—and which no doubt will be—considered by the relevant regulatory bodies.

I note my hon. Friend's last point.

Business of the House

4.37 pm

The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Wakeham): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement about the business for next week:

MONDAY 24 OCTOBER—Consideration in Committee of the European Communities (Finance) Bill.

Motion relating to the Local Government (Prescribed Expenditure) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations.

TUESDAY 25 OCTOBER—Opposition Day. There will be a debate on an Opposition motion entitled "The State of the Econony".

Second Reading of the Road Traffic Bill *[Lords]*, the Road Traffic (Consequential Provisions) Bill *[Lords]*, and the Road Traffic Offenders Bill *[Lords]*, which are consolidation measures.

WEDNESDAY 26 OCTOBER—Consideration of Lords amendments to the Housing (Scotland) Bill.

Motions relating to Scottish community charge regulations. Details will be given in the *Official Report*.

THURSDAY 27 OCTOBER—Remaining stages of the European Communities (Finance) Bill.

Motion on the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order.

FRIDAY 28 OCTOBER—There will be a debate on the disposal of radioactive waste on a motion for the Adjournment of the House. The Environment Committee's first report Session 1985-86 on radioactive waste (HC 191) and the Government's second stage response (Cmnd. 9852) will be relevant to the debate.

MONDAY 31 OCTOBER—Second Reading of the Rate Support Grants Bill.

The House will wish to know that it is proposed that Government business will be taken in the week beginning 14 November. The new Session will open on Tuesday 22 November.

[Debate on Wednesday 26 October 1988: Abolition of Domestic Rates (Domestic and Part Residential Subjects) (Scotland) Regulations 1988; Community Water Charges (Scotland) Regulations 1988; Community Charges (Registration) (Scotland) (No. 2) Regulations 1988; Standard and Collective Community Charges (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 1988; Personal Community Charge (Exemption for the Mentally Impaired) (Scotland) Regulations 1988; Community Charges (Registration) (Scotland) (No. 2) Amendment Regulations 1988.]

Mr. Frank Dobson (Holborn and St. Pancras): I thank the right hon. Gentleman for his statement, and, in particular, for the Opposition day set down for next week. In view of the fact that the parliamentary year is scheduled to last no fewer than 18 months on this occasion, will he tell us whether we shall have an Opposition day every week during the spillover period to go some way towards compensating for and matching the enormous extension of time made available for Government business?

In view of the widespread concern over today's statement about Barlow Clowes, and the number of hon. Members who wished to ask questions after the statement and did not get in, can we expect an early debate on the matter?

In view of the Prime Minister's recent much-vaunted conversion to protecting the environment, can we expect an early debate on that subject in Government time, or will her conversion prove to be about as authentic as the Turin shroud?

Does the right hon. Gentleman recall that he has still failed in his duty to the people of Scotland in not getting enough Tories to serve on the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs? When can we expect the promised debate on his failure to set up that Select Committee?

Finally, in view of the growing crisis of homelessness, and the likely further increase in homelessness as many people cannot find the money to meet their mortgage repayments, can we expect a debate on homelessness and housing in Government time?

Mr. Wakeham: The hon. Gentleman asked me five questions on the business for next week. First, he asked me about an Opposition day. I recognise that it has been a long Session, and that we have already provided one extra day over that required by Standing Orders. I suggest that we discuss the question of additional time through the usual channels.

The hon. Gentleman raised the matter of Barlow Clowes and the report. I recognise that it is a very important matter, which the House will want an opportunity to discuss. I suggest that we spend the weekend reading the report, and perhaps have discussions through the usual channels to decide how best to proceed, as clearly many important issues have emerged from the exchanges that we have just had.

The hon. Gentleman's remarks about the Prime Minister and the environment are not really worthy of him, from his present position, but there will be a number of occasions when those issues will be debatable in the near future. I have no doubt that opportunities wil be taken in the debate on the Queen's Speech, and so on.

With regard to Scotland, the hon. Gentleman, representing a London seat, seems continually to misrepresent the position. As he knows, proposals were put to the Opposition which were unacceptable to them. I regret that. I gave an undertaking that there would be a debate on it, and I shall honour that undertaking, but I consider that discussions through the usual channels will be the best way to proceed.

In regard to homelessness, I am conscious that a debate did not take place as intended, as a number of Opposition Members wished to raise an earlier matter at considerable length. That presents us with some difficulties. I think it is a matter best discussed through the usual channels.

Mr. Julian Amery (Brighton, Pavilion): Would my right hon. Friend arrange for a general debate on Northern Ireland before the summit meeting between our Government and the Government of the Republic of Ireland to review the Anglo-Irish Agreement so that Her Majesty's Government will have the benefit of the views of the House on the matter?

Mr. Wakeham: I fully recognise my right hon. Friend's concern, and the force of his argument. I shall have to look into whether I can provide time, but of course there will be occasions when Northern Ireland issues can be raised. I shall look into the matter for my right hon. Friend.

Mr. Menzies Campbell (Fife, North-East): In view of events during the summer Olympic games, and certain remarks attributed to the Minister of State, Home Office since then, will the Leader of the House find an early date

[Mr. Menzies Campbell]

for a debate on drugs in sport? When he is considering that, will he bear it in mind that 179 hon. Members, in the current Session, have signed an early-day motion supporting in principle the proposal that anabolic steroids should become controlled drugs under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971?

[That this House notes with concern the evidence of mounting use of anabolic steroids by sportsmen and women which is recognised as having dangerous medical side-effects including the risk of death; is concerned that such drugs are freely available in the United Kingdom and are a source of temptation to naive competitors, unscrupulous coaches and over-ambitious parents; and expresses its support for the principle of making anabolic steroids controlled drugs under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.]

Mr. Wakeham: That is a suitable subject for debate. I cannot promise an early debate on it, but I shall certainly bear the hon. Gentleman's suggestion in mind.

Mr. Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South): As my right hon. Friend and his ministerial colleagues are preparing for the Barlow Clowes debate, will they consider not just what Ministers and officials could reasonably be expected to know, but what investors could reasonably be entitled to think?

Mr. Wakeham: I do not think that I shall stray any further into the matter than my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy did when speaking at the Dispatch Box a few moments ago. However, I shall certainly take note of my hon. Friend's point and draw it to his attention.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): When this debate on Barlow Clowes takes place, can we have a guarantee that by the time we have the debate the Secretary of State will have got the sack and been replaced by an elected Member who can carry the can? Will the Leader of the House ensure that the Chancellor of the Duchy does not take part in the debate, in view of the fact that it will not be lost on the British people that that Minister spent a lot of time at the Department of Health and Social Security when 138,000 people were arrested and tried under this Government——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Questions, not statements.

Mr. Skinner: I am just suggesting that we do not have that Minister in the debate, because the British people understand that if a Minister can be part and parcel of 138,000 people being arrested and convicted for fraud on the DHSS when the Government do not have the guts to deal with licences——

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is an abuse of business questions.

Mr. Wakeham: The hon. Gentleman's question is not much about next week's business, but I think that I can answer him. In a fairly uncertain situation, one thing is certain. As far as I know, my right hon. and noble Friend will still be Secretary of State when we have any debate on the matter, and almost certainly my right hon. Friend the Chacellor of the Duchy will reply to any debate in this House, and he will do it extremely well.

Mr. Michael Latham (Rutland and Melton): Before we have a debate on Barlow Clowes, be it the week after next or whatever, will the Minister, whose statement today, frankly, was extremely disappointing and sounded too much like civil servants protecting their own backs, come to the Dispatch Box next week and announce what he will do about the specific suggestion made by two Conservative Members—that the affected interests should be called in to see if they can sort it out as the Minister is not prepared to do it himself?

Mr. Wakeham: I shall certainly pass that suggestion to my right hon. Friend, who has already taken note of it from the questions raised with him. I do not think I can add anything more at this stage.

Ms. Joan Walley (Stoke-on-Trent, North): Does the Leader of the House have any proposals to bring forward a Bill for the removal of Crown immunity from the Palace of Westminster? In the light of the removal of asbestos from offices in the Tea Room corridors, will he make arrangements to report back to the House meetings he has had with Ministers at the Department of the Environment to make sure that hon. Members and their staff who are working in the Tea Room buildings can be sure that there are no asbestos fibres there, and, rather than depending on random sampling of asbestos, will he ensure that each office has been sampled so that the same safeguards apply that would apply to local authorities throughout the land?

Mr. Wakeham: There are two parts to the hon. Lady's question. First, on bringing forward legislation on the matter, I can assure the hon. Lady that at this stage in the Session, I am very anxious to get existing legislation through and I have no proposals to bring any further forward at this stage. Secondly, I recognise her concern and perhaps that of other hon. Members. I am looking into the matter, and I shall be in touch.

Sir Philip Goodhart (Beckenham): There has been considerable anxiety about the Government decision to repatriate 9,000 Vietnamese boat people who are now in Hong Kong. Can we have an early debate or a statement by the Foreign Secretary so that we can probe the assurances that have been given that those unfortunate people will not face punishment or starvation?

Mr. Wakeham: I recognise the concern expressed by my hon. Friend. It is an important matter. I cannot promise an early debate, but I know of occasions in the near future when such matters could be raised when the Foreign Secretary will be taking part in a debate in the House.

Mr. Alex Salmond (Banff and Buchan): In considering the case for an early debate on the bid for Scottish and Newcastle Breweries by Elder IXL, will the Leader of the House take note of the unity of Scottish opinion on that matter across party boundaries? Will he take note of the fact that the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has powers under the Industry Act 1975 to prevent, by prohibitive order, the transfer of control of important manufacturing concerns? Given the unity of Scottish opinion, is there not a substantial case for early action to end the uncertainty that should be tested in an early debate in the House?

Mr. Wakeham: As the hon. Gentleman knows, the proposed acquisition is being considered by the Director General of Fair Trading. He has a statutory duty to advise

my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State. It would not be appropriate for me to say anything more at this stage.

Mr. Patrick McLoughlin (Derbyshire, West): May I draw my right hon. Friend's attention to early-day motion 542 which deals with the appointment by Derbyshire county council of a former Labour Member of Parliament to the post of county director at £45,000 a year?

[That this House deplores the appointment by Derbyshire County Council of Mr. Reg Race, former hon. Member for Wood Green, former Research Officer for the National Union of Public Employees, former head of the Greater London Council's programme office, former consultant to the Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians and former researcher to the Labour-funded London Government Information Unit, to the £46,000 a year post of County Director; and believes that all local authority employees should be politically impartial and that Derbyshire County Council is making appointments on the basis of whether or not candidates are acceptable to the ruling group's left-wing views and not on the basis of merit and experience.]

Would it be possible to have a debate on the conduct of local government, bearing in mind that unsatisfactory appointment? The man has now resigned—*[Interruption.]* Well, he has resigned. The people of Derbyshire are wondering how much it cost to appoint him and how much has been spent on removal expenses for what has turned out to be an unsatisfactory nine-month political appointment. Is it not time for proper debates on the conduct of local government?

Mr. Wakeham: My hon. Friend has raised an important point. Effective local government rests solidly on the tradition of politically neutral officers, serving with equal commitment whichever party is in political control. There is increasing concern that in some cases appointments are politically motivated. The Widdicombe committee has put forward proposals aimed at preventing such abuses and the Government are considering them carefully.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): Is this a statement?

Mr. Wakeham: I have a note on every early-day motion on the Order Paper, and I propose to give the right answers.

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): In view of that interesting reply, will the Leader of the House arrange for Law Officers or Ministers in the Department of the Environment to make a statement tomorrow morning, hopefully having persuaded the Bradford Conservative council overnight to drop its plan to restrict public entry to next Tuesday's Bradford council meeting? Does the Leader of the House realise that many of my constituents and hon. Members will be denied access to that council meeting if the plan is allowed to be introduced?

Does he not realise that, however much Bradford Conservative council attempts to stop the public from witnessing its proceedings, it will not conceal the fact that it has no electoral mandate or popular support for the 9,000 redundancies and other deeply damaging policies it is hoping to steamroller through at next Tuesday's meeting? Incidentally, it will be breaching a Bill which was sponsored by the Prime Minister soon after she was elected as the Member of Parliament for Finchley.

Mr. Wakeham: I know that this afternoon the hon. Gentleman has been in touch with officials at the Department of the Environment. Those are matters for the council, but I will ensure that the Minister for Local Government is aware of the hon. Gentleman's view.

Mr. Robin Maxwell-Hyslop (Tiverton): Will my right hon. Friend, without fail, arrange for the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster to appear next week again at the Dispatch Box because his statement today was so inadequate and important questions remain unanswered? In his statement, will he address himself particularly to his Department's negligence, reported in paragraph 5.1 of the Le Quesne report, in which it is clear that the Department of Trade and Industry agreed to the two devices which enabled any fraud that took place to take place, namely electronic rather than written records and a system of obviating the necessity for issuing contract notes, without which any fraud would have been revealed before a lot of people had bought these securities?

Mr. Wakeham: I believe that my suggestion that we should all read the report over the weekend and then decide how best to proceed is the best suggestion I have for the House.

Mr. Jack Ashley (Stoke-on-Trent, South): As the freezing of child benefit will have serious implications for the future of poor people and for the political future of the Secretary of State for Social Security, would it not be wise to debate that subject next week?

Mr. Wakeham: The wise course is to wait until the statement on such matters is made in the normal course of events.

Mr. Phillip Oppenheim (Amber Valley): I wish to reinforce the request made by my hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, West (Mr. McLoughlin) for a debate on the recent sudden and surprising resignation of Reg Race, former Labour Member of Parliament, from his position as chief officer of Derbyshire county council. Will my right hon. Friend bear in mind that there is grave concern in Derbyshire that the resignation of Mr. Race is not unconnected to a large secret investment that the county council pension fund has made in a business operated by Owen Oyston, a former estate agent from Manchester? Will my right hon. Friend bear in mind the great concern in Derbyshire about that matter?

Mr. Wakeham: These are not matters for me, but I note what my hon. Friend has said.

Mr. David Clelland (Tyne Bridge): Notwithstanding his previous answer on the subject, will the Leader of the House make arrangements for an early statement on the Government's position on the hostile takeover bid for Scottish and Newcastle Breweries, the Newcastle half of which is in my constituency? Is he aware that, although the people of Tyneside may be willing to accept Australian Neighbours, they are not willing to accept Australian Foster parents?

Mr. Wakeham: My right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State has a statutory duty in these matters, and it would not be right for me to comment while he is considering his duty.

Mr. Nicholas Budgen (Wolverhampton, South-West): Since the European Communities (Finance) Bill, with which the House will be dealing on Monday, envisages an 80 per cent. increase in European structural funds, a measure that will finance Euro-Socialism, will my right hon. Friend say, in view of the change in the Government's position as signalled by the Prime Minister's recent speeches about Europe, that the Government will be voting against that 80 per cent. increase?

Mr. Wakeham: The appropriate Minister will deal with the Bill on Monday when it comes before the House. However, I know that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister fully supports the Bill, and I hope that my hon. Friend does as well.

Mr. Allan Roberts (Bootle): Will the Leader of the House arrange for a statement to be made next week on the privatisation of Girobank? Will he ask the Minister to explain why the short list of those who have put in bids has not yet been announced, although it was promised that it would be announced during the recess? Will he ask the Minister to say whether there is any truth in the fact that the Bank of Scotland was on the short list and has withdrawn and that great difficulties are being experienced by the Government in their attempt to privatise Girobank?

Mr. Wakeham: I do not know whether that is correct. I do not believe it to be so. I shall refer the matter to my right hon. Friend the Minister, who I am sure will make a statement, if a statement is needed.

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson (Newbury): Is my right hon. Friend aware that during the summer recess I had an opportunity to visit a unit at the Royal Berkshire hospital which is keeping premature babies alive? I was told that it is now possible to enable a 22-week-old baby to survive. In view of the grave implications of that, in terms of the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929, for medical teams which may be terminating pregnancies after that age, may I suggest that he should find time for the House to reach a final decision on the Abortion (Amendment) Bill introduced by the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton)?

Mr. Wakeham: I recognise the concern, but I cannot add anything to what I have said before. Private Members' Bills are dealt with under procedures that the House has agreed. I cannot arbitrarily make a change in those arrangements.

Mr. Tony Banks: Will the Leader of the House arrange for a debate next week on the corrupt and incompetent policies being pursued by Tory-controlled Westminster city council, so that we can have an opportunity to discover more about the scandalous deal between Westminster city council and the Conservative party over the freehold sale of the office in Smith Square? It is clear that that cost Westminster ratepayers a great deal of money. If we are to talk about efficient local government, the activities of Westminster city council deserve much wider discussion.

Mr. Wakeham: The partial way in which the hon. Gentleman asked his question showed that he does not expect me to be very forthcoming in my answer. I cannot promise such a debate, but no doubt he can find a way of raising any points that he believes to be important.

Mr. John Browne (Winchester): Does my right hon. Friend recall that, in his statement, our right hon. Friend used the word "exceptional" to describe the Barlow Clowes affair? Quite apart from any legal obligation that may or may not come from reading the report and further investigations, many Conservative Members feel that the Government have an exceptional moral responsibility. Would it be possible to make the proposed debate on Barlow Clowes a matter of urgency before the Government make further statements on proposals without having sensed the feelings of Conservative Members?

Mr. Wakeham: I still think that the advice that I have given to read the report over the weekend and consider how best to proceed is the right advice for the House.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): May I suggest that the Leader of the House resurrects the Salmon commission's report on standards of conduct in public life? It would enable us to discuss the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in the Barlow Clowes affair and why he has not resigned, as used to be the case when Ministers behaved in a crass and incompetent way. It would enable us to discuss the responsibilities of members of local government and the lord mayor of Bradford, who is using his casting vote in an unscrupulous and cheating way to maintain the Tories in office so that they can sack 9,000 employees, close 25 community centres and half a dozen benefit shops and make savage cuts elsewhere. Surely it is a matter of concern for the House that these massive cuts and attacks on the city of Bradford are being made in this unfair, cheating and gerrymandering way. We should discuss the matter, and the Salmon report contains the basis on which to do so.

Mr. Wakeham: I am sure that, when Lord Salmon wrote his report, he did not expect it to be used in the sort of question that the hon. Gentleman puts to me today.

Mr. Peter Thurnham (Bolton, North-East): May we have an early debate on the need for legislation to deal with the dumping of toxic and other waste materials and for heavier fines to stop illegal dumping?

Mr. Wakeham: This is an important matter. I cannot promise a debate specifically on this subject, but, with a little skill, my hon. Friend might be able to make a point or two on Friday 28 October.

Mr. Ivor Stanbrook (Orpington): Since my right hon. Friend says that he has a note on all motions on the Order Paper, will he say what progress has been made with the implementation by the Government of what is required under early-day motion 6?

[That this House deplores the fact that, alone among public service pensioners, those whose service was overseas cannot count pre-appointment war service towards their pensions; and calls upon Her Majesty's Government to remedy this injustice to a dwindling group of elderly people whose working lives were spent in adverse conditions while dedicated to the service of British interests overseas.]

It calls on the Government to end the anomaly whereby all public servans receive credit for war service unless that public service was abroad. Surely it is time for the Government to honour their implied moral obligations. Between the "court of Star Chamber", the Treasury and the Foreign Office, will he kindly ensure that this early-day motion is accepted and that the money is paid?

Mr. Wakeham: My hon. Friend raises early-day motion 6, and I shall tell him what my note says. My hon. Friend has had a long-standing interest in this matter and has raised it in the House on a number of occasions. We recognise how strongly the colonial service pensioners feel about the issue and we shall keep it under careful review. As my hon. Friend will appreciate, however, there are many claims on public expenditure resources.

Mr. Jonathan Sayeed (Bristol, East): Does my right hon. Friend agree that it is a policy of enlightened self-interest that education be involved in business and business in education? If he agrees that that is the case, will he arrange for an early debate on the decision of Customs and Excise to charge VAT on gifts by business to universities?

Mr. Wakeham: I think that my hon. Friend is in luck. If he attends tomorrow and catches your eye, Mr. Speaker, this subject will be appropriate to the debate on education and industry links.

Mr. David Martin (Portsmouth, South): Does my hon. Friend appreciate the strength of feeling about the inadequacy of the law and the state and practice of sentencing those who drink too much, get into a car, drive away and kill someone? May we have an early opportunity to debate the North report's proposals and hear the Government's conclusions on those proposals and, thereafter, have an early opportunity for legislation?

Mr. Wakeham: This is an important matter, and, as my hon. Friend probably knows, I have some responsibility for these matters. At present, we are considering the recommendations of the North report. When we have reached our conclusions we shall report to the House and decide how best to proceed from there.

Written Answers

5.6 pm

Mr. Roy Hattersley (Birmingham, Sparkbrook): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this afternoon the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland distributed in the Press Gallery what purported to be written answers to parliamentary questions. Both concerned the future of the right to silence within the United Kingdom system of justice. One was not a written answer, for no question on the subject had been placed on the Order Paper. Both amounted, with varying degrees of ingenuity, to stratagems to avoid making a statement in the House. I do not wish to debate the merits—nor would you allow me to do so—of what the statements proposed, although it is important to my point of order to mention that until now the right to silence has been an essential aspect of our free society.

My point is simply that the prospect of a change to our legal system as fundamental as that should have been announced to the House in the proper and usual way. I therefore ask you, Mr. Speaker, first, what can be done to prevent the Government behaving in this hole-and-corner way and, secondly, whether we may have an explanation tomorrow from the Government about how something described as a parliamentary answer, which was not a parliamentary answer, was circulated in the Press Gallery, and what are the consequences of that mistake.

The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Wakeham): I shall certainly look into the matter. As I understand it, two written answers have been made today by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland that were perfectly in order.

Mr. Frank Dobson (Holborn and St. Pancras): No.

Mr. Wakeham: May I finish by saying that if I find that that is not the case I shall communicate it to you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I have looked at one of the written answers. Written answer No. 249 says "pursuant to a reply on 20 July." I am not aware of the second written answer.

Mr. Kevin McNamara (Kingston-upon-Hull, North): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland had difficulties, but nevertheless he circularised a written answer without a question being put down, and the question was not headed "pursuant to" anything.

Mr. Speaker: If it was any fault of the Table Office, I shall look into the matter.

Mr. Hattersley: Perhaps I might help the Leader of the House through the dark passage of his ignorance. The question to which I referred was allegedly laid by the hon. Member for Nuneaton (Mr. Stevens). While he received an answer to his question, which was circularised, he did not ask a question.

Barlow Clowes Report (Copies)

5.8 pm

Mr. Robin Maxwell-Hyslop (Tiverton): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I understand from the authorities of the House that there has developed a considerable laxity in Government Departments, who are omitting to lay on the Table of the House—which, for this purpose, means Journal Office—as soon as the House has passed a notice of motion for an unopposed return, the document concerned so that it is available to hon. Members. I understand the position to be that, although Ministers can control the time of release from Vote Office of documents which they are putting into Vote Office, from time out of mind it has been the rule of the House that when the House has passed a notice of motion for an unopposed return —as the House did at about 2.26 pm today—there should have been a copy of the Barlow Clowes report by Sir Godfray Le Quesne available to hon. Members in the Journal Office.

When I went to Journal Office to get it, it was only with some difficulty that the Clerk of the Journal was able to get a copy from Vote Office, who were under the impression that the embargo on release to hon. Members from Vote Office in some way covered Journal Office, which it does not. Would you, Mr. Speaker, therefore use such machinery as is appropriate to make it known—because I believe that it is a matter for you, Mr. Speaker, to make it known—to all Ministers that when they put such a motion on the Order Paper it is incumbent on them to ensure that there is a copy available to the Table of the House—which means the Journal Office in this context—right away and that that copy will not be delayed because, for their own reasons, they wish to delay delivery to hon. Members from Vote Office?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member raises an important matter. I shall certainly look into it.

Private Bills

5.9 pm

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. You will recall that before July we had one or two discussions in the House about the propriety of the private Bill procedure as it affected the North Killingholme Cargo Terminal Bill and the Associated British Ports (No. 2) Bill and about whether Members with an interest could serve on the Committee. For instance, because the National Union of Mineworkers opposed the legislation, sponsored members of the union would hardly be likely to serve on the Committee.

It has been drawn to my attention that a former member of the private Bill Committee on the North Killingholme Cargo Terminal Bill, the hon. Member for Luton, South (Mr. Bright), has now become a PPS, so he has been taken off the Committee and a substitute found. This matter should be considered again because of the complications resulting from the appointment of the new Chairman.

Simon Engineering is the company that sponsors the North Killingholme Cargo Terminal Bill. That company's subsidiary, Simon Carves, is part of the British Chemical Engineering Contractors Association. The parliamentary adviser to that association is none other than the Member who has replaced the hon. Member for Luton, South—the hon. Member for Rochford (Dr. Clark).

We must look into this matter. I suggest that the present Chairman should not be able to preside over this private Bill Committee. It would be better for all concerned if this murky private Bill procedure were abandoned, together with these two Bills, because of the complications which have arisen during the past six months.

Mr. Speaker: I think that that matter should correctly and properly be drawn to the attention of the Chairman of the Committee of Selection. That is what the hon. Member should do. We must now move on.

Mr. Frank Dobson (Holborn and St. Pancras): Surely, Mr. Speaker, an alleged breach of the Standing Orders applying to private Bills is a matter that is reasonably addressed to you. Members who become members of opposed private Bill Committees are required to sign a declaration saying that they have no personal or constituency interest in those matters. It is perfectly legitimate for my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) to bring this point to your attention at the earliest opportunity, and that is what he did.

Mr. Speaker: I do not appoint Members to chair private Bill Committees. I shall look into the question of whether a declaration has been signed. I fully accept that this is an important matter.

Mr. Skinner: The reason for the urgency is simple. The private Bill Committee has been set up and will meet in the next few days. I suggest that the matter must be dealt with as soon as possible.

Mr. Speaker: So far as my responsibility is concerned, I give an undertaking that I shall look into the matter.

BILLS PRESENTED

Rate Support Grants

Mr. Secretary Ridley, supported by Mr. Secretary Walker, Mr. John Major, Mr. John Selwyn Gummer and Mrs. Virginia Bottomley, presented a Bill to make further provision about rate support grants: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time tomorrow and to be printed. [Bill 216.]

Haemoglobin Disorders (Screening and Counselling)

Mr. Tony Lloyd, supported by Mr. Keith Vaz, Sir George Young, Mr. Bernie Grant, Mr. Dafydd Wigley, Mr. Paul Boateng, Mr. John Bowis and Mr. Peter Pike, presented a Bill to oblige health authorities in England and Wales and Health Boards in Scotland to provide screening and counselling services for people at risk from inherited haemoglobin disorders and to draw to the attention of those people and of medical practitioners and registered nurses the availability of such services: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time on 28 October and to be printed. [Bill 217.]

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

Ordered,

That the Liverpool and Wirral Urban Development Area Order 1988 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.—*[Mr. Wakeham.]*

Orders of the Day

Defence Estimates

[SECOND DAY'S DEBATE]

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on amendment to Question [19 October]:

That this House approves the Statement on the Defence Estimates 1988 contained in Cm. 344.

Which amendment was, to leave out from "House" to the end of the Question and to add instead thereof:

"believes that the plans outlined in the Statement on Defence Estimates, Cm. 344, and in particular the Government's acquisition of Trident which is neither British nor independent, are already having a deleterious effect on the conventional defences of the United Kingdom, especially the Royal Navy surface fleet, and on related defence procurement industries; calls upon the Government to cancel Trident and use resources to secure our non-nuclear defences and to work actively for the reduction and abolition of nuclear weapons in Britain and elsewhere and the adoption by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation of a strategy of No First Use; applauds the signing of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty by the Governments of the United States and the Soviet Union and would be opposed to any nuclear arms deployment which would undermine the effectiveness of that Treaty; welcomes the progress being made towards a Chemical and Biological Weapons Ban Treaty, and the anticipated 50 per cent. cuts in ballistic missiles which would result from the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks; and further believes that the Conventional Stability Talks will provide the means whereby North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and Warsaw Pact troop numbers can be asymmetrically reduced, forward troop deployments can be withdrawn, and short-range ground and air launched dual capable systems can be eliminated."—*[Mr. O'Neill.]*

Question again proposed, That the amendment be made.

Mr. Speaker: As this debate is starting later than we had expected, because of an important statement and business questions, I appeal to the Front Benchers to make brief contributions to give a lead.

I propose a limit of 10 minutes on speeches between 7 o'clock and 10 minutes to 9. I hope that that limit will be followed by all Members who are called, in view of the late start and the great demand to take part in the debate.

5.13 pm

The Minister of State for the Armed Forces (Mr. Archie Hamilton): Although I have addressed the House as a Defence Minister before, this is the first time that I have done so without the right hon. Member for Llanelli (Mr. Davies) sitting on the Opposition Front Bench. I regret his resignation. He is an honourable man—too honourable, I suspect for today's Labour party. As he said on BBC 2's "Newsnight" programme on 17 June this year, three days after his resignation:

"I felt it was going to be impossible for me. I would have been the person in the House of Commons who would have to draft the amendment to the defence White Paper. I would have found that difficult to do. I would have had to have stood at that Dispatch Box and argue the case. I think this year I would have found it impossible to do."

How many other members of the Labour party share the right hon. Gentleman's views on Labour's defence policy, but dare not speak out?

The amendment in the name of the Leader of the Opposition, which the right hon. Member for Llanelli did not draft, alleges that Trident is neither British nor independent. That is, of course, nonsense. Trident missiles will be purchased from the United States, as indeed will other equipment for the submarine, and the British Government will control the operation of our strategic nuclear force. The critical factor is that a large proportion of our missiles will always be on our submarines ready for use and under the absolute control of the Government.

The hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) suggested yesterday that, with an 18-day period needed to service Trident in the United States, he hoped that the Soviet Union would give us three weeks' warning of a nuclear attack. That is also nonsense and I suspect that he knows that it is nonsense. Just in case he really wants to know what provision is being made to service Trident, let me tell him.

We regard the agreement to service Trident missiles at King's bay as very satisfactory. It will save some £770 million in capital costs as well as running costs. Of course Trident missiles will need to be returned to King's bay, but only once every seven to eight years. Our requirement is, and has always been, to maintain at least one submarine on deterrent patrol at any one time and I can assure the House that we shall have more than sufficient missiles to meet that requirement.

Mr. Martin J. O'Neill (Clackmannan): I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for giving us that information. Was there at any time the option of these missiles being serviced anywhere else, for example, on the Clyde at Coulport or Faslane?

Mr. Hamilton: As I have said, that option existed, but it would have cost us serious sums of money to set up those facilities here. Significant savings have been made by getting the servicing done at King's bay.

Mr. Tony Benn (Chesterfield): Before the Minister leaves the point about the independent nature of the deterrent, will he tell the House plainly whether those missiles can be targeted without the use of the worldwide American satellite system? Sir Frank Cooper, former permanent secretary to the Ministry of Defence, made it clear in the Zircon film that there would be no capacity to target those missiles unless the American satellite system were switched on for that purpose.

Mr. Hamilton: The right hon. Gentleman knows quite well that we do not comment on the targeting of our missile systems.

I should like also to take the opportunity to make it clear that, although construction work at Vickers Shipbuilding and Engineering Ltd. on the two Vanguard class submarines so far ordered was suspended during the recent strike, we do not expect that there will be any slippage in the planned in-service date.

There were a number of interesting contributions in yesterday's debate. The hon. Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer) reminded the House how his family had been affected by Europe's two world wars. For the hon. Gentleman's family, and indeed for many other British families, those experiences were not unusual. The hon. Gentleman and I are united in our conviction that Europe must never witness another world war. Where we part company is on how that should be ensured.

The hon. Gentleman advocates a nuclear-free world, but does he not accept that the fear of a nuclear exchange has actually preserved peace in Europe? No one can afford to start a war that may end in massive nuclear destruction.

[Mr. Hamilton]

But remove the nuclear weapons and Europe becomes free for conventional war, and more likely to experience the third world war which we are all determined to prevent.

In the debate yesterday, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State described in some detail the extensive improvements that we are making to the armed forces. I should like to concentrate on the many different activities carried out by the services over the past year, in the United Kingdom, NATO, and in many other parts of the world.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): If Polaris kept the peace, as the hon. Gentleman claims, why do we need Trident, which is between four and 10 times more powerful in its extermination capacity than Polaris? Why should we go to this expense when we have Polaris which, the hon. Gentleman claims, deters people from embarking on nuclear war? Why do we need Trident?

Mr. Hamilton: As the hon. Gentleman knows, Polaris is a relatively short-range missile system, and we cannot guarantee that it will remain undetected in the relatively shallow waters in which it has to operate. Therefore, we need a successor system which will operate much more widely.

Regular participation by United Kingdom forces in major NATO exercises not only helps to establish the sort of co-operation between allies that would be vital in war, but provides a visible demonstration of Alliance solidarity in peace. I should like to mention just a few of the many NATO exercises our forces have participated in during the year. The United Kingdom contingent of the allied command Europe mobile force, which represents some 25 per cent. of its total strength, took part in joint exercises in both Norway and Turkey. The 19,500-strong United Kingdom mobile force took part in September in a large NATO reinforcement exercise in Denmark.

At sea, a number of Royal Naval ships and submarines played their part in Teamwork 88, a major NATO maritime exercise which also involved RAF aircraft and some 5,200 Royal Marines. In the UK air defence region, RAF Jaguars, Buccaneers and Tornados were also involved in exercises Elder Forest and Elder Joust in April and earlier this month.

In Britain, a series of national exercises designed to test our current plans for military home defence has been taking place since 7 September, involving the Regular Army, elements of the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force, and members of the United States forces based in this country. They were joined by volunteers from the Territorial Army, the Home Service Force and by individual reservists.

I should like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all those employers who have released people to take part in these exercises. The importance of the reserve forces to our defence effort cannot be over-estimated, and it is vital that we keep these forces fully trained. I am also most grateful to those non-military organisations, including the police, fire and ambulance services, and the voluntary aid societies, who have found the time and resources to participate. Their contribution to the success of the exercises is very much appreciated.

Mr. Robert Key (Salisbury): Is my hon. Friend aware of how successful exercise Drake's Drum was? I was one of the hon. Members who were privileged to see that exercise on Salisbury plain, and we were particularly struck by the way in which the home defence forces and the territorialists quickly knitted back into the regular military pattern. Is he also aware that any attempt to move the military from Salisbury plain to the north would be heavily resisted in my constituency? The Army is welcome to stay there for as long as it wishes. The local community is well aware of the great contribution that the military makes to conservation, of the environmental impact of the Army on the south of England, and of the role that the Army takes, for example, in preserving Stonehenge, with English Heritage. I hope that my hon. Friend will have something to say about that later.

Mr. Hamilton: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his remarks, and I know that the Army will be particularly grateful that it is so welcome in his constituency.

The House will be aware that earlier this month the Soviet Union issued a challenge inspection request to the United Kingdom under the terms of the Stockholm document. We responded positively, and within the time limit laid down. The exercises taking place within the specified area were not included in the annual Stockholm calendar of notifiable military activities for 1988 since the troop levels in the field did not approach the 13,000 threshold for notification. The inspection lasted for 48 hours and was conducted in a professional and congenial spirit. No difficulties arose and we welcomed the opportunity to demonstrate our willingness to contribute further to such confidence-building measures.

Although our defence efforts are rightly concentrated in the NATO area, it is important not to forget our commitments and activities that lie in other parts of the world. The past year has been an important one for deployments and exercises by our forces outside the NATO area. Such deployments not only test the capabilities of our forces, but provide an excellent opportunity to renew professional links with our friends and allies throughout the world.

Even as I speak, ships of the Navy's Outback 88 task group deployment are preparing to return to the United Kingdom from the far east. The three warships and three Royal Fleet auxiliaries, headed by HMS Ark Royal, represented the Royal Navy at the fleet review in Sydney on 1 October as part of the Australian bicentennial celebrations. It was particularly appropriate, of course, that the 60-odd vessels in the review were led to their stations by HMS Sirius, the namesake of the Royal Navy ship that led the first fleet to Australia 200 years ago.

It is a matter of regret that the visit to Australia has been marred by the activities of trade unions in Melbourne which prevented HMS Ark Royal entering Melbourne harbour. As the House knows, we have a policy of neither confirming nor denying whether our ships are carrying nuclear weapons and we are not prepared to alter that policy to meet the demands of the Australian trade unions. I believe that many Australians in Melbourne were extremely disappointed not to have Ark Royal contributing to their 200th anniversary celebrations.

Earlier in their deployment, ships from Outback 88 were able to demonstrate the Government's firm commitment to the five power defence arrangements by joining our allies—Malaysia, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand—in two major exercises: the maritime exercise Starfish in the South China sea, and the impressive

air defence exercise Lima Bersatu. They also joined units from the Hong Kong garrison and the Sultan of Brunei's armed forces in exercise Setia Kawan, or "Loyal Friend".

The RAF also mounted an impressive overseas deployment to the far east during this, its 70th anniversary year. This deployment, nicknamed Golden Eagle, is still under way and involves four Tornado F-3 air defence aircraft, with tanker and Hercules support. The aircraft took part in exercise Lima Bersatu, and will return home via the USA, thereby completing a circumnavigation of the earth.

Sadly, there have been a number of natural disasters around the world this year. Where the services have been in a position to help, they have done so. In August, there was a severe earthquake in northern India and Nepal. The British military hospital at Dharan became the focal point of medical support for the local population, helped by emergency medical teams flown in from Hong Kong and the United Kingdom. The hospital was expanded from 70 to 250 beds and has been working non-stop over the past few weeks, treating several hundred casualties. This extra activity is now winding down, but it has been an outstanding example of the professionalism and skill of the armed forces.

In September, following the devastating passage of Hurricane Gilbert across the Caribbean, the West Indies guardship, HMS Active, sailed to the Cayman Islands and Jamaica to provide emergency relief assistance, and a team of Royal Engineers flew from Belize to Jamaica to help restore the Princess Margaret hospital, near Kingston, to working order.

Yesterday, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State paid tribute to the efforts of the Royal Navy and the Armilla patrol. I shall mention in particular our mine countermeasure vessels. To date, they have discovered and destroyed 10 mines in the waters of the region. Without their efforts, ships might have been lost or seriously damaged, almost certainly with loss of life.

Western European Union partners have made a real contribution to maintaining the freedom of navigation in the Gulf and to upholding regional stability. Members have continued to co-ordinate closely over their assessments of the changing situation in the Gulf and about their plans for national naval contingents there. I am glad to inform the House that mine countermeasure vessels of Western European Union countries are currently checking a new merchant shipping route in the Gulf. This will be an important contribution to freedom and safety of navigation in those waters.

Another difficult but continuing task for our armed forces is, of course, in supporting the Royal Ulster Constabulary in the fight against terrorism in Northern Ireland. The Government are determined to carry through their efforts to restore peace and order to the Province, and all three services, including the Royal Marines, have a part to play in combating, within the rule of law, the men of violence whose aim is to destroy any hopes of peace or a normal life for the people of Northern Ireland.

The main responsibility for the military element of maintaining security in Northern Ireland rests with the Regular Army and the Ulster Defence Regiment. There are currently some 11,100 regular service personnel and some 6,300 Ulster Defence Regiment personnel in the Province.

I should like in particular to pay tribute to the Ulster Defence Regiment and the role which it plays in supporting the RUC. Since its foundation just over 18 years ago, the UDR has been continually on operations —a unique record for a regiment of the British Army. During that time, the regiment has been transformed from its original role as a part-time local defence force. Today, nearly half of the soldiers in the regiment are full-time soldiers, carrying out almost exactly the same duties as the Regular Army, but with the benefit of local knowledge and considerable experience. In over 80 per cent. of the Province, the UDR now provides the primary military support to the RUC.

A few brief details will serve to illustrate the increasing professionalism and the continuing commitment of members of the UDR. First, in the past two years, all new UDR permanent cadre officers have completed the standard military course at Sandhurst, some of them, I may say, with distinction. Secondly, from a strength of some 6,300, nearly 1,000 members of the UDR have now served for 15 years or longer under the most dangerous and stressful conditions. Thirdly, nearly 30 per cent. of the permanent cadre have previous experience with other regiments of the Regular Army, and nearly 40 per cent. in the case of officers and senior NCOs. Finally, this year alone there have been 43 awards for gallant and meritorious service in Northern Ireland made to members of the UDR, including 19 mentions in dispatches.

I believe that these figures speak for themselves in showing how the UDR has developed into a highly motivated, professional and experienced regiment of the British Army. The military value and capability of the UDR is increasingly being recognised on both sides of the water, and I applaud the special efforts that the regiment has been making recently to win the support of the whole community of Northern Ireland, which it serves with such distinction. It is a matter of regret that some members of the Catholic community are reluctant to join and that they presently form only a small element of the regiment.

The past year has, however, seen an upsurge in brutal acts of terrorism. Inevitably, this has taken its toll of members of the security forces, as well as those they work so bravely to protect. So far this year, a Royal Navy recruiting officer, 21 members of the Regular Army and 11 members of the UDR have been murdered by terrorists in Northern Ireland. Outside the Province, one soldier died in a bomb attack on Mill Hill barracks in north London. Another was killed as he drove to catch a ferry home in Ostend and three RAF personnel were murdered while off duty in Holland.

Hon. Members will recall in particular the barbarous and shameful act on 20 August this year against a bus carrying 35 off-duty soldiers from 1st Battalion the Light Infantry returning from leave to their base in Omagh. The bomb killed eight soldiers and injured 27 others. I know that the House will support me in condemning this kind of cowardly attack against young men who have chosen to serve their country.

The House will be well aware of the review of security in Northern Ireland that has been carried out. I shall not comment further on that now.

Events such as these do not, however, weaken our resolve to defeat terrorism. The campaign against the men of violence in Northern Ireland continues and some notable successes have been achieved. A significant number of terrorists continue to be arrested and charged with serious offences.

[Mr. Hamilton]

Since the beginning of the year, the security forces have also recovered nearly 500 weapons from terrorists, the highest total since 1977, over 86,000 rounds of ammunition, the highest total since 1974, and over 6 tonnes of explosives have been found or neutralised. In addition, some 300 kg of the powerful military explosive Semtex has been recovered in the Republic by the Garda.

Despite the significant recoveries that have been made by the security forces on both sides of the border, the large quantities of arms and explosives that reached Ireland in the pre-Eksund shipments still pose a serious threat. By the end of September, for example, some 400 kg of Semtex had been used by terrorists to make 160 lethal or potentially lethal devices, which were either exploded by the terrorists or made safe by the Army.

Over the past year, a considerable number of planned terrorist attacks have been successfully thwarted. Just last month, for example, three armed terrorists were intercepted at Drumnakilly in the act of attempting to assassinate the driver of a coal lorry. Hon. Members will have noted that the Provisional IRA has admitted that the terrorists were on so-called active service when they were killed. I believe that that statement speaks for itself in demonstrating the viciousness of the current terrorist campaign. The incident also demonstrates the risks that the security forces face in Northern Ireland as they try to halt the terrorists' campaign of violence and murder. Many lives have undoubtedly been saved by the bravery, vigilance and dedicated hard work of the security forces.

This vigilance needs to be constant, though, and the hard work needs to be effective. To increase the effectiveness of our counter-terrorist operations in the border area, a new brigade was formed earlier this year, with special responsibility to improve the co-ordination and direction of security force activity along the border. It will also allow the other two brigades to concentrate on areas of high terrorist activity in the rest of the Province. We continue to build on the Anglo-Irish Agreement and on the improved crossborder co-operation with the Irish security forces, which is vital to our efforts to prevent the border being exploited by terrorists.

The most telling recent example of the Provisional IRA's utter callousness when it comes to the murder of innocent civilians was the plot to detonate a massive car bomb in Gibraltar in March. Had this attempt not been thwarted, it is possible that there would have been hundreds of civilian and military casualties. I welcome the clear and conclusive verdict of the Gibraltar jury, which was reached after an exhaustive public examination of all the relevant facts. I should also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to our special forces. Because of their covert nature, very little is usually said about them. It is often forgotten that they are ordinary people with families and are no different from anyone else. They are, however, highly trained, they have to take great risks and, as a fighting force, they are the envy of the world.

In Gibraltar the SAS showed great courage and determination. They had a difficult task and they carried it out within the law. I have no hesitation in saying that they are a credit to the country and I join in my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister's recent tribute to their bravery in going back to Gibraltar to give evidence at the inquest.

I must say that the Government made it clear all along that the inquest was the proper place for a full examination of the events of 6 March and that prior "trial by television" was highly undesirable. The facts as they emerged at the inquest have amply demonstrated that the television programme "Death on the Rock" was manifestly flawed with significant inaccuracies, casting a shameful slur for a number of months on the reputations of the soldiers concerned. The timing of the programme was, moreover, unjustified and prejudicial to potential jury members. I therefore very much welcome Thames Television's inquiry under Lord Windlesham into the making of the programme.

Mr. Eric S. Heffer (Liverpool, Walton): I find what the Minister says very interesting in relation to the overall debate on defence expenditure, but, as he is pursuing this matter, has the *Index on Censorship* been drawn to his attention? Over the years, that journal has concentrated on analysing undemocratic regimes in Eastern Europe and other parts of the world, but one of its recent editions analysed the failure of the Government to protect human and democratic rights in this country. Is he aware that that is a new departure for the *Index on Censorship* and that, in this respect, this country has the worst record in the West? We are increasingly finding that the Government are taking away our democratic rights step by step. It is the duty and responsibility of our defence forces to uphold democracy and not to allow the Government to undermine it.

Mr. Hamilton: I should have thought it was clear to any hon. Member that the people who are trying to undermine democracy here are the terrorists and that we must do everything we can to oppose their dastardly acts.

The terrorist attacks on the continent over the past year have reinforced the need for vigilance. I can assure the House that the safety of service personnel, wherever they are, is of paramount importance to this Government, and that we are taking all reasonable steps within our power to protect them. Service men and women are given regular and timely briefings on the level of the terrorist threat, and particular emphasis is put on practical steps which individuals can take to minimise the risks to their safety.

Much wider initiatives are being implemented. As I announced on 23 August, we have decided that service personnel, their families and British civilians working with British forces Germany should now use British civilian number plates on their private cars, as they do in this country. Action is well in hand to carry out this change as soon as possible. About 95,000 vehicles are involved, and to get the maximum benefit from this initiative the numbers must be issued randomly, so the change will inevitably take time. We aim, however, to complete the greater part of the changeover before the Christmas leave period begins.

Mr. John Wilkinson (Ruislip-Northwood): I have corresponded with my hon. Friend on this issue. Would it not be wise for the Ministry to encourage service personnel in Germany to buy German cars and register them locally rather than to drive British cars with British number plates, albeit not service plates, which are readily identifiable?

Mr. Hamilton: I take my hon. Friend's point. Most of our service men in Germany want to buy their cars there

so that they can enjoy the tax advantage of that arrangement. They then bring them back to Britain. They are under threat anyway when their cars are in bases, and we are trying to protect them when they are on the open road or coming across the Channel on the ferries.

Mr. Frank Cook (Stockton, North): Did the Ministry consider that the use of English number plates would identify service personnel as being fish in a different pond? Was it not considered possible to use United Nations plates, which would have allowed service personnel to enjoy tax concessions and an added degree of anonymity?

Mr. Hamilton: I am not sure whether the hon. Gentleman wishes to refer to United Nations plates or NATO plates. The use of NATO plates was an alternative that was considered, but it was thought that the IRA might decide to treat all members of NATO as targets. The cars bearing such plates would still have been identifiable when crossing the channel by ferry and on the open road away from British bases, with which we were mainly concerned.

Our primary defence commitment is, of course, NATO, and for that reason the actions of the Soviet Union are of the utmost importance. As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said yesterday, a fact that needs to be faced is that the recent Soviet rhetoric has yet to be matched by substantive action. It is therefore essential for us, and for NATO, to ensure that our conventional and nuclear forces are kept up to date.

People have now seen through the arguments of CND and those of the Opposition parties. The clear lesson of the INF treaty was that success in arms control comes from being able to negotiate from strength, not from weakness. This is not nuclearphilia, cold-war mongering or sabre rattling. NATO's nuclear stockpile in Europe has been reduced by about 35 per cent. since 1979 and now stands at its lowest level for over 20 years. There can be no clearer demonstration of our determination to maintain only the minimum forces necessary for effective deterrence.

Equally, however, those minimum forces must be effective and properly structured. Weapons that are seen to be outdated or ineffective simply serve no good purpose. Let there be no mistake, therefore. Now is not the time to drop our guard. The need to ensure that our defences are effective and up to date, as this Government have been doing for the past nine years, has not now gone away, even with such an important development as the INF treaty.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): My hon. Friend has just said that weapons that are outdated serve no useful purpose. Are not we reaching the stage now whereby the development of anti-tank missiles and the development of helicopter technology will render the tank a lump of metal constrained within small areas of the battlefield, totally vulnerable and irrelevant to future defence needs? If the Government, quite rightly, are going to spend money on defence, should it not be spent on aerial defence through helicopters rather than on these blundering great antiquities?

Mr. Hamilton: I have been aware for some time that my hon. Friend takes a jaundiced view of the future of the tank. He held the view when I was last a defence Minister about 18 months ago. His views have been taken into consideration by all those who are in the place where I work, and their view is that the tank still has a useful future.

Mr. Edward Leigh (Gainsborough and Horncastle): Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Hamilton: No, I shall not give way. I must bring my remarks to an end. I have undertaken to make a short speech.

The Government's defence policy since 1979 has been clear and unequivocal. I wish I could say the same of the Opposition's policy. Yesterday, they tabled two amendments to the Government's motion. One, in the name of the Leader of the Opposition, set out what he would like Labour policy to be. The other, in the names of the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) and other Members generally reckoned to belong to the hard Left of the Labour party, represents what Labour policy as agreed at the Labour party conference actually is. As usual, the Labour party is split on defence.

Let us make no mistake about this. Whether we consider the policies of the soft Left or the hard Left, they are equally dangerous and damaging to the security of the United Kingdom. Labour's defence policy has played a key role in losing it two general elections, and it looks to me as if it will sink it in the next one, too.

5.46 pm

Mr. Allan Rogers (Rhondda): First, I welcome the Minister's return to the Government Front Bench. I am sure that his recent stint as Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Prime Minister will fit him well for his post as Minister in charge of the SAS.

I join the Minister in the tributes that he has paid to our service men and women. They have played an important part in the defence of this country, and my right hon. and hon. Friends and I offer our gratitude and congratulations to all those whose professionalism and skill has contributed so much to the quality and image of our armed services. We have great regard for those who serve in Northern Ireland in most difficult circumstances. We heard last night from my hon. Friend the Member for Stockport, North (Mr. Cook) of the appalling conditions that some of our soldiers and service personnel generally have to endure, and I am sure that there may be ways of improving these conditions. I hope that the Secretary of State for Defence and the Minister will consider what my hon. Friend said and perhaps improve conditions.

We offer our condolences and sympathy to the families of those who have been killed over the past year in service for our country.

We understand that this year the Ministry of Defence begged for an extra £1·4 billion. That is money that the Secretary of State says is vital for our defence, but the claim has been turned down. We understand also that the hotel room, or bedroom, negotiations at Brighton have failed and that he has a somewhat smaller sum than that for which he argued. The right hon. Gentleman said yesterday that he was under severe financial constrictions and that he needed the additional money badly. Will he or the Minister let us know how he fared? Will one or other of them let us into the secret and tell us what the deal is so that we can comment on it? It would be interesting information. I am sure that the House would like to know the details of the deal.

The issue of Royal Ordnance sites was dealt with ably yesterday by my hon. Friends the Members for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) and for Renfrew, West and Inverclyde (Mr. Graham). They posed critical questions,

[Mr. Allan Rogers]

none of which was dealt with either by the Secretary of State or his property adviser, the Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement. Perhaps the questions will be answered today. There is extreme concern about the aura of connivance, corruption and irregularity that is beginning to surround the issue. I can assure the Minister and Conservative Back Benchers that the problem will not go away. Yesterday, the Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement claimed that there are major offsetting costs in relation to the two sites that are being sold. I intervened to ask whether he could provide details of these costs and he replied that

"it would be a waste of time to quantify the costs."—[*Official Report*, 19 October 1988; Vol. 138, c. 976.]

Why would it be a waste of time to quantify the costs? Will the Minister explain the reasoning behind that ludicrous statement? Surely the costs were important in assessing value or pricing when the Ministry of Defence was selling the Royal Ordnance sites. Are we to understand that Royal Ordnance was sold without an examination of both sides of the balance sheet? Why is it a waste of time to quantify these negative costs? Surely they should have been a vital factor in assessing what the asking price should be——

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement (Mr. Tim Sainsbury): The hon. Gentleman has only quoted one sentence of what I said last night. I reminded him then that, when trying to quantify costs, one has first to discover what costs are being quantified—what decontamination is required, what planning permission might be available, what development costs such as access roads and sewerage might be. Those things are not known; they are uncertain, and until they have been determined the costs cannot be quantified. All that we know for certain is that they are substantial.

Mr. Rogers: I have never heard so much codswallop in my life. Is the Minister suggesting that it is beyond his and his Department's wit to assess what the costs of access roads or of site development would be? Any developer who is going to develop land—whether previously developed or on a green field site—could come up with those costs. The Minister is merely illustrating his Department's incompetence in this matter.

The facts revealed in *The Independent* are as follows. There were two sites in the south-east, including the historic Enfield site. They were sold to British Aerospace on a valuation of £3·5 million, and are now worth £400 million. Representations were made by British Aerospace, in its desire to take over Royal Ordnance, to the effect that it would protect jobs. It has now reneged on that promise. These serious allegations strike at the heart of the Government's competence and integrity. They warrant a full and public inquiry. Will the Secretary of State or his Ministers now give the House an assurance that such a public inquiry will be held? I shall be happy to give way to them, should they want to do so. Their silence illustrates that they do not want an inquiry because of the incompetence that would be revealed—but the problem will not go away.

I also want the Minister to give us an assurance that he will co-operate fully with any Public Accounts Committee investigation into this matter. I see that he is nodding his assent, and I am glad of that. May we also have an assurance from the Minister that none of his officials who were involved in the sale will be employed by British Aerospace when they leave the MOD? Such a thing is not unknown.

In his wind-up speech yesterday the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement said that he sought to emulate Cato the Elder by using in every speech the phrase

"Value for money must be obtained"—[*Official Report*, 19 October 1988; Vol. 138, c. 973.]

The British taxpayer wishes that, when he sells off Royal Ordnance—and other public assets—he would espouse not "value for money" but getting "money for value"—the value of British assets which are being given away.

I want to concentrate on the management aspects of defence and of the defence economy: procurement, competition in procurement, the Government's so-called efficiency drive and the so-called monetary savings that have accrued to them from it. Those things bear directly on the operations and capability of our forces.

Procurement decisions lie at the heart of defence matters and are an area of defence that the Government do not particularly like having discussed. When pressed on such issues they retreat during discussion of the vital points behind the barricades of security or commercial confidentiality. That is why it suits them for the Opposition to have differences over the pace of nuclear disarmament. It is understandable that they should make much of those differences—one would expect nothing else from them. No one is in politics to help other parties, especially not the Conservatives, whose ethic is one of helping themselves. Our differences suit them because they shroud their deficiencies. They shroud their cut-backs, their overruns, their delays and their bad management of the defence economy. They give them an escape route from their failures. Apart from the activities of the Opposition and of some newspapers such as *The Independent*, discussion of the scandal of procurement mistakes, fraud and irregularities is going by default.

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): I hesitate to interject but thank my hon. Friend for allowing me to do so. As a member of the Select Committee on Defence I may say that we produced a substantial report on procurement and enjoyed substantial co-operation. Indeed, we could not have produced it without the MOD's co-operation. So I cannot really see how differences in the Labour party help the MOD to hide anything to do with this matter. The MOD was forthcoming in its replies, which substantiated virtually everything that the Select Committee said.

Mr. Rogers: I thank my hon. Friend for his timely and helpful intervention.

While this might be excusable in some parties, it is surely not excusable in the Tory party, the party of big business. Conservatives pride themselves—we hear this every day—on being the shrewd, hard City slickers, the tough streetwise people who are capable of taking tough decisions. When the last Secretary of State for Defence was appointed, the then Minister of State said in a defence debate at the time that it was nice to have a Secretary of State who knew his way around the business world. Let us grant the Tories the fact that they are shrewd, hard City slickers, capable of taking tough decisions that affect nurses, hospitals, the sick and needy, and child benefit. But

when it comes to defence they fail lamentably to take the tough, hard decisions that are required for the defence of this country.

I want to speak briefly about the Government's spending proposals, and in doing so to pay tribute to the Select Committee on Defence for highlighting much of what was wrong about these Defence Estimates. The Government say there is no need for a defence review and that all commitments and roles will be maintained—the forward defence of West Germany, the protection of the east Atlantic, the defence of the United Kingdom home base, Northern Ireland, Polaris and Trident, out-of-area operations, the Falklands garrison and sea and air bridge. But many hon. Members on both sides now say that we cannot maintain these commitments and carry out these roles without an increase in expenditure. Yet expenditure is falling in real terms. On the Government's figures it will fall by more than 7 per cent. in real terms between 1986 and 1989.

The Government gave a commitment—carried on from a commitment made in May 1977 by the Labour Government, as was pointed out yesterday by my hon Friend the Member for Sheffield, Attercliffe (Mr. Duffy) —to 3 per cent. growth a year in real terms. In practice we know that that 3 per cent. growth has not taken place since the Falklands episode. Defence spending has fallen considerably in recent years, it is still falling and it will continue to fall. As table 1 of the Select Committee's report on the 1988 Estimates shows, in 1979 defence as a share of GDP was 4·5 per cent. In 1987-88 it was also 4·5 per cent., but in 1990-91 it will be only 4 per cent. There has been no extra effort or allocation made by the Government. In other words, defence is receiving a diminishing share of a larger cake.

Mr. Keith Mans (Wyre): Does the hon. Member for Rhondda (Mr. Rogers) agree that the reason the Defence Estimates have stayed the same in terms of GNP is because of the growth in the British economy? In terms of real increases in defence expenditure, the figure is substantially higher today than it was in 1979.

Mr. Rogers: Yes, but in real terms the figure has fallen. [HON. MEMBERS: "No".] I will not engage in some puerile argument. I suggest that Conservative Members look at the Estimates, where it will be seen that, as a share of GDP, the amount of money being spent on defence is less than in 1979. I am glad that the Minister says that is right, and perhaps he should give a lesson to his hon. Friends.

That trend should also be viewed against a background of increasing inflation. In its observations on the buying power of the defence budget and on the relative price effect, the Select Committee observed that the budget takes no account of recent and continuing inflation. They are rises that will decrease spending in real terms over the next few years.

Another factor highlighted by the Select Committee was the generation-on-generation cost increases to which my hon. Friend the Member for Clackmannan referred yesterday.

The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. George Younger): I am sure that the hon. Gentleman would wish to give the House the complete picture. I am sure that he would not like to have said all that he has without adding that, nevertheless, the level of defence spending today is some 20 per cent. higher in real terms than it was under the last Labour Government. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman would want the complete picture to be before the House.

Mr. Rogers: The figure is still 8 per cent. less than in 1984. My argument does not depend on historicial comparisons with 1979, 1945, or 1920. My comparisons are with recent history. More importantly—and it is typical of the Government and of some of their not so bright supporters to ignore this fact—the real argument is about what is to be spent in the next three or four years. Everyone will agree that defence spending is falling.

I return to my argument concerning generation-on-generation cost increases, which concerns the factor by which the cost of a new generation of defence equipment exceeds the cost of its predecessor in real terms. The Select Committee commented that,

"there is every reason to believe that it is increasing substantially."

As we know, the type 22 frigate is costing about four times as much as the Leander. That will have a significant negative effect on the Estimates, and it is one that the Government are not redressing. That is not surprising, because we see exactly the same phenomenon in the Health Service, where the Government's reaction is exactly the same. Their response, as we have heard today, is, "We're spending more money," and a refusal to acknowledge, as is demonstrated in their own figures, that they are spending a diminishing amount of an expanding GDP.

As a result, the technologies have a substantial negative effect on the rest of the Department's expenditure. That is why service men's pay, like nurses' pay, is suffering. It is also why service men, like nurses, are voting with their feet. One hon. Member who spoke yesterday made mention of the Royal Air Force pilots who are leaving to take jobs with civil airlines, and he put his finger right on the problem. Terms, conditions and pay outside are far better than those which service men currently have. The Select Committee was right to point out that awards must now be found from within the defence budget. In other words, "You can have the pay rise if the money is there to fund it." It must be a matter of great concern to right hon. and hon. Members in all parts of the House that the number of skilled and trained personnel of all ranks and abilities who are leaving the Royal Air Force is steadily increasing. The level of pilot loss from the Royal Air Force is causing substantial concern.

Yesterday, the Secretary of State for Defence and the Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement spoke of competition for procurement. May I ask them to harden up that comment and also to remove some of the wooliness from the comments made by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement earlier. The Secretary of State does not know how much is being saved. On 30 June 1986, he stated:

"As the Select Committee rightly observed, it is, of course, difficult to quantify the precise savings that we make."

He went on to say that,

"nobody knows what we would have had to pay in the absence of competition."—[*Official Report*, 30 June 1986; Vol. 100, c. 714.]

The Secretary of State was right. Nobody knows what can be saved—not the Secretary of State and not the Procurement Executive. It is a farce. What the Government are claiming is not really verifiable.

[Mr. Rogers]

We all know about MOD estimates. Presumably they can be set at any convenient level. Certainly they have been in the past. The Select Committee rumbled that fact. It stated:

"First, there is the problem of estimating what MoD would have paid for an item if it had not been competitively procured."

The permanent under-secretary of state rejected the suggestion that what may appear to be good competition might have been bad estimating. He went on to state:

"What you have to safeguard against is deliberately inflating the estimates so that the eventual figure looks good."

I must admit that the thought had occurred to us, too.

I do not believe that the Secretary of State knows what he is really saying. In the 1986 debate, he tried a little harder at a later point, when he commented:

"The introduction of competition for the supply of missile pallets,"—

and I am not sure how big or small are missile pallets—

"which we had previously bought non-competitively, has led to the price being cut by half."

I accept what was said by the Minister, and the logical conclusion of his statement—and it was his statement, not mine—is that previously we had been overcharged, either honestly or dishonestly. If that is the case—and the Secretary of State appears to be amused, so certainly he is not resenting my comments—let the right hon. Gentleman say how much of the money from that honest or dishonest fraud has been recovered. What action, if any, has been taken against the firms that overcharged? Are they still MoD contractors? Why is it that those fraud investigations are taking so long? If there is so much money to be saved, why do not the Government post-cost all non-competitive contracts instead of the miserable percentage that are currently being post-costed?

Procurement fraud is a recurring theme in the history of the British defence industry. No doubt certain villainous shipwrights attempted to defraud the taxpayer when fitting out Sir Francis Drake's fleet. More recent scandals included the excess profits made by Ferranti on open-ended contracts for the Bloodhound missiles in the 1960s. They were discovered and Ferranti was forced to make a repayment, although nobody went to prison for perpetrating that massive fraud on the British taxpayer.

In the past 12 months, the biggest potential scandal has been the possible multi-million pound frauds carried out by Marconi. The Marconi investigation has been going on for more than 12 months. There are only seven other possible frauds currently under investigation, so why is the Marconi inquiry taking so long? Is it because the number of officers in the MOD's serious crime squad is only 28? Why is that so, when there are thousands of social security investigators probing people who have defrauded the DHSS of only £5 or £10—while the big boys in the City are getting away with murder? Do the Government accept the recommendation of the Public Accounts Committee that a telephone hotline be established for whistle-blowers on contract fraudsters? Have they ever paid any compensation to the whistle-blowers who have been sacked while helping to save British taxpayers millions of pounds? No.

For many people the distinction between irregularity and fraud is difficult to discern; nevertheless, the Ministry of Defence, for some peculiar reason, insists on such a difference. Over the past 14 years, the main irregularity —so we are told—has been contractors overcharging without—we have been told—dishonest intention. Between 1972 and 1985, 1,100 contracts were re-examined or post-costed, and in 114 of those cases refunds were secured, totalling approximately £30 million.

The first question that I should like to ask the Secretary of State is this: why does the MOD admit that only a small percentage of contracts are post-costed? A second and more important question is why the irregularities occurred. We are told by the Department that administrative difficulties lead to such irregularities. If that is the case, why do those administrative difficulties always result in overcharging, never in undercharging? There can never be a mistake for the benefit of the taxpayer. Mistakes are always for the benefit of big business—the friends of the Tories.

Are not the Tories a little suspicious about the fact that the contractors are always overcharging? I think that they ought to be. Mr. Peter Levene, the chief of the Procurement Executive, is suspicious; if he is, why is not the Secretary of State? Why does the Minister of State find it amusing that I should bring to his attention such gross frauds on the British taxpayer? Oh, yes, it is a very laughable position. We have just heard the Government refusing to help pensioners over the Barlow Clowes affair. They say that they cannot pay compensation to them—that they cannot recover and pay out taxpayers' money —but they will allow taxpayers to be robbed by big business.

Mr. Peter Levene has said that he feels that the penalties for overcharging are not large enough. He has said that he wants to be charged on money that the contractor has to repay. The Government refuse to implement his suggestion. Why? Why will they not act on the recommendation of their senior officer? Can the Secretary of State explain it? It is obvious that the problems of fraud and irregularity will not be cleared up by a Government who will never reveal the cosy relationship between defence contractors and the MOD, and between big business and the Tory party.

Let us leave procurement and equipment. The Government next tried to make great play of presenting an aura of efficiency, suggesting that they had saved considerably on manpower while still alleging that the services were not merely maintaining capability but extending and increasing it. The Estimates state:

"The programme"—

of manpower cuts, that is—

"will enable us to improve our front-line capability, without any increase in total manpower".

Let us have a look at that proposition. Let us examine what is happening to the Royal Navy, for example. The Government have stated that since 1981 the proportion of Royal Navy personnel serving on the front line or immediately in its support has increased to 70 per cent. From what has it increased? Was it 69·5 per cent. last year? That is a rather nonsensical statement.

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Rogers: I shall do so later.

The Estimates then state that the services' uniformed strength has been reduced by more than 8,000. Indeed it has: we now have 8,000 fewer sailors. That is nothing to be proud of.

Mr. Bill Walker *rose*——

Mr. Rogers: I have told the hon. Gentleman that I will give way to him afterwards. If he will stop bleating I shall do so, but he really must wait until I have finished.

The Royal Navy also contains 28,000 fewer civilians. Its manpower strength has fallen by 36,000 since the Government came to power. It is shrinking in manpower as well as ships.

Mr. Bill Walker: The hon. Gentleman is showing the House very clearly his complete ignorance of defence matters. Does he not realise that the purchase of modern, sophisticated equipment means that fewer people are required to operate it? We require fewer pilots today than were required to defend the United Kingdom 20 or 40 years ago, because we have much more expensive sophisticated equipment flown by much more highly skilled and trained individuals. Fewer people are doing a much more effective job.

Mr. Rogers: I was just coming to that point, and I thank the hon. Gentleman for providing me with an introduction. I am sure that he can well remember 40 years ago.

In order to obscure the truth, the Estimates state—and now I am coming to the point that the hon. Gentleman is bleating about—

"Less manpower-intensive ships are also being introduced into the Fleet; for example, on current plans, the crew of a Type 23 will be two-thirds of that needed in a Type 22."

I am sure that the Secretary of State consulted the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) when he drew up the Estimates. But the hon. Gentleman cannot get away with that now, and neither can the Secretary of State. We are not going to let them get away with it. They have been rumbled by the Select Committee, and they are twisting and wriggling.

The past and present falls in manpower that we see in the Estimates, and which the Secretary of State and the hon. Member for Tayside, North are talking about, have nothing to do with the ordering of ships. We have no type 23 frigates, and we shall not have any until next year. We shall not get the rest of them until the late 1990s. The Select Committee rumbled that. It said:

"The quotation above might have its place in the SDE 91 or 92, but it carries little conviction this year."

It does not carry much truth either. The Secretary of State ought not to produce estimates containing statements that are manifestly untrue and simply seek to obscure the truth.

Mr. Leigh: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Rogers: No, I am afraid that my time is limited. Other hon. Members want to speak.

The same tale applies to the Army and the Air Force: cutbacks and more cutbacks, with the same allegations of increased capability and efficiency. The Select Committee is right to point out to us—I ask hon. Members to read the report—that the services are being overstretched, with commanders having to do more with less, a greater burden being imposed on individual service men, front-line manpower having to take on additional tasks and skilled men having to carry out less sophisticated ones. That is the problem of the Government's cutback in manpower. Our front-line service men have not the capability to carry out their tasks.

We would require another debate to talk about the mismanagement of procurement. The list of delays—or what the Select Committee has called "fairly widespread slippage"—is a long list indeed. Time prevents me from going into detail. but we need only look for examples to find them. There is the £288 million overspend on the Rapier, the £40 million overspend on the Harrier GR5, the £260 million overspend on the ALARM system and its slippage of several years. There is the three-year delay in bringing the Foxhunter radar into service, which has resulted in 32 Tornado fighters being put into storage. The £17 million spent on the command system was wasted, meaning that our type 23 frigates, when they actually go to sea, will not have a computer-automated command system allowing them to operate with full effectiveness.

I could go on for a long time about procurement delays, but it would be wrong for me to leave the debate without referring to the sorry plight of the merchant navy, to which my hon. Friend the Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas) referred yesterday. The Select Committee has brought the problems to the Government's attention. Suffice it to say that the merchant navy, both in ships and men, is an extremely vulnerable part of our defences.

This debate is one of the few opportunities to examine the Government's stewardship of defence matters. Once again this year the Government are talking big and acting small. The cuts, delays and mismanagement mean that our defence commitment and roles are there only in name. If we were called upon to fulfil those roles, to honour our commitments, we would be found sorely lacking. That is the main basis of the Opposition's criticism of the Government.

6.20 pm

Mr. Julian Amery (Brighton, Pavilion): When the hon. Member for Rhondda (Mr. Rogers) came to the Dispatch Box I had not expected him to press for more defence expenditure. I had not expected him to criticise the shortfall in real terms in what we have been spending. I am sure that all that he has said on that will be a great help to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and his colleagues when they present their dossier to the Star Chamber. His speech will be honoured in the file that is put before the Secretary of State for Energy.

Of course, it was natural and right that he should try to avoid—I shall not say "evade" because it is a bad word—the great strategic issue that has divided his party by dwelling primarily on procurement. But it was a bit of bad luck that his hon. Friend the Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas) intervened. It stuck in his hon. Friend's gullet to accept that the Government really have been quite decent in making information on procurement available to the Select Committee.

The whole subject of defence is weighty and grave. Just occasionally there is a ray of light which relieves it. I want to start my remarks by saluting the brilliant young German pilot who managed to land an aircraft in Red square. If I had to nominate anyone for the Nobel prize, he would be the one. He made monkeys out of all the top brass in the Soviet Union; and I hope that our top brass will have considered whether the same thing might have happened over here.

We have to try to reconcile two developments. There clearly has been a major change in the Soviet Union's foreign policy. General Secretary Brezhnev tried to export the internal problems of the Soviet Union by expansion. Afghanistan, Angola, Aden, Ethiopia and Nicaragua were all symptoms of that. It now seems that President

[Mr. Julian Amery]

Gorbachev wishes to change that policy, convinced as he has become that expansion does not solve the problems. Brezhnev used to talk about seizing the oil of the Gulf as the minerals of southern Africa. Well, that has not worked. It has proved to be a no-win operation, as Mr. Gorbachev appears to recognise.

At the same time, as my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State pointed out yesterday, the deployment of Soviet forces on the ground shows that they are just about the same as they were under Mr. Brezhnev—perhaps a little more sinister, because they are being modernised.

Therefore, there is a problem here. The conclusion that we must clearly draw is that our foreign policy must be as flexible as possible, seizing every nuance of improvement in what the Soviet leaders say, and even appear to do. But our defence policy must mirror and reflect exactly the situation on the ground. It may be that Mr. Gorbachev's concentration on reconstruction inside the Soviet Union will lead to disarmament. It may mean that he is prepared to beat the swords into ploughshares. But that is a slow process. Making swords, as I know from my experience in procurement, is slow, and to turn them into civil equipment is equally slow. If there is to be a real reconstruction in the Soviet Union, it will mean the transfer of its best managers and scientists from the defence industries to the civil industries.

Therefore, my right hon. Friend is right to go on as we are. There could be a reversion in the Soviet Union to the policy of externalising internal problems, and we would be fools if we built our defence policy on hopes as distinct from facts.

Even taking a hopeful view, we have to recognise that changes are not only taking place in the Soviet Union. Whatever the outcome of the American presidential elections in November, I suspect that there will be great pressure in the United States to limit its overseas commitment to Europe. I do not think that it will abandon its commitment. I do not think that it will abandon our allies. But, over the years, it has carried a disproportionate amount of the burden, and with its trade and fiscal deficits we must expect that it will reduce its effort, particularly as problems are increasing at the other end of the world—the Pacific rim—where it is, economically, financially and security-wise, as interested as it is in Europe.

Therefore, we in Europe will have to fill any gaps that may arise. This is not the occasion to go into what kind of European union we want—I shall have plenty to say on that subject in another debate—but I think that we are all agreed that there will be a European union. That comes out just as much in the Prime Minister's speeches as in others. Therefore, we must give thought to how, collectively, we Europeans will protect and promote the joint interests that we are in the process of forming. Protection and promotion mean defence, and there is a gaping hole in the heart of it. Europe cannot be defended without France, and France, although an Atlantic ally, refuses to take part in the defence organisation that has been created for the defence of Europe. President Mitterrand re-emphasised that in a speech the other day.

Frankly, I think that the French are mistaken. I can understand that, when the Americans were in a position of hegemony, when they dominated the European scene, General de Gaulle felt uneasy about it But that is not the situation today. The Americans are asking, almost begging, us to play a bigger part than we do. Therefore, I think that the French are wrong, but we must live in the world as it is. Interesting Franco-German defence agreements are being made. I hope that there are an increasing number of Anglo-French and Anglo-German projects under review. But, somehow, all that wants bringing together.

Since 1946 I have been a believer in Europe. I am the last survivor of the little group that sat with Churchill in the autumn of 1946 and decided to start the European movement. Would not the best way be to put more weight into the Western European Union? That was, after all, a British conception. It was launched by Anthony Eden when the French rejected the idea of German rearmament. We persuaded them to agree to German rearmament by committing a corps and a tactical air force to the continent on a permanent basis. Our concept was simple, and its importance is only now beginning to become clear. There was a memorandum that persuaded Eden that we needed two boxes—a box to keep the Russians out, which was NATO, and a box to keep the Germans in, which was the Western European Union. That is what we went for.

I do not think that boosting the WEU will weaken the American commitment. The Americans are in Europe because it is in their interests to be in Europe. A very big European effort indeed would be needed before the Americans could feel safe enough to withdraw massively from Europe. However, if we strengthened the WEU, that might anchor West Germany still more firmly into the western European family. That is important, at a time when the siren voices of neutralism are being heard quite loudly in different parts of Germany.

There is another reason why it is important to strengthen the WEU. If the bipolar world—the world that has been dominated by the two super-powers—is to recede, though I am not sure that it will, and if a more multipolar world is to take its place, we must expect problems to arise for states that were previously subordinated to the two great alliances. Even during the time of the bipolar world, that has been happening. The Falklands and the Iran-Iraq wars are examples, but new crises may arise between countries that are now less subordinated to the two super-powers.

The newspapers are full of stories about Serbian nationalism. I do not intend to weary the House by discussing that problem, apart from recalling that world war I started with an outburst of Serbian nationalism that culminated in the assassination of the archduke. The Balkans are still a possible powder keg. So is the middle east, so is Africa. Europe will not be the policeman of the world—at least, I hope not—but Europe has worldwide interests and it is our duty to protect and promote those interests. The Gulf war demonstrated that fact.

When my right hon. Friends consider their defence policy, I beg them to keep seriously in mind the importance of the Western European Union. We need to keep the Germans in the western bloc and strengthen the European pillar of the Atlantic alliance. We need an organisation in which we can give thought to how European interests outside the area can best be protected and promoted.

6.33 pm

Mr. Menzies Campbell (Fife, North-East): Unexpectedly, I found that I was unable to be present for the opening speeches yesterday evening. I have written to the Secretary of State and to the hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill), who opened the debate for the Opposition, offering apologies for my absence.

Throughout the debate generous tribute has been paid to those who serve in our armed forces. I am happy to associate myself with that tribute. However, I wish to pay a particular tribute to those who perform search and rescue operations around the coasts of the United Kingdom. I have a particular constituency interest in that matter, but it is also a matter of national significance. Many hon. Members will know that a review of such operations is taking place. The Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces who is to reply to the debate knows of my particular interest in the apprehension that is felt about the future of the search and rescue operations at RAF Leuchars in my constituency. A flight of 22 Squadron, flying Wessex helicopters, provides that search and rescue facility.

Until this year, 138 missions have been flown and 98 people have been rescued. On average, 90 per cent. of rescues are civilian rescues. On a daily basis, the pilots and their accompanying observers and winchmen have to display great skill and courage—almost always in very unpleasant and dangerous conditions. As we have heard, a review is taking place. Some of us, including the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker), who has taken a keen interest in the matter, had hoped that before the debate we might be told the precise result of that review.

The Minister was extremely courteous when he listened to what we had to say. In particular, he received from Fife a delegation comprising the district council, the regional council and me. We welcomed that, but we should welcome all the more a decision that the existing service is to be retained.

Mr. Bill Walker: I do not want anybody to think that it is only in Fife that the civic authorities are concerned about this matter. The hon. and learned Gentleman knows that he has the full support of Tayside in all the efforts that are being made to retain the Wessex helicopter squadron. Many of the rescues are carried out in Tayside, and it is fair to say that the majority of those rescues take place in my constituency.

Mr. Campbell: The Minister will be in no doubt about the strength of feeling at every level of government in central Scotland about the issue.

The Government's announcement of February 1988, to the effect that search and rescue would be retained so long as there was a military requirement for it, has not alleviated much of the concern. I do not expect the Minister to tell us today about the results of the review, but can he say when he will be able to give us the results? Since the review has not yet, I presume, been completed, I can do no better than to refer him to the last sentence of paragraph 10.6 of the seventh report of the Select Committee. It says that

"the withdrawal of SAR facilities from Leuchars would mean that large areas of central Scotland would have no daylight SAR coverage within an hour from call out."

The last sentence of the following paragraph is in heavy type, which I suppose means that it is emphasised. It says:

"It would not be acceptable for military SAR facilities to be withdrawn from RAF Leuchars without there being a requirement that any civilian facilities should use aircraft as capable, and have readiness states and back-up at least as good, as those provided by the military."

I intend also to refer briefly to the closure of the Royal Ordnance factory at Bishopton. The case concerning the property elements of that closure have already been eloquently deployed. Last night the hon. Member for Renfrew, West and Inverclyde (Mr. Graham) spoke most movingly about the consequences of the closure to his constituents. However, my concern relates to the possible strategic consequences of that closure. I understand that Bishopton is the United Kingdom's prime manufacturer of gun propellants and that it has a unique nitroglycerine manufacturing facility. It employs 1,100 skilled, experienced and loyal workers.

What consideration has been given to the consequences to our defence capability if the factory goes out of production? What assurances have the Government received about continued production and supply? And is it really true that we might find ourselves, in extremis, having to rely on foreign manufacturers? At best that would make us vulnerable. At worst it would put us at severe risk.

Tribute has already been paid to the Select Committee's work. I can do no more than say that in its consideration of the Royal Navy's surface fleet, in its sixth report to the House, that tribute is more than amply justified. It behoves all of us to read that report and the Government's response to it and form a judgment as to where the truth lies. I do not understand the Select Committee to have changed its conclusions because of the terms of the response. Perhaps it was hardly encouraged to do so when the Government's practical response to its report was to order three new type 23 frigates.

I ask the Government to take account of the fact that great uncertainty surrounds shipyards such as Yarrow and Swan Hunter as a result of the Government's current shipbuilding programme. Building the ships that the Royal Navy requires necessarily involves high levels of investment and skill. To justify such investment and to maintain such skills there must be long-term orders or at least an expectation of them. Skills are frequently difficult to acquire but easy to lose.

There is also uncertainty about helicopters. On 9 April 1987, the Secretary of State for Defence announced an intention to place an order with Westland for 25 utility EH101 helicopters for delivery in the early 1990s. The EH101 is a basic design. Since the announcement, the Ministry of Defence has, I understand, attempted to define its detailed requirements and may even now be embarking on project definition studies. The result is that 1995 is probably the earliest achievable delivery date.

I am sure that I am not the only hon. Member to have received representations on this matter, but I must tell the House that the company views the delays with considerable concern. I hope that the Minister can give the company some comfort today and assure it that further delays are unlikely.

It is inconceivable that the secure defence of the United Kingdom can be ensured other than through our membership of NATO. For the foreseeable future, NATO will be a nuclear alliance. I find myself in almost total agreement with the right hon. Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Mr. Amery); any contact with officials or politicians in the United States makes it clear that,

[Mr. Campbell]

whoever wins the presidential election next month, the issue of a greater European contribution will undoubtedly be on the agenda. There is a risk of overemphasising the United States position. I do not believe that there is any mood of isolationism, but there is a mood of realism brought about by financial circumstances there, particularly the budget deficit.

We cannot ignore the possible political consequences of the economic changes of 1992. There are undoubtedly uncertainties in that connection, but there may be opportunities as well. A more integrated Europe might find itself compelled and encouraged to make a greater contribution to its own defence. It is clear, however, that, by 1992, all but £1·8 billion of the expenditure on Trident will have been incurred. Just as Polaris could not be towed out to sea and sunk—which I think was suggested at one stage—we will not be able to switch Trident off as if it were a conveyor belt. Whichever party is in government by 1992, it will have Trident effectively, if not completely, in place.

No matter what is said in the debate or outside the House, the party that forms the Government in 1992 will not unilaterally remove Trident. The intermediate nuclear forces treaty has changed all that and the debate in 1992 will be about keeping a strategic nuclear deterrent in the United Kingdom or being willing to dispose of it if one is satisfied that that is safe. It is wrong to think that that debate will necessarily be domestic, because if the United States and the Soviet Union achieve a START I treaty and move on to START II, it is almost certain that there will be great pressure on the United Kingdom to put her weapons on the table.

Leaving aside the difficult question whether we should own or lease the missiles, we cannot ignore the fact that the United States might, because of its commitment to START II, be unwilling to remain co-operative in those respects in which the United Kingdom relies on it for the servicing of missiles.

It was not always popular in my party to be in favour of deployment of cruise missiles. There was a curiosity in the opinion polls of the time—they showed that a majority of people opposed cruise but favoured retaining the independent nuclear deterrent. The Government take great credit for the INF treaty. It is partly justified, but the issue is not quite as simple as they claim. It is clear, however, that if there had been unilateral withdrawal of cruise missiles during the time of Mr. Brezhnev it is unlikely that there would have been any response.

My criticism of the Government is that they seem to be unduly pessimistic. I accept the need for caution in these matters but caution and optimism need not be mutually exclusive. We must accept that Trident will effectively be in position by the next general election. The weapon's life goes beyond the end of the century. It is highly unlikely that any Government will be capable of removing or be willing to remove Trident unilaterally. If a safe means of arms reduction can be arrived at without prejudice to our safety, we should adopt it, but there can be no reduction unless there is satisfaction, in so far as one can be satisfied, that our safety will not be prejudiced.

6.46 pm

Dr. Alan Glyn (Windsor and Maidenhead): I should like to pay tribute to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence and his colleagues for the excellent colour and quality of the Estimates.

Defence consists of strategy and tactics. Strategy is the ability to estimate the strength of one's enemy now and in the future. Tactics are through NATO and the flexible and dual response and the retention of Trident.

We all welcome the historic summit between President Reagan and Mr. Gorbachev in December 1987. We note that it might be the first step towards some form of arms reduction, both conventional and atomic. We must remember, however, that in the same month as that summit, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister met Mr. Gorbachev at Brize Norton, where bilateral negotiations were made possible. We should give credit to our Prime Minister for that, and it was a step in the right direction.

We all know that the Warsaw pact has more than 3:1 superiority in artillery, 2:1 superiority in tactical aircraft and hundreds of thousands of chemical weapons. It also has nuclear warheads targeted towards NATO. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has always maintained that until we can get a lasting and satisfactory disarmament agreement, we must retain our nuclear deterrent. I entirely agree with her.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Mr. Amery) mentioned the United States. I agree with him that they have problems on their doorstep in central and south America. They sometimes chide us and say that we should spend more on defence, but I think that they will always be our main ally in NATO—let us hope so.

Mr. Gorbachev has achieved an incredible victory in his own country by beating the conventional Communist clique. He realises that unless he can achieve a powerful industrial and agricultural output he has no future. With such a background, it would be possible to pay for increased arms production. Let us not forget that the Soviet Union is increasing arms production day by day.

There is also the possibility that the satellites, on which Mr. Gorbachev places so much importance, could either give him difficulties or strength, according to their wish. Their will and their degree of independence—and their independent views—have already become apparent to the world. A change in leadership could mean an alteration of policy.

I shall now turn to what I regard as one of the most dangerous things happening now. Hostile relations between Russia and China have resulted in at least 500,000 troops being stationed on the Sino-Soviet frontier. If an agreement was made between those two countries—and it looks as if there will be one—we would be faced with an estimated 500,000 troops who could be deployed under the Warsaw pact. Far more importantly, if that agreement was to go even further and there was a military alliance between Russia and China, we should be faced with one of the most powerful combinations and an enormous defence problem. That is why it is terribly important that we should always anticipate that possibility in our defence strategy.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Westmorland and Lonsdale (Mr. Jopling) said yesterday that we should anticipate possible and future alignments and that we should always ensure that we have sufficient in our

armoury to defend ourselves. That is why reductions must be verified, and must, at the same time, not reduce in any way our ability to make our contribution to NATO and our own defences. I referred to the United States earlier. It will always play its part in Europe.

I wish to speak next about the Reserve. I welcome the national employer liaison committee, although I am not sure whether it will work, because of factors beyond the Government's control. The Government will have to think again about how we can build up a sufficiently strong Reserve and Territorial Army that can take its place in NATO and fulfil its essential commitments in the defence of this country.

I thank my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces for coming down to Victoria barracks and helping me. I hope that he does not have to face the Star Chamber for long when it comes to rebuilding the barracks. We visited the Life Guards together on the way and learnt two lessons there. One important lesson that we learnt was that the versatility of the Army today is quite incredible. The second lesson was appreciating the difficulties of manning equipment such as tanks that are highly sophisticated and require a great deal of training. One has to balance sophistication and training to ensure that there are enough men to absorb the complicated technology that is now incorporated in almost all weapons.

I fully support the Government. I support their retention of Trident and I support almost everything that they say in the defence review. I hope that this country will be able to play its part not only in NATO and in other parts of the world that people tend to forget, but that we shall be able to assist in the process of world disarmament.

6.54 pm

Mr. A. E. P. Duffy (Sheffield, Attercliffe): The Defence Estimates before the House represent a reduction in real terms of 2·6 per cent. a year. Inevitably, hon. Members yesterday expressed anxiety about how long the Government can keep the lid on defence spending while meeting current commitments. The Secretary of State for Defence himself admitted that difficult choices cannot be avoided.

Yet the existing gap is nothing like the chasm that is likely to open up between commitments and resources in the next few years. The scale of some forthcoming procurement decisions will prevent the Secretary of State from finding relief in slippage, cutting some marginal tasks out of area or the more efficient management of procurement. It is little wonder that a leader in *The Daily Telegraph* this summer described the "Statement on the Defence Estimates 1988" as

"bland and . . . self-congratulatory as ever"

or that Mr. Leon Brittan, in his pamphlet "Defence and Arms Control in a Changing Society", said:

"The Government should not put off a wide-ranging review of defence policy."

We are witnessing once again the syndrome that existed in the 1970s, which was so soundly criticised by Conservative Members when they were in opposition, as well as by this Administration when they came to power. In the 1970s, the resources that successive Governments were prepared to justify to Parliament were never quite sufficient to meet the commitments and capabilities that those Governments equally thought it necessary to maintain. I experienced that phase when I was on the Treasury Bench, but I was part of the Government who eventually took steps to match resources with commitments.

Whereas in the 1970s commitments were pruned—as they were following the 1974 review; there is no doubt about that—they have now been kept at roughly the same level for the past six years, and in certain cases even increased. At the same time, we are edging into a very expensive phase of procurement, involving, for example, the completion of the Tornado programme, the arrival of Trident, the replacement of the aging Chieftains, the maintenance of amphibious capability and the development of the European fighter aircraft—not to mention a large and increasing number of quite unnerving cost overruns to be found in table 2 of the Estimates. Yet competitive tendering actually fell over the past year, as is also revealed in table 2.

The outcome is bound to have a harmful effect on training, activity and professional standards, governed as they are by such factors as petrol, spare parts and ammunition—the only respects on which money can be saved in the short term. In consequence, there is an effect on morale and retention rates, which are already worsening quite significantly, as was confirmed in our exchanges yesterday. That is the natural consequence of overstretch and curtailment of activity.

Let us consider briefly the three services. The role of the Royal Navy cannot be filled by any other ally. Nevertheless, the Navy will account for only £2·5 billion of the Estimates, compared with the more than £4 billion that is to be spent on British forces in the central region. Hon. Members on both sides of the House must be concerned, therefore, that doubts should continue to arise year after year about the size and effectiveness of the fleet, especially in view of its NATO-assigned role and the escalating size and power of the Soviet navy. NATO is a maritime alliance; the Warsaw pact is not. Yet the Government's inadequate provision for the Navy is something to which every independent expert bears witness. Plainly, that provision is now inadequate to allow us to discharge our NATO role, much less continue to meet out-of-area commitments. SACLANT says that he is now 45 per cent. short of the escorts that he needs and the Commander-in-Chief, Fleet does not have adequate operational assets, according to the Select Committee on Defence.

The surface fleet of destroyers and frigates numbers "about 50", the Ministry of Defence says—in itself a change from the previous absolute commitment to 50 ships. Currently, there are 13 destroyers and 35 frigates available—48 vessels. But of these, three destroyers and 11 frigates are in refit, on trial or being used for training, leaving just 34 operational. In other words, almost all the Nott proposals of June 1981, to which both sides of the House were then opposed, have been achieved by 1988. Nott recommended only two carriers, and we are just about to mothball one. We do not have the men to run the carrier that is about to be mothballed.

Caught out by the statement on the Defence Estimates in 1988 by the Select Committee, the Secretary of State rushed to announce the ordering of three more type 23 frigates. Yet he invited tenders for four frigates just a year ago. That is an example of slippage. Because the defence statement is so professional—look at it, Mr. Deputy Speaker—because it is so glossy and so presentational, seemingly full of information, graphs and essays, it is so

[Mr. A. E. P. Duffy]

potentially lulling, comforting and even deceiving. The only way in which hon. Members can deal with it is really to study it—as most demonstrably do not, as can be seen from debates year after year—and ask questions.

With the greatest respect to the Minister who opened the debate, we got the kind of speech that we get every year under this Administration—a long speech that bears little relation to the subject. What he had to say is very important but it can be said under two other departmental headings. What we are here to do—we cannot do otherwise—is to discuss the statement. The best way in which we can address it is to raise questions.

That is the best way in which hon. Members can assist the ongoing debate on defence—to go on raising questions such as what is the present age structure of the surface fleet? How many vessels are operational, in dockyard hands or on disposal lists? We do not always have up-to-date information on what ships are on disposal lists. How many of the minesweeper orders planned under a £1 billion modernisation scheme will be completed by the 1995 deadline? How many type 23 frigate orders are envisaged by 1991, before, as my hon. Friend the Member for Rhondda (Mr. Rogers) reminded us, they are overtaken by the NFR90 programme? Is it true that the first two type 23s will probably sail without an effective central command and control system? That was the whole purpose of the type 23 programme, because, of course, the NFR90 ships will have another role to play. Above all, why is British sea power apparently more highly prized by the Kuwaiti Government than by Her Majesty's Government?

The Army, according to *The Economist* on 27 May this year, "is seriously underequipped". The problem of replacing Chieftan tanks is well known, but the Army has a vital need also for modern artillery and air defence weapons. Three questions arise: first, given the stress laid on air mobility on page 24 of the statement, when will the EH101, to which the hon. and learned Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Campbell) referred, succeed the Puma in that role? Secondly, when will the multi-launch rocket system, referred to on page 312 as "under order", come into service? Thirdly, does the full development of the third generation of anti-tank guided weapons, mentioned in paragraph 4.4, allow for the latest Soviet tank technology, notably the FST1?

The RAF has received more favourable funding in recent years, but there remain two significant gaps in the RAF's aircraft inventory. The delays in acquiring a modern airborne early warning aircraft are well known. We heard yesterday from the Secretary of State that we cannot afford the full complement. I should like to know when the first E3A aircraft will be delivered. That would be helpful to the House. Will it just slip? The other gap is the lack of specialised electronic warfare aircraft, such as the EF111 or the F4G "Wild Weasel". If West Germany sees the need to acquire a Tornado variant for the job, why are we preventing our own tactical air force in the central region from having one?

I have other questions. First, when will Tucano production catch up on the original schedule? Secondly, when will the much-delayed tail end of Tornado GR1 deliveries finally occur? Thirdly, how long is the Tornado ADV radar expected to remain a problem? What is the future of the 32 mothballed Tornado F2s? When is the improved UKADGE mentioned on page 23 of the statement expected to become operational? Finally, when, oh when, will we have a modern IFF?

Compared with last year's hawkish treatment of Soviet foreign policy, the present Estimates display considerably greater willingness to accept the reality of change in the Soviet Union. Yet the Government are still saying that, as East-West relations improve, as the Russians withdraw from Afghanistan and as they implement the INF treaty, it is appropriate to respond with a vast increase in Britain's nuclear capacity.

That is a gross misjudgment of our real security needs, as the North Atlantic Assembly—of which I am a member—composed of Members of Parliament from 16 member nations, recognises in a new report. It considers that those needs are to improve the conventional balance in Europe, to strengthen the European pillar and to acknowledge and encourage the very welcome developments in the Soviet Union. That is the view of the parliamentary side of our alliance.

I recommend that report to hon. Members. It is a fascinating blueprint for a new and more equitable relationship between the transatlantic members of the alliance. They see that relationship as having changed. Therefore, they ask how NATO is to change with it. Should we not start with a strategic rethink with a view to greater flexibility and seek a strategy of flexible, minimum deterrence? I hope that in next year's Defence Estimates we shall have an essay on those issues, because the permanent under-secretary in the Ministry of Defence is eminently qualified to address those vital questions. In conclusion, perhaps the biggest threat we face currently is the danger of the status quo.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Order. I remind the House that the 10-minute limit on speeches is now in operation. I ask hon. Members who are called to keep an eye on the clock.

7.7 pm

Mr. Cyril D. Townsend (Bexleyheath): The House always listens very attentively indeed to the hon. Member for Sheffield, Attercliffe (Mr. Duffy) as he has a great knowledge of defence matters and, as I said in March this year when I followed him in a debate on the Royal Navy, he has a genuine determination to see the Royal Navy enhanced and strengthened. But, alas, he is in an impossible position. Only a few weeks ago at the Labour party conference a resolution was passed proposing that Britain's defence expenditure should be brought down into line with our European partners. As all my hon. Friends know, that would mean massive cuts in Britain's defence equivalent to about the cost of running the Royal Navy.

We mark this year the 71st anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution which brought about the Soviet Union. I do not think that I am going too far in saying that at the moment the Soviet Union is in danger of being a Third world country with First world weapons and the First world's best space programme. It is a country in chaos with a bloated bureaucracy and a military and industrial complex out of control. Of course we all wish the secretary general the best of luck in trying to reform and modernise his system and cut back on the defence effort of that country, but I am not sure I would give him more than a 51 per cent. chance of succeeding.

Lord Carrington, who has just completed a very successful period with NATO, said:

"When it comes to plain facts, there has been no reduction yet in Soviet military power, no diminution in the rate at which new tanks, ships and aircraft are flowing off the production line. Expenditure on procurement continues to grow at nearly 3 per cent. a year, despite Mr. Gorbachev's peace rhetoric and his interest in slowing down the military machine."

The same noble Lord said in a speech in Oslo in 1985—it is worth drawing his remarks to the attention of the House—that if there is an elephant in one's neighbour's garden, it may make sense to study its intentions but equally it makes sense to have a strong fence to protect one's flowerbeds. We are right to keep our guard up in these changing circumstances while hoping for the best.

In August this year—this is a sign of the times—the United States Defence Secretary, Mr. Carlucci, gave an address at the Soviet military academy in Moscow. While speaking to the assembled company he said:

"we have difficulty in reconciling a defensive doctrine with what we see in Soviet force structure and operational strategy as an emphasis on the offensive—especially on surprise and manoeuvre. I refer to such things as the operational manoeuvre group concept, forward-based bridging units, and the heavy emphasis on tanks and artillery. At the same time, we see no shift of emphasis to the kind of forces typically associated with defence."

I hope that the House and the country will ask the basic question as to why, in October 1988, the Soviet Union constantly practises the river-crossing exercise with its shock armies. Why does it base so far forward and so close to the German border so much ammunition and petrol, oil and lubricants? If we cannot get a satisfactory answer, surely we have no alternative but to keep on strengthening our own defence effort and improving our co-ordination with our allies.

I want to draw attention to the enhancement of the weapons systems of the Soviet Union. We used to say, with some confidence, "We do not need to match the Soviet Union tank by tank, aircraft by aircraft or submarine by submarine because we have a technological edge." Sadly, we are losing that edge. I remind the House of the new Typhoon submarines that the Soviet Union has deployed. They are quiet and hard to detect. It will be difficult for our submarines to keep abreast of that stealth technology. We talk about our reactive armour. The Soviet Union has the same thing. We must spend our money on gaining and keeping a technological gap. If we do not, without the numbers behind us, we will be in real trouble.

I cannot claim great enthusiasm for deciding on the new tank for the British Army of the Rhine. I suggest to my hon. Friends on the Front Bench that the way forward is through improved surveillance methods and precision-guided missiles. In this day and age, if one can find, one can hit and if one can hit, one can destroy.

I want to draw attention to the lack of helicopters in the British Army. There was a recent display and exercise on Salisbury plain which drew attention to this. Many of my hon. Friends will have further details. We have allowed the British Army to fall behind other armies in NATO and the Warsaw pact in this respect. The time has come to improve helicopter capability.

Saint Cyril was once described as a fearless and courageous preacher of the orthodox, in theological terms. I have tried to be the same in defence matters. I hope that I may be allowed to raise two further points which are not quite so orthodox. The first concerns the need for a defence review. I am by no means a lonely voice among Conservative Members on such topics. My right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan), before clearing his desk to move to Brussels where I hope he will keep Kent suitable and safe for grazing heifers and Tory voters, called for a defence review. He was wise to do so. It should not be an issue between the parties. Sir John Nott carried out the last defence review under great pressure from the Treasury. He had to find big cuts in a short time. The inter-service mechanism was not at the advanced stage that it has now reached and the results of that review are well out of date. For example, there has been the INF agreement. It would be wise of the Government and in their own political interest to recognise that. The previous election is over one horizon and the next election has not yet appeared on the other one. This is a good moment to study Britain's defence capabilities and the new challenges we face in the new world to see how we can best proceed.

The second matter—this is one of my many lost causes but I am happy to bring it forward for consideration by my hon. Friends—is the need for Britain to place less emphasis on its continental effort and more on its maritime effort. I have considerable firepower behind me on that issue. However, at least three Secretaries of State for Defence have quietly taken me aside and said, "Cyril, you are wrong. Please understand that you just harm everything by talking like that. Don't you understand that the United States is under great pressure to cut back on its 327,000 service men in Europe and that Germany does not want to carry our burden in Europe?" Since the time of Marlborough standing armies in Europe have not been popular with the British people. I do not believe that it is the best use of limited defence resources. We would be true to our traditions and would be looking after the best interests of the defence of the free world if, over a period of time, we could disengage from the continent and increase our maritime effort. I should like to see the Cabinet discussing that matter and I should like to see a cautious Civil Service statement in the defence White Paper that, in the long run, that is where Britain's defence interests lie.

7.17pm

Dr. John Gilbert (Dudley, East): The debate has come far too late in the year. It is a scandal. It is wrong for defence to be pushed back into the mop-up session just because of the incompetence of the Government's business managers. I hope that we shall be given an assurance that there will never again be five months between the publication of the White Paper and the debate. If we do have the debate this late, let us have it when the Secretary of State has some idea whether he has won his annual battle with the Treasury.

It will not surprise many hon. Members to know that I find myself unable to support the amendment in the names of my right hon. and hon. Friends merely because of one phrase which relates to the cancellation of Trident. I do not propose to weary colleagues with explanations of my reasons for that because I am sure that they are fairly well known. I want to place on record that I am content with the rest of the amendment. I am delighted that it calls on the Government to

"use resources to secure our non-nuclear defences and to work actively"—

those are beautiful words—

[Dr. John Gilbert]

"for the reduction and abolition of nuclear weapons in Britain and elsewhere".

I congratulate the Front Bench spokesmen for not mentioning unilateralism or saying that we should have no nuclear weapons in our hands, in our territories, or on our territorial waters. I welcome the slow move back towards the traditional defence policies of my party. However, there was one extraordinary passage in the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill). I gave him notice that I intended to raise the matter. He talked about a peace wing and war wing in the Labour party. I do not know of anybody in my party who is in a war wing or who wants a war. I hope that it was a slip of the tongue because he will be hard put to identify anybody in the Labour party who wants a war with anyone.

I congratulate my hon. Friends the Members for Sheffield, Attercliffe (Mr. Duffy) and Rhondda (Mr. Rogers) on their catalogue of inquiries of Ministers about the state of our defence equipment programme. I notice that not a single Minister had the courtesy to make a note when either of my hon. Friends was speaking, so I suppose that we cannot expect answers to their extremely important questions. The only other explanation is that Ministers know the list already and are preparing the answers anyway, but I should be surprised if that were the case.

My hon. Friend the Member for Attercliffe produced a superb list of problems in the Ministry of Defence and I shall add a couple, one of which is at least a scandal. At least one Minister in the Ministry of Defence must be extremely grateful that the DROPS affair has not been considered in detail by the Select Committee on Defence.

I am concerned that a choice will have to be made between an American and British tank. This country has had a dismal history of tank production since the Chieftain tank was introduced in 1966. We have no record of which we can be proud of co-operation with our allies over the debate on smooth and rifle bore, and what should be the size of the bore of the tank gun, and we have had a dismal record in selling tanks abroad. Unless the new owners of the Royal Ordnance factories can do something about selling more tanks, we should get out of the tank-making business altogether; we would probably be far better off buying German, if not American, tanks. MBT80 was on the stocks when I arrived at the Ministry of Defence in 1976, but we have not progressed much further with it.

I am worried about the state of the fire control systems that are available to the Royal Navy. I cite in aid the appalling disaster in the Gulf not long ago when an American warship, which had the most modern fire control systems, shot down an innocent airliner. I do not seek to place blame on any of the individuals concerned, but an article in *New Scientist* of 5 May reports—I should be grateful for some response from the Minister on this—that the Ministry of Defence has had to cancel an order for a computerised command and control system for the new type 23 frigates. The article says that the Ministry of Defence has

"spent £30 million on the project, but the system could not cope with orchestrating all the weapons and sensors on the frigates.

This means that the officers on board four Type 23 frigates that will be launched between now and the 1990s will have to rely on operating each sensor and weapon independently."

If that is so, we are faced with a serious problem, with no guarantee that the disaster that overtook that airliner and American warship could not happen to one of our own warships.

I have never concealed my scepticism about the European fighter aircraft, which was known as the AST403 in 1976. It was supposed to be a Harrier-Jaguar replacement and to be optimised in the ground-attack role. It is now to be optimised in the air-superiority role, but I have never heard a single satisfactory word of explanation from a Minister of why that U-turn in the function of the aircraft has taken place. I strongly suspect that it is to do with industrial and political considerations in terms of co-operation with the French or German defence industries rather than being related to the needs of the Royal Air Force. It would be extremely interesting if Ministers said whether the United States is releasing its stealth technology for the EFA project or, if it is not, whether they are confident that our stealth technology matches that of the Americans.

On page 65 of the White Paper—the Minister need not look it up, as it is not a point on which I want a reply—there is mention of the forces in eastern Europe that are not on the central front. I do not take issue with the figures given for the central front or eastern Europe, but it is a fact that the other Warsaw pact land forces—I recently returned from a trip to Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania—are, for all practical purposes, no more than supernumerary agricultural workers. They spend most of their time in the fields digging ditches and cutting hedges. I cannot foresee their being of any serious military use, other than in the defence of their country—certainly not in any forward deployment.

The hon. Member for Bexleyheath (Mr. Townsend) made the extremely valuable point that the quality of Soviet material is now outpacing ours in various directions. He drew attention to the Typhoon submarine, about which we have known for some time, but there are serious suggestions that the Soviet Union is outpacing us in the quality of battlefield munitions, and that must be of considerable concern. It gets most of its technology from breaches of COCOM.

I am concerned that the Ministry of Defence does not put nearly enough resources at the disposal of the COCOM office inside the Ministry. The Select Committee on Trade and Industry has taken a little evidence about this matter, and, as I understand it, there are three officers on full-time duty in the Ministry of Defence attending to COCOM matters. Anyone who has visited the office of technology assessment in the Pentagon, as I did recently, knows that the United States has about 200 people devoted to this extremely important work, and it is high time the Ministry of Defence paid more attention to it.

I can understand why the Secretary of State is experiencing difficulty agreeing his defence Vote with the Chief Secretary to the Treasury. One reads in the newspapers that the Secretary of State is cooling his heels in the Treasury's ante-room. I take it that that is another of Mr. Bernard Ingham's insulting briefings about Cabinet Ministers. I can believe that the Treasury is unsympathetic to the politics of burden-sharing, and I very much agree with the right hon. Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Mr. Amery) and the hon. and learned Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Campbell). Whoever wins the next election will come under enormous pressure for a reduction in American ground troops in Europe. Had I

been speaking yesterday, I would have made a different peroration because I understand that Vice-President Bush has given a firm commitment—if he has been reported accurately—that there will be no reduction in the American military presence in Europe. I foresee no reason for complacency because there will be enormous pressure on the matter in Congress, which controls the defence vote. Our budget, despite the efforts of Ministers to pretend otherwise, is on a downward trend in real terms, and I hope that the Secretary of State will win the fight that he must win with the Treasury to obtain an adequate defence Vote.

7.27 pm

Mr. John Wilkinson (Ruislip-Northwood): To some extent, our debate is a victim of the peace process. Increasingly, the people of Western Europe are coming to take at face value the statements of General Secretary, and now President, Gorbachev.

The general secretary expressed the hope that all in western Europe will live in the same house. The people of eastern Europe have a different wish. They do not wish to live in the same house as the Soviet Union. More and more, they are asserting their different identities and reverting to their historic and national roots. There are nationalist movements in the Baltic states, the Ukraine, Byelorussia, Armenia, Georgia and in the Balkans, to which my right hon. Friend the Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Mr. Amery) alluded. They are movements of fundamental significance, but, as I have said before, empires in decline can be at least as dangerous to their neighbours as empires that are expanding. If one looks at the history of what has happened in the periods of decline of the Ottoman empire, the Austro-Hungarian empire, the French empire, the British empire, the Portuguese empire and many others, one sees that the processes of decline were accompanied by conflict. We cannot be sure that such conflict in Europe will not overspill, with dramatic consequences. We must, therefore, be vigilant, as my hon. Friend the Member for Bexleyheath (Mr. Townsend) so wisely reminded us.

At the same time as change is afoot in the Soviet Union, the Soviet's new peace policy is encouraging western Governments to increase their credits to the eastern bloc, to increase the flow of high technology to the eastern bloc and greatly to expand East-West trade without predetermined quid pro quos being demanded. The result of the process could be a much strengthened Sovied Union in economic terms. In military terms, it is clear that the capability of the Soviet armed forces continues to grow across the spectrum—in both strategic and conventional weaponry. As yet, there has been no sign of substantial changes in military doctrine or of substantial reductions in force posture by the Soviets. It is important that we be vigilant and that, as resources are so constrained, we should seek ever better value for money.

I am afraid that this will be a difficult affair for the British Government. They have shown great responsibility in their conduct of the nation's defence. I praise my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence and his ministerial team. I know as a Western European Union committee chairman how helpful they have been, for example, in organising the WEU symposium on military research in London in March and in providing for visits by my committee to the tri-national Tornado training establishment at Cottesmore and to the Aeroplane and Armament Experimental Establishment at Boscombe Down. They have been helpful, positive and encouraging in every way, but they are up against a fundamental problem—lack of resources.

The pay of the armed forces must go up at least in keeping with the rate of pay in the civil community. The cost of weapons increases rather more than inflation. All this happens at the same time as our defence budget decreases in real terms and, although I acknowledge that the decrease is a fairly recent development, it is a fact that the Government must face. This squeeze on resources is impelling my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State yet again to go cap in hand to the Treasury in this expenditure round to ask for more money. My right hon. Friend knows that unless he gets more money the circle cannot be squared.

Unless my right hon. Friend gets more money, it will be dificult to honour the Government's pledge in their answer in Cm. 443 to the report of the Select Committee on Defence on the surface fleet. The Government said:

> "The Government has provided substantial additional resources for defence, including additions in the last Public Expenditure Survey round, so that commitments can be sustained. There is thus no need for or question of a defence review, whether 'by stealth' or otherwise."

Over the past six years I have spent much time—I have co-authored two books and chaired the Omega committee report of the Adam Smith Institute—vainly trying to suggest that it would be wise for the Government to embark upon a review. For a long time this budgetary bind has been plain for all to see. I have suggested that we should examine radically in concert with our allies—not unilaterally as we did in 1981 when Defence Secretary Nott presented Cmnd. 8288 "The United Kingdom Defence Programme: The Way Forward"—how best as good, faithful members of NATO, determined to enhance the European contribution to our common Atlantic defence, we could make better use of our resources.

The strategic defence of our nation in nuclear terms must be sacrosanct, and we all understand that. The Opposition's amendment is plainly totally irresponsible. We cannot ignore the defence of the home base. The Government have improved Britain's air defence, with the Tornado F3 coming into service, improvements in our radar infrastructure and the fact that the Home Service defence force and Royal Auxiliary Air Force Regiment squadrons are exercising well.

Defence of the east Atlantic and English channel is crucial for NATO. We play a key part, with 70 per cent. of the naval forces in those areas coming from the Royal Navy. Unless these command areas are secure, how can western Europe be reinforced in time of tension or war? Without such certain reinforcement, how can a defence of western Europe be sustained?

We must also consider our overseas intervention force capability. The capability to intervene on the flanks with the AMF and Marines is crucial. Our Norwegian friends are particularly vulnerable, adjacent as they are in the north to the Soviets and with the Kola peninsula base complex right on their doorstep—the base from which the Soviets' strategic submarine force and northern fleet sail. Intervention forces are vital for Britain. We have repeatedly seen how necessary they are, most recently in 1982 in the south Atlantic conflict.

[Mr. John Wilkinson]

Last, but not least, there is our Brussels treaty commitment. Are we for ever and for aye to keep a tactical air force, plus 55,000 men on the continent of Europe, as though nothing has changed? It is not as though the foreign exchange costs are met by our German friends. Since 1980 they have been absolved of the offset requirement which was incumbent on them. Paradoxically on the autobahns one sees the Germans proceeding on their stately way in BMWs and Mercedes while the Americans and British, who are there to defend them, drive along in their old jalopies. The Germans spend about half as much as the British on defence as a proportion of GNP.

I am suggesting only that the balance between the offence and the defence is changing in favour of the defence with precision-guided weapons, as my hon. Friend the Member for Bexleyheath pointed out. The helicopter used against armoured vehicles is especially effective. We no longer have a conscript army as we did when we undertook the Brussels treaty commitment. There is a baggage train of families to maintain. One need only read the National Audit Office report "Costs and Financial Control of British Forces in Germany" to realise how expensive that baggage train is. Furthermore, in peace-time these forces are stationed in the wrong place, so it will be difficult for our forces in Germany to get to the right place in time of war.

My right hon. and hon. Friends in Government should not eschew a review. There is nothing wrong in re-examining strategy as international affairs develop. In fact, it is the responsible and right thing to do. If my right hon. and hon. Friends bite the bullet, forget what they may have said in answer to the Select Committee and conduct such a review, they will conclude that three divisions in Germany are too much for the United Kingdom. We should do rather more at sea and in the air and with our intervention forces. If we reduced our forces to a division west of the Rhine covering the clutch of Royal Air Force stations, Laarbruch, Bruggen and Wildenrath, that would be appropriate. We are not shirking our duty. We are one of the two European nuclear powers in the Alliance and shall continue to play a vital part.

7.38 pm

Dr. John Reid (Motherwell, North): I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the debate, first, because I know that many hon. Members wish to speak, and, secondly, because I cannot claim the comprehensive and detailed knowledge shown in many speeches, like that of my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Attercliffe (Mr. Duffy).

However, I wish to raise once again the defence implications of the closure of the royal ordnance factories, especially, but not exclusively, that at Bishopton. The case has been put both inside and outside the House, most recently and with most passion last night by my hon. Friend the Member for Renfrew, West and Inverclyde (Mr. Graham) who has a direct constituency interest.

I have an interest, first, as someone concerned with the defence and security of our nation, and, secondly, as someone concerned with the defence of my nation's employment. Thirdly, like other hon. Members, I am concerned to see that fair play is given to the taxpayer over this. Finally, I have a particular interest as a Member of Parliament whose constituency depends on the steel industry, which, while it is less strategic in a defence sense than the ROFs, is strategic in an industrial sense, and is about to go through the same privatisation process as that faced by the royal ordnance factories. As a result of all these concerns, I find the Government's attitude towards defence in general, and the royal ordnance factories in particular, at best wrong in priorities, and at worst negligent of the national interest.

Over the past few years, the defence posture of the Government has been characterised by three main features. First, they have consistently shown a preference for nuclear weapons, even if it is at the expense of conventional forces—what Lord Carver referred to as their delusions of nuclear grandeur. Secondly, the Government have consistently preferred the encouragement of private gain even when, in the defence sector, it may be at the expense of national defence needs. Finally, they have shown an increasing preference for using the private market as the arbiter of national defence requirement when it should only, and can only, be determined by public discussion, public policy and public ownership.

The history of the Government is littered with examples of dereliction of duty, from the Westland affair to the sell-off of the royal dockyards. Nowhere is that dereliction more obvious, and nowhere is the concern felt more, than in Scotland, and nowhere is it more obvious than in the proposed closures at Bishopton and Patricroft. In yesterday's press we read even more horrifying reports that another 10 British Aerospace factories, including two royal ordnance factories, could be under threat. Thus, despite the assurances of Ministers at the time of privatisation, and despite all the promises and pledges of British Aerospace, Bishopton is to close.

The fact of closure is galling enough on its own, but the excuse for the closure makes it even more unacceptable and unpalatable. The reason given—the need to reduce so-called spare or surplus capacity—serves only to underline once more the necessity for public sector control of the royal ordnance factories. While they were in the public sector and operating in the broad national interest, the existence of spare capacity within the royal ordnance factories was not a handicap but a bonus. Reserve capacity was a requirement of good defence provision, not because of any sympathy or sentimentality towards the work force, but for the good, sound strategic defence reasons that a nation with insufficient means to increase defence production in an emergency is a nation incapable of responding to an emergency.

Nothing illustrated that fact better than the conflict in the Falklands. Whatever side we take in the debates on the merits of that war, there was surely something bizarre and demeaning about a maritime nation scouring the ferry and fishing fleets of Britain to muster an adequate naval force to send into action. Let us not forget that during that emergency the royal ordnance factory at Bishopton was working 24 hours a day, seven days a week to supply the additional requirements made necessary by that conflict.

With the ordnance factories, the Government are going down the same mistaken road they followed with the Falklands. It is not as if the Government were unaware of the danger to reserve capacity when they privatised the factories. The matter was specifically raised during the debate on the Second Reading of the Ordnance Factories

and Civil Services Bill, as far back as 16 January 1984, by my hon. Friend the Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara) and others. The answer from the then Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement now looks quite staggering in its complacency. The Minister said, when he was challenged about the threat to reserve capacity:

"There has been far too much unwarranted negativity".

Incidentally, he may not have been a good manager of the interest of the defence force, but he was an expert in the use of words. I was talking to some people from Bishopton and they are greatly relieved to know that they face not unemployment but "unwarranted negativity". The Minister said:

"There has been far too much unwarranted negativity of this sort in discussion of the future of the ROFs. The right hon. Gentleman suggested that, once privatised, the ROFs could not be relied upon to supply the guns, fighting vehicles and ammunition they have supplied in the past; that in a time of tension or war we in the Ministry of Defence would look to the ROFs to step up production and suddenly find that they were not there. That is patently absurd. The ROFs are not being sent anywhere."—[*Official Report*, 16 January 1984; Vol. 52, c. 101.]

Well, I have news for Ministers. If they continue their present course, the next time we have an emergency or, in the words of the Minister, in a time of tension or war the Ministry of Defence looks to the ROFs—like Bishopton—they will not find them. They are going somewhere. In private hands, they are going down the tubes. Ministers cannot say that they were not forewarned. The tragedy is that normally forewarned is forearmed. In the case of this Government, forewarned means disarmed.

All this might be understandable if there had been fair treatment of the taxpayer, but the reality is that British Aerospace profited by untold millions because of undervaluation of land alone.

There are those who believe in a conspiracy theory of history. I am inclined to attribute what has happened not to that, but to another theory of history, beginning with a capital C. Whatever the reason for it, there should have been some humility from Ministers last night. Instead, the present Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement boasted of his prowess at property management. If that is a manifestation of expertise of property management by the Government, thank God the hon. Gentleman is not my estate agent.

Even at this late stage, the Government have a chance to restore the faith of workers at Bishopton and the other factories and to secure a good reserve capacity on a sound basis for the conventional support of our armed forces. They owe that duty not only to the work force of Bishopton, but to the safeguarding of the defence of this country.

7.48 pm

Mr. Robert Hayward (Kingswood): I wish to deal with one or two points that relate particularly to my part of the country, but, initially, I shall comment on some of the contributions made so far. I find the contributions from hon. Members on the Opposition Back Benches far more honest than the contributions from hon. Members on the Opposition Front Bench. That is also true of the contribution from the Liberal Benches because, although the hon. and learned Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Campbell), who is not in his seat at the moment, acknowledged that Trident would be in existence up to 1993, he did not say whether his party believed that that weapon would be used. His party leader has flatly refused to give an answer to that question when it has been put to him on a number of occasions on television. I therefore hope that, sooner or later, the Liberals will decide whether they would intend to use that weapon, as well as simply acknowledging its existence.

The hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) was challenged yesterday by my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, East (Mr. Sayeed) about the level of expenditure to which the Labour party would commit itself. In reply, he said:

"I confirm the first question. I shall reply to the second question in the course of my remarks."—[*Official Report*, 19 October 1988; Vol. 138, c. 917.]

I sat through his speech, and I have read it in the *Official Report* twice since then and can find no attempt to answer the question from my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, East about the amount of GNP that the Labour party would commit. I listened with interest to see whether the hon. Member for Rhondda (Mr. Rogers) would touch on the matter today, but we still have no indication of approximately what proportion of GNP the Labour party intends to commit.

There may be a vast range of opinion among Opposition Members as to how that money should be spent. On the one hand, we heard it stated honestly by the hon. Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer) and, on the other hand, by the right hon. Member for Dudley, East (Dr. Gilbert), who made an excellent contribution to the debate, but Labour Front Bench Members have at no stage given an approximation of the amount of GNP that the Labour party would commit. They reel off all the problems saying, "We haven't got enough frigates or ammunition. We have problems with helicopters, the Army and the Air Force", but there is no indication as to whether they would be willing to put in more money, the same amount of money, or less money than the Government are currently doing. It is patently dishonest to list that catalogue of questions without attempting to deal with that general financial point.

I wish to mention two specific points about which there have already been a number of comments. I agree with the comments yesterday of my hon. Friend the Member for Weston-super-Mare (Mr. Wiggin) about the Territorial Army. I have been in correspondence with my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary about the Territorial Army because, although I appreciate the efforts made by the Ministry of Defence to recruit people into the Territorial Army as an extra reserve of expertise that we genuinely need, I am concerned about the demands being put on individuals who join the Territorial Army. I believe that the Minister has been advised about this matter. I do not expect a reply this evening, but I am willing to discuss the matter with him later.

The impression is given that people recruited into the Territorial Army are told that they will be required for a certain number of days. The minimum is 27 days, plus at least six weekends. From my conversations with a number of people involved in the Territorial Army, it has become clear to me that that is not the expectation of the Territorial Army. One of those people said to me yesterday, "If you don't do at least one weekend every month, then you are useless to the Territorial Army." It was clearly indicated to the person about whom I wrote to the Under-Secretary that he would be required for at least

[Mr. Robert Hayward]

16 weekends a year and that anything less than that would not be of any major benefit to the Territorial Army. I checked that with other people whom I know belong to the Territorial Army and they all gave that clear indication.

It is therefore hardly surprising that, if people are recruited into the Territorial Army, expecting to give six, seven or eight weekends a year, which is quite reasonable, and then find themselves confronted with substantial pressure from officers in the Territorial Army to attend for 16 or 20 weekends a year, they find that demand too great and therefore give up. That partly explains the high turnover that we are currently facing. If we resolve that problem, many people currently leaving the Territorial Army will be willing to stay and those who have left would rejoin.

The other comments that I wish to make relate to recent purchasing decisions. I particularly welcome the commitment made yesterday by the Secretary of State to the European fighter aircraft. The Under-Secretary will be well aware of the importance of that to Bristol, like the importance of the Tornado programme, in terms of engines, and we greatly appreciate that. Much comment has been made about helicopters. Like my hon. Friends the Members for Bexleyheath (Mr. Townsend), for Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Wilkinson) and for Weston-super-Mare, I am somewhat confused because I do not believe that the Ministry of Defence knows what it wants to do with helicopters. As my hon. Friend the Member for Ruislip-Northwood said so lucidly, aspects of defence policy are changing and, therefore, the requirements for tanks, helicopters and other armaments.

I particularly welcome the decision announced during the summer recess regarding the RTM 322 engine and the EH101 helicopter. I hope that that will go a long way towards guaranteeing sales of that helicopter, not only in Europe, but in other parts of the world. Like other hon. Members, I am not sure that the Ministry of Defence has a clear understanding of what it wishes to do with helicopters. I am not a military expert. I am not able to say whether it should do X, Y or Z, but the lack of clarity of policy comes through over and over again in all the documents with which I have been confronted.

There is a time limit for speeches in this debate. I hope to give extra time to other hon. Members and will not, therefore, comment on the royal ordnance factories, about which a number of hon. Members have spoken. However, I hope that my comments are of help in respect of the Estimates, which I commend to the House.

7.56 pm

Mr. Tony Benn (Chesterfield): Many important questions have been raised in the debate, but the main one is, "Are we right to tax the British people by £19 billion, which is £441 per elector, for the purposes set out in the defence White Paper?"

There is some disagreement, which I have tried to follow, between the two Front Benches about the balance between conventional and nuclear forces. I find no great disagreement—indeed, a wide measure of agreement—between the two Front Benches about the level of defence spending. I listened very carefully and I too picked up the idea that the Opposition were saying that more money should be spent on defence. If this debate were confined to that narrow question, it would not reflect the deeply held views of those people living in this country who believe, as I do, that the time has come for a much bolder, more imaginative and far-sighted review of Britain's defence and foreign policies.

I make no complaint, because we are not allowed to do so, that the amendment tabled by me and my hon. Friends has not been called for debate and will not be voted on, but that does not prevent me from referring to it. We said that our group of hon. Members

'declines to accept the Defence Estimates; believes that the Trident and new nuclear weapons programmes should be cancelled and the finance saved diverted to health, education and housing budgets; further calls for the removal of nuclear bases, weapons and facilities from Britain and an end to all participation in any nuclear programmes or systems; further resolves to reduce arms expenditure by £7 billion to the same level as other Western European countries and to divert the money saved to social spending and the arms manufacturing facilities released to socially useful production; and believes that reduction in arms spending will help to promote peace and the elimination of poverty and hunger throughout the world.'.

The thinking behind that was reflected clearly and overwhelmingly, not only at this year's Labour party conference, but at a succession of Labour party conferences. It has been put before the electorate and all of us in the House have been party to manifestos that have contained some or all of those proposals, but the real argument is about whether we should look again at the whole basis on which we propose to tax the British people.

The time has come to re-examine six assumptions upon which the foreign and defence policies of all Governments have been based since 1945. I say "all Governments" because, in a strange way, this is not in any sense a party matter. These assumptions are, first, that there is a Soviet military threat; secondly, that the United States, as the leader of the Western Alliance, has a world policy designed to uphold democracy and human rights all over the world; thirdly, that nuclear weapons make us safer; fourthly, that Britain has an independent deterrent; fifthly, that we can well afford to pay the cost of these arms; and finally, that our defence policy has protected and nourished democracy at home. All these assumptions need to be re-examined, for I believe that they are significantly false.

First, there is the issue of the Soviet military threat. Does anyone in this place seriously believe that, while Mr. Gorbachev is wrestling with long-overdue reforms in the Soviet Union, the Red Army is planning to land in Britain or to attack western Europe? I shall turn to what the public think about this because there are means of knowing that. The Soviet Union lost 20 million people during the second world war, and I am of a generation that will never forget that the liberty that we now enjoy was won in part by Russian blood in defence of their own territory in 1941. The purpose of the bombing of Hiroshima was not to bring the Japanese to their knees. I learnt when I was in Japan that the Japanese had offered to surrender weeks, if not months, before the bomb was dropped. It was dropped to warn the Russians.

The reason that Mr. Gorbachev is credible now is because—*[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) laughs, but he should read the record of the tribunal trying the Japanese leaders after the war in Tokyo. The Japanese offered through the Swiss to surrender months before the atomic bomb was dropped. The only condition that they laid was that Hirohito should remain. The hon. Gentleman should read the record

before doubting the accuracy of what I am saying. I discovered the fact only five years ago, but it is all on the record. The great theory that the bomb was used to save about 250,000 American lives is not true. Instead, it was used to tell the Soviet Union that we, the West, had an overwhelming weapon.

Mr. Gorbachev is credible because he says that he wants to cut defence expenditure to improve the standard of living of the Russian people.

Mr. Mans: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Benn: I shall not give way to the hon. Gentleman because of the time limit.

The second argument is that the United States advocates and upholds democracy and civil rights throughout the world. I hope that I shall not be misunderstood when I say that America is an empire as Britain once was. America, in Vietnam, Cuba, Chile, Grenada, and in its relations with Franco and the Greek colonels, was not upholding democracy. Instead, it was protecting its world interests.

I was born in 1925, when about 20 per cent. of the world's population was governed through this Chamber. This place was the heart of the British empire, but we now live in a far-flung colony of the American empire. Those outside the House know this. The fact that we have no vote in the American presidential elections is a reminder of our colonial status.

The third argument—*[Interruption.]* Conservative Members laugh at what I am saying. They should remember that when we governed India the Indians had no say on how they were governed from this House. When Mr. Gandhi came to London in 1931, he was asked what he thought of civilisation in Britain. He said that he thought that it would be a good idea. That was a sign of the anti-colonial pressures of the time. The House must face facts.

The third argument is that nuclear weapons make us safer. After Chernobyl and the clear risk of accident, that is an unsupportable point of view. I say to my hon. Friends who contend that we must have the bomb because the Russians have it that when a Labour Prime Minister decided that we should build the bomb, the Russians did not have it. We decided to build nuclear weapons when the Soviet Union did not have them. That argument is a part of the history of the post-war years.

Fourthly, do we have an independent nuclear deterrent? We do not. We do not make nuclear weapons. The Americans supply them and refurbish them. Sir Frank Cooper was the permanent secretary at the Ministry of Defence and he must know more about these matters than anyone else. In the course of the Zircon film he said that we could not fire Polaris without the American satellite system. That was the secret, or the breaking of it, that made the Government wish to ban the film. Sir Frank made it clear that the Zircon satellite was an attempt to replace or supplement the American satellite system. The price that we paid for that, as we heard yesterday, was American control of the British security service and the situation that now prevails at GCHQ.

Fifthly, can we afford an independent nuclear deterrent? The answer is that we cannot. I am one of the few Members who sat in this place to listen to Aneurin Bevan's resignation speech. He resigned in 1951 over the high defence budget, which was at the expense of the welfare state. The cost is massive because it involves 60 per cent. of our scientists and engineers. If we compare that with the average level of expenditure in Western Europe, £7 billion more is spent here than by our allies, who are equally keen to defend their countries.

The transfer of resources would enable us to meet pressing needs. Does anyone think that more people will die in Britain as a result of the Red Army landing here than as a result of AIDS, cancer or heart disease? The people know that the nation's health is a national interest and that it is being starved of resources in part for the purpose of maintaining the defence budget.

Finally, is democracy protected by the present system? It is not. Militarism destroys liberty or erodes it. Let us consider, for example, the role of James Angleton in "Spycatcher", who came to London and told MI5 that the then Labour Prime Minister was a Soviet agent. There was the former Secretary of State for Defence who ordered Cathy Massiter to tap the phones of CND. These examples tell us that the military state infringes domestic liberty. The war in Ireland is a most vivid example.

What do the public think? There are those who say, "Mr. Benn, what you say may be right, but what do the public think?" I am not a believer in opinion polls but they are available for examination. The latest opinion poll findings tell us that only 9 per cent. of the British people think that a Soviet attack is likely. When it comes to causes of war, 58 per cent. of the British people think that the cause may be nuclear attack by accident. It seems that 6 per cent. think that the likely responsibility for such a war would rest with the Soviet Union, while 27 per cent. think that it would be with the United States. These are not hard Left arguments. I am referring to the figures that have been published by Dr. Gallup, who is no particular friend of mine.

It appears that 41 per cent. of the British people have confidence in the world role of the Soviet Union while only 24 per cent. have confidence in the United States. When it comes to desire for world domination, 17 per cent. consider that to be the main interest of the Soviet Union and 32 per cent. think it to be the main interest of the United States. When asked about credit for the disarmament agreement—the INF—only 10 per cent. think that the United States should get the major credit——

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Order. The right hon. Member has precisely 20 seconds left.

Mr. Benn: I appreciate the time constraint that is upon us, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I shall draw my remarks to a conclusion.

For 40 years the cold war has dominated the politics and economics of the House and the country. We have hope in 1988, and it must be our task to seize the possibility of looking to the 1990s and the next century so that we can reallocate the money and the skills that are wasted on weapons of mass destruction to create the means of life for those who are condemned to die because resources are being wasted instead of being made available to meet their needs.

For these reasons I shall be voting against the Defence Estimates tonight. I believe that they represent a burden that the British people should not pay, and a burden that world events make it unnecessary for us to pay.

8.9 pm

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): If there were time, I should take great pleasure in shooting down in flames the right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) point by point. Will he never learn? Three general elections have not shown him what the British public want. He is not the only person to be out of step with the British nation. That highlights how fortunate we are to have my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence and his ministerial colleagues, who are pursuing sensible defence policies, cutting out waste and maintaining security for Britain now and in future.

I support the efforts that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is making to persuade the Treasury, and perhaps the Star Chamber, to maintain our defence spending, or perhaps to increase it. We must be careful about expenditure, but defence spending is falling behind other areas of spending and there is much to do if we are to support the United States and NATO and look after our own responsibilities.

In exchange for this support for the Secretary of State I ask him to make one or two small switches of emphasis. We should move marginally away from our hi-tech weapons, some of which are of doubtful effectiveness, towards personnel. Recruiting will be tight in the 1990s; we must retain what we have; we shall have to compete in a difficult market for new recruits. Pay is not the essential aspect. Conditions of service and fringe benefits are. We must examine them carefully and help our forces in every way. Housing is always a prominent issue among service men. They all want to own their houses, but need to know where and how they can do that on mortgages. Our service men frequently have to move, and hence their children must frequently change schools. They need support for that. All these things are terribly important. We always hear—rightly—from Ministers about how they are trying to help with the simplification of service life, but that always seems to be about to happen tomorrow. When will it happen today?

The second tiny switch of emphasis has to do with the value for money that we obtain from our reserves. They are extremely effective and cost effective, and a small change in the amount of money available to them would be highly beneficial. Many hon. Members have spoken about the TA, the RNVR and the Royal Auxiliary Air Force and the Home Service Force, together with the cadets in those forces. They deserve excellent equipment, the best facilities and a proper promotion structure in each service. Too often experienced officers in their forties find they have nowhere to go.

The great initiative of recent months under Brigadier Tommy Macpherson to highlight to the nation the importance of our reserves and their value to the MOD is highly commendable, and I hope that it will be successful with our employers, who have a significant part to play in the promotion of our reserves.

I am delighted that my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces is coming to the south of Scotland next month to talk about low flying, which is an important issue there. I am sure that he will strike the right balance and explain how essential it is for Royal Air Force pilots to maintain a significant level of low flying. The hon. and learned Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Campbell) mentioned how important it is to maintain the search and rescue facility at Leuchars for central Scotland. It would be inconceivable if 22 squadron were removed from Leuchars or 202 squadron from Lossiemouth. I am quite sure that the distinguished Air Officer (Scotland and Northern Ireland), Air Vice-Marshal David Brook, is fighting his corner hard over what is an important issue for Scotland—not only for the services but for the community at large. My hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) and others—and I—have all paid tribute to the search and rescue service.

Turning to Royal Ordnance, I am as concerned as anyone else about the closure of Bishopton, because of the large number of lost jobs that will ensue in an area of high unemployment. I want to discuss the knock-on or knock-off effect that that will have on the Royal Ordnance factory at Powfoot in my constituency, which is managed effectively and efficiently by ICI Nobel. It has a full order book and is the only factory in the United Kingdom manufacturing tubular propellant for all British small arms ammunition. It was the subject of a five-year agreement between RO and the MOD. I stress that it is the only indigenous provider of the propellant that we require for our small arms ammunition.

In 1985 Royal Ordnance gave ICI notice to quit. I went to see my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine), then Secretary of State for Defence, and he gladly gave me a stay of execution into the 1990s, which was good news. This year, however, Royal Ordnance said that it would remove the production line in 1990 to Bishopton. Then, a few weeks ago, came the announcement that Bishopton was to close. Where is this production line to be taken now? It is quite wrong that we should buy the propellant that we need from America or the continent—for example, from Czechoslovakia, where it is manufactured with Communist Government subsidy —given that it is a crucial powder for our ammunition. Will the Minister examine the matter, not in terms of Royal Ordnance's rights as a company, but in the light of the factory's being the only supplier of this gunpowder in this country. Surely we cannot go into the 1990s without it. I hope for a response from the Minister as soon as possible.

A further knock-off effect will be that if we do not have Powfoot we shall not need to make nitrocellulose at Dumfries, which will mean a further loss of jobs. Royal Ordnance must not lose sight of its reponsiblility to the community as well as to the MOD and its shareholders. I am not climbing on the bandwagon of those who complain about property development. RO is jolly lucky if it can sell Powfoot or give it away after it has been sterilised following years and years of high explosives production.

I am delighted with the firm policies developed by my right hon. Friend for this country. He is on the right lines and has my entire support. I hope that he will look into support for personnel in the services, at their conditions of service, and will give me a favourable reply on what is to become of the unique production line in my constituency which now seems severely threatened and stands to lose 140 jobs. I hope that my right hon. Friend will be able to reverse that decision.

8.18 pm

Miss Joan Lestor (Eccles): The hon. Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) nicely opened the way for me to follow him by discussing the Royal Ordnance factories.

Today, a lobby of working men and women from Bishopton and Patricroft in my constituency was here. They came to protest at the closure of the factory, pointing out the effect that the loss of their jobs would have on communities that already suffer, in many cases, from unemployment that is well above the national average.

The workers also asked, and I repeat their request, for an inquiry by the Public Accounts Committee into the background of the privatisation of Royal Ordnance and what has flowed from that. If the speculation in *The Independent* and the fears that were first expressed in the MOD's report about the sale of the Royal Ordnance factories, which was commented on by the Comptroller and Auditor General, is all wrong, the Government have nothing to fear. They will hold a public inquiry, we shall have egg on our faces and they will come out of it with no more stains on their rather spotty characters than they have now. I do not understand the resistance to such an inquiry. The disclosures since the leak during the week of the Labour party conference, where I first picked up the news on the television, have given people cause for concern about what is happening.

My concern about the background to the privatisation started some time ago. When I took over the Eccles constituency from Lewis Carter-Jones, he handed me a file on the subject. I also raised the matter with the Leader of the House, who was standing in for the Prime Minister on 11 February. I asked him to put pressure on his colleagues in the Ministry of Defence

"to answer the criticisms of the Comptroller and Auditor General about the privatisation of the Royal Ordnance Factory"

because the Minister had refused to answer them. I pointed out the cheapness of the way in which the deal was carried out, and the fact that

"dividends were waived to make the company more attractive and . . . the delay in the transfer of pension rights and redundancy pay made this whole operation exceedingly expensive."

The Leader of the House replied:

"I think that the hon. Lady misses the important point. The important point is that there were difficulties in the armament procurement industry. That industry will be much better under privatisation than it ever would under state control."—[*Official Report*, 11 February 1988; Vol. 127, c. 498.]

A few months later we were told, as the hon. Member for Dumfries stressed, that two factories—others have already closed—were to close. In particular, that at Patricroft is to be closed. There are grave doubts surrounding the background to this matter and the way in which the Royal Ordnance factories were sold off to British Aerospace.

Earlier, one of my hon. Friends mentioned the soothing noises that were made by the Ministry of Defence. I have a letter dated February 1987 from Lord Trefgarne to Lewis Carter-Jones stating:

"Whilst your constituents may be concerned about the introduction of competition into the procurement of ammunition, Royal Ordnance with its long history of producing these stores will stand a good chance of winning the orders for our further requirements."

Lord Trefgarne went on to comment on how well Royal Ordnance was already doing. Soothing noises were made, and I can refer to another letter dated 30 November, which made similar soothing noises.

When the leak finally came and the unions took up the matter, they were told that production at the closed Royal Ordnance factories would go to other Royal Ordnance factories. However, we now know that the company is looking both nationally and internationally for other plants. Three joint ventures are planned. I should like an assurance that none of the work from Patricroft or Bishopton will go to the planned joint ventures in Chile, Brazil and Kentucky. If we are to have an armaments industry, and if we are to supply our defence forces, it appears, if those reports are true, that we shall be moving production to non-NATO countries where there is no agreed quality assurance in respect of propellant and ammunition standards. If we are saying—and of course we are not—that an arms industry is no longer needed in this country, the talents of the highly skilled men and women who have been employed in it should be applied elsewhere. There is plenty of social and other need in the community which those skills could be used to meet. But no, we now find that those goods are to be bought elsewhere.

My constituency has an above average level of unemployment. It has been starved of investment and of growth, and over the years its traditional industries have declined. We had a spark of hope when £160 million was invested in the Trafford park development scheme, which begins just 100 yards from the Royal Ordnance factory that is to be closed with the loss of more than 1,000 jobs. It makes a nonsense of putting money into a development scheme in the hope of producing more jobs when at the same time the door is closed on more than 1,000 jobs nearby, in a situation that has very shady surroundings.

Skills there are to be left lying dormant. The knock-on effect on the community will be colossal in respect of both employment and local trading losses. Families will be plummeted into poverty. More and more youngsters in that area are being left without hope. They have looked to Patricroft and other places for some form of apprenticeship and for hope for the future. As was said by one of my hon. Friends yesterday in respect of Bishopton, the Royal Ordnance factories have become family concerns employing fathers and sons, and so on. Already large numbers of young people in my constituency have been left without hope for the future.

We shall soon hear Conservative Members saying that those unemployed could work if they wanted to do so and that they are not getting on their bikes looking for jobs. The truth is that there is no more work available in my area. If that industry had declined, we would want to use the skills of those people in some other way. However, that is not the case, because that production is being sent elsewhere. People are being denied the right to work, and we are robbing our defence industry of assured equipment quality.

As far as we can tell, British Aerospace is making a financial killing by selling out the jobs of my constituents. That is how we see it, and that is how the people of Eccles see it. That is how it is viewed by the people in all the areas affected. It is nonsense for the Government to shrug it off. Every Conservative Member who has spoken, with the exception of the hon. Member for Dumfries, has said, "It is a pity about the unemployment, but . . ." There should be no "but" about unemployment. I say again to the Minister that if the stories about the background to this development are wrong, if we are wrong, and if the unions are wrong, the Government have nothing to fear from an inquiry, because we shall be the ones made to look silly and not them. I urge the Government to think again.

8.24 pm

Mr. Neil Thorne (Ilford, South): I shall not attempt to go down the path followed by the hon. Member for Eccles (Miss Lestor) in respect of the Royal Ordnance factories, particularly with reference to that in her own constituency, except to say that it is vital that a large number of alternative industries are available in towns so that they are not dependent on one particular type. That is certainly the case in Eccles. Corby is a marvellous example of a town that was wholly dependent on one industry, but which is no longer so dependent—and it is now a boom town. I hope that the hon. Lady's constituents will find that in the *not-too-distant future other employment* opportunities are made available to those who are dedicated and who wish to use their skills. Therefore, I am not as pessimistic as the hon. Member for Eccles.

I thank my hon. Friend the Minister of State for his mention of the work and assistance given by the Royal Army Medical Corps following the Dharan earthquake. The services provide important assistance in emergencies, which is often not appreciated or realised by the agencies that demand that we provide more aid. We have those forces and resources readily available in many parts of the world. It is important that we should be able to provide assistance at short notice. That is what happened in Dharan, and I am delighted that our services did so well there. Complete surgical teams were promptly ferried out from Hong Kong, supplemented by experts from this country, and a permanent base was established. I hope to visit Dharan next month, when, I understand, the services there will be running down because they are to be relocated. Had the earthquake occurred six months later, it would have been much more difficult to provide assistance. I hope that in reviewing the services that the Army was able to provide my hon. Friend will seek to ensure that there is some continuity and that those people who have settled near Dharan will not be left without medical cover of the kind upon which they have come to rely for such a long time, when the British Army moves its Gurkha recruitment base, as it plans to do in the next few weeks.

Under the same heading, we must also give credit to the work of the Royal Navy after the recent hurricane in Jamaica. It was able to send in a patrol vessel and to provide substantial assistance at short notice. Such help does not appear in any acknowledgement of the aid that we provide. A number of other countries provide more aid in pounds, shillings and pence, but they do not have on hand the type of services that we can provide in emergencies.

The second point I wish to address concerns our reserve forces. Other hon. Members have mentioned the extremely good value for money that our reserves represent. I recall that the last time a calculation was made at my request the cost of providing a reserve soldier was only 10 per cent. of that of providing a regular soldier because of the extra provision made for accommodation, pensions and education.

Therefore, reserve soldiers represent extremely good value for money. It is not possible for them to take over completly because a minimum number of regular soldiers must always be provided to fulfil the role of the regular forces. All through our history, over many hundreds of years, the reserve forces have had an important role to play. However, because of our NATO commitments, we have come to expect a very great deal from them. We have been using them as a trade-off because of the lack of national service, and that has put an enormous strain on the lives of those part-time soldiers, sailors and, in some cases, airmen. That is one of the main reasons why we are having difficulty in retaining recruits.

Plenty of young men and women are able and willing to offer their services, but often they sadly find that the commitment does not fit in with their domestic lives. We must do some serious thinking about that, because those young people are vital if we are to ensure that we need not call upon a national service, which most regular forces would regret.

One aspect to which we do not pay enough attention is the social side, particularly for junior ranks. The training required is often onerous, because the soldiers and their commanders are of course anxious that their service should reach virtually "regular" quality. I well understand that the commanders want to achieve that standard, but it often means that families are neglected. We must try to make up for that by ensuring that there are extremely good clubs for junior ranks, particularly for the benefit of their wives and families. In my view, the reserve forces should have the best club in any neighbourhood, without exception. I think we should then find that many who have passed through their service would wish to contribute by coming back to help with the facilities.

I know that time is limited and that many others wish to speak, so I shall not detain the House for long, but I should like to raise one or two other matters. The first concerns helicopters. I know that 25 utility helicopters have been ordered. Continuity is important to the helicopter industry if it is to exist. The helicopters were originally due to start being delivered in the early 1990s, but I understand that delivery may now be put back to the mid-1990s. If that happens there will be further employment repercussions, for without continuity it is impossible to keep together the skilled work forces that are so essential. I hope that my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary will have something to say about that later.

There is also the question of the offset for the Boeing AWACS deal that was done in 1986. Let me refresh my hon. Friend's memory. It was agreed that Boeing would provide new expenditure of 130 per cent. of the cost of the AWACS, which would have meant a total expenditure in this country of £1,300 million. I should be grateful if my hon. Friend would say a little about that. I should like to be reassured that things are going well and that progress will not be too prolonged.

I congratulate the hon. Member for Stockton, North (Mr. Cook) on joining the Opposition Front Bench team, and thank him for the kind remarks that he made about me yesterday in connection with the armed forces parliamentary scheme. I am delighted that everything in which he has been involved has been going so well. It is possible, of course, that his appointment had something to do with it; nevertheless, it is very good news. I hope that the scheme will be expanded, and that other hon. Members on both sides of the House will have an opportunity to participate when it is launched officially later in the year.

In this connection I am most grateful to my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for all his help and encouragement.

8.34 pm

Mr. Harry Cohen (Leyton): The glossy cover for the Defence Estimates, with three nuclear submarines in a wonderful setting, shows how much the Government romanticise and glorify the nuclear arms race. Nuclear weapons are the Government's steroid fix. They would fail any drug test because they are addicted to the magic mushroom—the nuclear one. The Prime Minister wants every new one that is going: Trident, battlefield nuclear artillery, the Army tactical missile system, short-range nukes to follow on from Lance, the replacement of free-fall bombs—TASM—nuclear depth charges, submarine-launched cruise missiles, more United States F111 hydrogen bombers, and the air-launched cruise missile to follow. The Prime Minister calls it modernisation, but it is cheating on the spirit of the INF agreement. She is rearming when the people of the world want disarmament.

This new arms race, embodied in the Defence Estimates, goes against the grain of Britain's and the world's interests. A good deal of environmental pollution is nuclear. Chernobyl and Sellafield are examples of the abysmal record, and we can now add another example, that of Fernald in Cincinnati, Ohio, where thousands of tonnes of nuclear waste have been released into the atmosphere and the water supply in the production of material for nuclear weapons. The Government are at present sitting on a report of significantly higher than normal leukaemia and other cancer clusters at Aldermaston and Burghfield.

Tackling the poverty and famine that so scar the face and conscience of the world is not compatible with massive arms expenditure. The economies of the super-powers are overburdened. What perestroika is all about is to get money to the people, the consumers, in the Soviet Union, but that cannot be done while there is such high spending on defence. The United States is one of the biggest debtor nations of the world, and its defence commitments contribute to that.

There is also the serious danger of nuclear proliferation. The Government's flying of plutonium to the Japanese is a scandal if ever there was one. I was on a delegation led by my hon. Friend the Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) to see the Iraqi ambassador about Iraq's use of chemical weapons. He virtually said to us, "If we had nuclear weapons, we would use them in defence of our country. You in Britain have them; why shouldn't we?" Government practice is encouraging that sort of attitude. Instead of getting out of the nuclear arms race and encouraging others to do so, we are moving more and more to politically usable nuclear weapons.

The MOD is on record as saying that nuclear weapons can be used

"to demonstrate that NATO has the capability and will to use its nuclear weapons in a deliberate, politically controlled way . . . (with the objective of restoring deterrence by inducing the aggressor to make the decision to terminate his aggression and withdraw)".

Presumably that would justify the use of nuclear weapons against Argentina in a future Falklands conflict.

The new nuke-speak refers to the "single shot" or "selective strike". The Prime Minister is aiming towards another Hiroshima, or perhaps a future attack against a troublesome Third world nation. That would truly be a third world war. The Government even contemplate the use of Trident—the equivalent of 2,000 Hiroshimas, a global orgy of world death including our own.

Trident is not independent: its missiles are targeted and serviced by the United States and are under NATO—in reality, US—control. It is a potential first strike weapon. Trident's use, and our obliteration as a consequence, is in reality in the hands of the United States President, perhaps even Dan Quayle, who, in his inexperience, may be tempted to use it in the European theatre while he stays in his bunker avoiding the draft, so to speak.

The Foreign Secretary talks of Trident being an irreducible minimum deterrent, but when he is asked to define "irreducible", he says that it relates to what the environment has to face. I will tell him what the environment has to face. It is the super-powers reducing their nuclear weapons. So why are the Government going for the massive increase that Trident is all about? They even refuse to put it on the negotiating table. The Government's stance is:

"no further reductions in nuclear weapons in Europe until imbalance of conventional forces has been removed and a global ban on chemical weapons achieved."

What a foolish set of conditions. There should be simultaneous negotiations on all three aspects. That condition amounts to a block on further nuclear disarmament.

In their evidence to the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs the Government talk of

"the need for residual force entitlements to remain at, or near, current NATO levels."

Again, that is the minimum necessary. It says that after reductions residual ceilings will have to be near or at the current NATO force levels. The Ministry of Defence is blocking serious negotiated reductions by saying that it will not make any. That is the MOD's perpetual bleat, despite the opportunity for substantial reductions on both sides. One of those opportunities is in conventional forces, where there is a great opportunity for reductions.

A West German paper entitled "Security for Europe" talks about a phased reduction in tanks coming down from about 80,000 to 10,000 on each side by the year 2000. That would be an asymmetrical phased reduction. Front-line strike aircraft and helicopter gunships would be cut to an equal ceiling of 500 on each side. Then it says that we should reduce the armed forces and their associated armaments by exchanging military data, by mutual at-site inspections in the process of verification, and by reducing the number of troops and officers in Europe by half, with either totally demilitarised zones or at least partially demilitarised zones where the most offensive and dangerous weapons are taken out. It also talks of confidence-building measures so that we set up a European military danger reduction centre of the sort that was agreed between the United States and the Soviet Union in September 1987. We could perhaps set up international fax hot lines. One has been in existence between the United States and the Soviet Union since 1963.

In addition, there need to be measures to avoid a technological arms race. That is the basis for negotiation which should be actively pursued by the Government to bring down enormously our defence costs and those of the world.

In conclusion, I recommend a pamphlet produced by Labour Action for Peace entitled "Welfare or Warfare? Cutting the cost of militarism". It talks about how the cost has increased 28 per cent. in real terms under the Government. Since the war, £240,000 million has been spent on war preparations. It describes how we

[Mr. Harry Cohen]

consistently spend more than our industrial competitors and how our military commitments overseas plunge us into debt on our balance of payments. It also points out that, if we cut defence spending to the level of Japan or Germany or other of our competitors in western Europe, £6,000 million a year would be released for spending on civilian industries, health, education and other welfare services.

That is the direction in which we should be going. It is time that we turned back those high defence costs and made Britain, Europe and the world a safer place.

8.44 pm

Mr. Edward Leigh (Gainsborough and Horncastle): The hon. Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) is a likeable chap but his speech was absurd. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister does not want any weapon systems that are not strictly necessary for defence. She does not want to use nuclear weapons, but it is her public pronouncement that she would use them if necessary which prevents not just nuclear war but all war. That is a fact and the hon. Gentleman cannot escape it.

This debate has been characterised by some interesting speeches from the Labour Back Benches. It has also been characterised by a speech from the hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill), notable for what it did not say rather than for what it did.

The right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) is an honest man. He represents the "peace at any price" movement in the Labour party, but at least he is honest. The right hon. Member for Dudley, East (Dr. Gilbert) is honest. He represents the "peace from strength" movement in the Labour party, although I question whether it is still a movement. I suspect that it is a dwindling band of people.

But the hon. Member for Clackmannan, who speaks on behalf of the Labour party, seems to represent the "peace at any price unless it might lose us the next general election" movement within the Labour party. He spoke for 50 minutes. His speech was masterly. He dealt with a number of interesting issues which were not central to what the House should be talking about. He did not touch at all upon nuclear strategy, on which I am sure the House would have wanted to hear his views. When I pressed him all he said was:

"I am whole-heartedly behind the present moves to reduce the threat of nuclear war on the continent and throughout the world."—[*Official Report*, 19 October 1988; Vol. 138, c. 918.]

What does that mean? It means nothing and it was designed to mean nothing. That statement, which I enticed, was the only statement made by the hon. Gentleman on nuclear policy. It could have been made by the right hon. Member for Chesterfield or my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister. It is meaningless.

The hon. Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock) also made an interesting speech. We all know that she used to lead the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Her speech was also like the dog that did not bark in the night. Is she ratting on her unilateralism? Why did she not mention it? She is rather like a person who has wandered into a desert, sees a mirage in the distance and rushes helter-skelter for it. The desert that she has wandered into is the unilateralism that she espouses and which she realises, as a shrewd and ambitious politician, is losing the Labour party election after election. The mirage to which she and the whole Labour party are rushing towards is the belief that recent developments in the Soviet Union, glasnost and perestroika—those expressions that have a cosy Slavic ring about them—have fundamentally changed the ball game when it comes to defence policy.

When I listen to the Labour party I am reminded of a story that I was told recently in Lincoln cathedral of the rabbi and the poor man. The poor man goes to the rabbi and says, "Rabbi, rabbi, how can I live in dignity with eight children in two rooms?" The rabbi says, "Go out and bring your cow in from the field and you will live with dignity." He does it and things get worse. He goes to the rabbi and the rabbi tells him to bring in his chickens. Things get worse. The rabbi tells him to bring in his pig. Things get even worse. The poor man goes to the rabbi and tells him, "Things are desperate." The rabbi tells him, "Go back to your home. Take away the cow, chickens and the pig." The poor man comes back and says, "Yes, rabbi, things are perfect. I can live in peace and dignity."

Why is that relevant? It is simply because, like the poor man in that parable, the Labour party in the shape of Ernie Bevin in 1948 said that such had been the violations of Yalta by the Soviet Union that we had to form NATO. For 40 years violation after violation is heaped upon Europe. The Prague spring, Hungary—*[Interruption.]* It is no good Labour Members jeering. This is what lies behind the need for a strong defence policy. Finally, those developments culminated in the invasion of Afghanistan and the unilateral deployment of SS 20 missiles without provocation targeted on western cities. Those missiles are now being withdrawn, thanks to the wise statesmanship of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and President Reagan. Incidentally, the hon. Member for Deptford made an extraordinary comment on that yesterday.

The Soviet Union has withdrawn from Afghanistan —no thanks to Mr. Gorbachev but thanks to the brave resistance of the Mujahidin, resourced by western nations. Just because those two developments have taken place, like the poor man in that parable the Labour party says that all is now sweetness and light.

But what is the true test of detente? What is the true test of what is happening in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe? Has the Berlin wall been taken down? Is there freedom in Prague? We were reminded only yesterday of current troop strengths. The internationally respected International Institute for Strategic Studies reminded us that the Soviet Union is not reducing its conventional forces in Europe to produce the reasonable sufficiency that is required for peace. It reminded us that NATO countries have 22,000 tanks and the Warsaw Pact 53,000. In terms of artillery, NATO has 10,000 and the Warsaw Pact 35,000. NATO has 4,000 combat aircraft, whereas the Warsaw Pact has 7,000. NATO has 864 helicopters, whereas the Warsaw Pact has 1,165.

The recent developments in the Soviet Union have changed nothing. In many ways, things are worse than they were in the late 1970s. I say to my right hon. and hon. Friends on the Treasury Bench, and in particular to my right hon. Friends at the Treasury, that we would give the wrong message in the current climate, and during this delicate stage as the presidential election in the United States moves towards its climax, if there were to be a significant cut in the Defence Estimates and if they did not

keep pace with inflation. We have to keep on the plateau that was decreed when we formulated our NATO commitments.

My hon. Friends the Members for Weston-super-Mare (Mr. Wiggin) and for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow) dealt with the tank issue. I do not believe that they were entirely serious when they said that the Chieftain tank should not be replaced. That would be absurd. By the year 2010 the Chieftain tank will be 50 years old. There has to be a replacement for it. I hope that my right hon. and hon. Friends on the Treasury Bench will bear in mind the serious logistical and manpower problems that would arise if a British tank were not ordered. It is unthinkable that a decision could be taken not to order a British tank.

I hope also that my right hon. and hon. Friends will deal with the problems that would arise if undue pressure were to be put on certain companies not to provide a British gun. The negotiations are at a delicate stage. I suspect that I am preaching to the converted on the Treasury Bench, but British companies would be very seriously affected if the policy were to change, particularly with regard to exports to the middle east.

As for land disposal, an editorial in *The Daily Telegraph* this week pointed out that the Ministry of Defence is the third largest landowner in the country. It has about 3,000 sites. The Ministry needs to do much more about realising its precious assets. If necessary, a Minister must concentrate full-time on realising them. I have seen an example of the non-realisation of assets in my constituency at Hemswell. The saga has continued for about 10 years. Hemswell was abandoned by the Royal Air Force. Since then, very little has been done. Luckily, progress is now being made, thanks to free enterprise. RAF Binbrook, which the RAF is vacating this year, will provide the opportunity for a £100 million development of private housing. I hope that my right hon. and hon. Friends will grasp the opportunities that have been provided.

To return to my theme of peace through strength, if the viper withdraws its fangs the wise man does not lay down his stick. He does not throw it to the ground, as the right hon. Member for Chesterfield would do. Furthermore, he does not do what the leader of the Labour party wants to do—throw it to the ground and multilaterally offer part of it to the viper in return for one fang. Instead, the wise man adopts the statesmenship that has been followed by the President of the United States and the Prime Minister—to talk peace and modernise defences. As long as we have that, I shall have confidence in the Estimates and in the Treasury Bench.

8.54 pm

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): The argument that we should negotiate from strength is very dangerous. It might be mirrored exactly by those in the Soviet Union who hold the same daft ideas as have been put forward today. They might argue, "We need more nuclear weapons in order to negotiate with Thatcher and her cronies."

The Tories are talking about a totally immoral and un-Christian threat of mass extermination. They rise to their feet when there are terrorist outrages in Northern Ireland and decry the loss of human life and limb. They do it time after time, yet tonight they are talking about the use of weapons that would destroy millions of men, women and children. The hon. Member for Gainsborough and Horncastle (Mr. Leigh) confirmed that the Prime Minister is prepared to use nuclear weapons for international policy purposes. That is outrageous. The argument is that we should never use them but that they are there. If, however, nuclear weapons are to be a deterrent, there must be an intention to use them whenever the chiefs of staff and the Prime Minister decide that it is right to do so. The threat of mass extermination, involving the possession and deployment of nuclear weapons, is immoral.

The Minister failed earlier to answer the question that I put to him. If, as the Government claim, Polaris has kept the peace, why are we embarking on a replacement for it that will be between four and 10 times more powerful, depending on the number of missiles to be used? The expenditure on it is massive. Prestige—nothing else—is involved. The Government are spending £11 billion on Trident, yet some of their poodles in Bradford are to sack 9,000 workers just to save £3 million or £4 million. What are the correct priorities—to preserve jobs and services in Bradford or to spend £11 billion on producing an even more effective means of mass extermination?

The House welcomed the INF agreement and the legislation that provides immunity for Soviet inspectors to observe the reduction in nuclear forces. The Opposition welcomed it with enthusiasm, but modernisation is a euphemism for cheating. The Government are going behind the back of the INF agreement in order to increase and develop nuclear weapons. They were not involved in the INF agreement, apart from a few telephone calls between the Prime Minister and the President of the United States and a cup of tea with the bold and courageous leader, Mr. Gorbachev, on the tarmac at Brize Norton. However, by their foolish actions, the Government are potentially prejudicing a very important beginning; it affects only a tiny proportion of the nuclear weapons that are held in stockpiles throughout the world —about 3 or 4 per cent.

How does the Minister reconcile massive expenditure on nuclear weapons with our signature on the United Nations nuclear non-proliferation treaty? We are told that treaties involve a solemn obligation. We signed that treaty, as did 133 non-nuclear nations. They signed it in good faith, on the basis that they would not manufacture or deploy nuclear weapons. If that is good enough for them, why does the United Kingdom always have to have nuclear weapons?

What will the United Kingdom say to nations that have rejected nuclear weapons—"It is all right for us to have them but it is not all right for you to have them."? That argument can be turned around. Non-nuclear nations could say, "If the United Kingdom feels that it is necessary to have nuclear weapons for defence, why should we not do the same and break the treaty?" They have said in two review conferences that the nuclear signatories—the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union and the United States —are breaking the treaty. The Soviet Union and the United States, however, are following clause 6 of the treaty which commits signatories which are nuclear powers to negotiate in good faith to remove nuclear weapons. The only nuclear signatory to the United Nations nuclear non-proliferation treaty which is in breach of it is the United Kingdom

Do the Government care about their international obligations or do they not? When will they satisfy the 133

[Mr. Bob Cryer]

non-nuclear nations that they will follow clause 6 and, more important, by their actions persuade the non-nuclear nations not to follow our terrible example and go nuclear?

Mr. Rhodri Morgan (Cardiff, West): One way in which the United Kingdom could meet its obligations is for it to include in the Estimates an item for arms conversion. The matter should not divide the House. Whether arms reduction is achieved through multilateralism or unilateralism, it must be possible that, by the early 1990s, Britain will have dispensed with Trident and other nuclear warheads. I refer to warheads and other ports manufactured in such places as the atomic weapons establishment in Cardiff.

There should be an item in the Estimates to prepare nuclear establishments such as Aldermaston, Burghfield and Cardiff, which are heavily involved in the manufacture of the British nuclear deterrent, for the possibility of converting to civilian production. They have done it before. Space age materials such as uranium, beryllium, zirconium and titanium are of great value to the hospital service and for specialised machinery used elsewhere.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. This is becoming a speech, not an intervention.

Mr. Cryer: I am most grateful to my hon. Friend, who has made a valuable point. If the Government intend to support moves towards peace, they should provide in the Estimates for some skills to be transferred. Although only a nominal number of people may be involved at first, it is an important principle. The Government could usefully embark on retraining for peace as a demonstration of what they often proclaim, although their actions indicate the reverse.

Why can other NATO countries be non-nuclear? The Prime Minister went to Canada and spoke to the Canadian Prime Minister. Did she rebuke him because the Canadians do not allow nuclear weapons on their soil? They will not, for example, have nuclear-powered cruise missiles. The only time that there were cruise missiles on Canadian soil, there was an absolute embargo on their use for nuclear purposes. They were flight-tested only as a contribution to NATO. The Canadians' stance remains that they will not have nuclear weapons on their soil.

Canada is not the only member of NATO. The Government have an opportunity to push NATO away from what is called "flexible response", but which involves first use of nuclear weapons. Roughly speaking, the idea is that if the Soviets book Sealink and the rest to come here to take us over and we fail to hold them with conventional forces, we should use nuclear weapons and effectively blow up the world.

NATO's first use of nuclear weapons should be stopped. We should move back from the brink, not endorse the idea of first use, which is potentially disastrous.

If those who believe in nuclear weapons are so frightened of the Soviet Union—their leader has described Mr. Gorbachev as bold and courageous—they should take a suicide pill, not support mass extermination. Nobody will come to the House saying that we will have a Division on whether to use nuclear weapons and that hon. Members should go to the Aye or No Lobby to establish who makes the decision. The Prime Minister and perhaps the Secretary of State for Defence and a few cronies from the chiefs of staff will make the decision. How undemocratic that is! It is an affront to civilisation.

Those who believe in the threat of mass extermination should commit suicide and let us get on with living. There might be much enthusiasm for the Prime Minister setting an example. That might be more widely welcomed on Conservative Benches than she thinks. There is a very strong case for getting rid of nuclear weapons.

I have been a unilateralist since the early 1960s, when I was a member of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. I believe that we can persuade the vast majority of people in the United Kingdom of the sense and sensibility of this course. That is the principle that we should stick by.

9.4 pm

Mr. John Browne (Winchester): Before beginning my six-minute speech, may I declare an interest as an active member of the Territorial Army.

In three weeks' time, we shall observe Remembrance Sunday. This year, it will be of special significance because it will be the 70th anniversary of 1918—the end of the great war, or the war to end all wars. Unfortunately, at the same time, we shall be remembering the dead of the second world war, a war brought about by an aggressor who gained encouragement from our apparent weakness. We should all remember that and vow, this Remembrance Sunday, to ourselves and for future generations that no apparent weakness on our part will lead to war. We really should remember that, particularly when we come to defence budgets.

Peace is always under threat and I would like to mention as many of the threats as time allows. First, there is the change in the perceived military threat. History shows us that there are three basic kinds of peace. There is the peace of death that greeted Germany at the end of the second world war. There is the peace of deterrence under which we live now on an East-West basis. Thirdly, there is the peace of détente—for example, the present peace between Germany and France. On a strategic European basis, we have grown accustomed to the peace of deterrence, but Mr. Gorbachev appears—and I emphasise the word "appears"—to offer a chance to move towards a new type of peace, a peace of détente.

What are they really up to in the Russian camp? Since the INF treaty we hear increased talk not about defence but about defensive defence. Meanwhile, the Soviets maintain their teaching, tactics, organisation and equipment for fast, surprise attack. As yet there is no reality in defensive defence.

Secondly, I would like to mention the cultural threat. Mr. Gorbachev is not only popular, but very well-known throughout the West. He is known not merely as Gorbachev, but as Gorby. He has proposed a new type of peace, that of detente, which is very attractive to the western grass roots. It sounds good, as if it might be cheaper. He also has great ability, using his western style charisma, to talk over the heads of Western leaders and negotiators directly to the grass roots throughout the western world. He is widening the defence debate from out of chambers like this to the grass roots throughout the Western world.

Today, everyone seems to have a view on defence. Unfortunately, many of those views are based on a woeful lack of knowledge and a belief that defence is somehow

simple when, in reality, it is extremely complex. I believe that the Government have a duty now to improve not only the knowledge but the quality of thinking about defence in this wider debate. We must not be content merely to issue information from the Ministry of Defence on a passive basis but must take an active role in teaching, organising seminars, and bringing trade union leaders, lawyers, school teachers, bankers, students and those sort of people into these seminars so that they learn to think in a more informed way about defence and to participate in quality debate. In this respect I very much support the parliamentary armed services scheme.

My third point is about defence spending. At a time when the strategic East-West peace of deterrence is changing—even, apparently, towards a peace of détente—new and hitherto unexpected enemies may be tempted to threaten us. It would be very unwise for us to assume that the Soviet Union is, or will remain our sole enemy. I note with interest that the intended exercises in Switzerland this year are not only against the orange forces from the east but against the blue forces from the west.

Defence spending in the United Kingdom is a measure not just of our money or wealth but of our national commitment and will to defend ourselves. It is watched worldwide. Costa Mendez saw that before the Falklands. It is an example to our NATO allies. It is a message to our potential enemies. Any effective cut in our defensive capability would be a staggering thing to contemplate at the moment, particularly in the light of the forthcoming American presidential election and the problems of burden-sharing. I therefore strongly support my right hon. Friend in his struggle with the Treasury for the realistic funding that he asked for at the very beginning.

Mr. Morgan: £1·4 billion.

Mr. Browne: Yes, £1·4 billion. Obviously, we must strive for value for money and cutting waste. But cutting waste is not the same as cutting costs. Some costs are necessary to do business.

There are many things that I would like to suggest, but one I should like to make in the last ten seconds is this: why do we not allow the men and women on the spot in the armed forces to suggest cuts, and give them a financial incentive for doing so—maybe 50 per cent. of the cut achieved in the first year—as a bonus to their pay? Then we would get cuts made by people inside the armed forces and not exclusively by people outside the armed forces who have little or no practical experience, and often risk in their recommendations the cutting of bone rather than fat.

9.10 pm

Mr. Sean Hughes (Knowsley, South): It is customary in defence White Paper debates to pay tribute to the men and women in our armed forces, and I add my support and that of my party to that which has been expressed by right hon. and hon. Members on both sides of the House.

I also echo the demand made so eloquently by my hon. Friends the Members for Eccles (Miss Lestor), for Renfrew, West and Inverclyde (Mr. Graham) and for Motherwell, North (Dr. Reid) for an inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the sale of two former Royal Ordnance factories. My hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Attercliffe (Mr. Duffy), in a very powerful speech, spoke of the lulling, almost deceiving, presentation of the White Paper. My only disagreement with him is that I would remove the qualification "almost".

After the hilarity which greeted the 1987 White Paper's attempt at historical perspective, some of us thought that the Secretary of State, or at least his script writers, might have been a bit more circumspect this year—but not a bit of it. This year we are not given just history; we are entertained to a consideration of theory.

As I read through chapter 1 of this year's White Paper, I was reminded of a similar publication which established historical fact and arrived at a considered judgment in much the same way, "1066 And All That" by Sellar and Yeatman. Hon. Members familiar with that classic will recall how the authors were able to classify everything as either "Good Things" or "Bad Things" so that the Norman conquest, the great plague and the American war of independence were all good things, while Mary Tudor, political economy and Napoleon were all bad things. The defence White Paper is written in exactly that style. The big difference is that Sellar and Yeatman wrote their classic as a spoof. I take it that the Government are deadly serious.

Let us remind the House of just one gem from the White Paper, although as *The Observer* review of "1066 And All That" said:

"Quotation is hopeless: every sentence clamours for it."

In paragraph 4 on page 5 of the White Paper is a confident assertion that

"Soviet operational art . . . has its roots in a long-standing tradition of defending the homeland by taking the offensive."

I do not want to exaggerate, but that is a bit rich coming from the Tories. If we take the year 1815 as the date when we became top nation—I cannot remember whether that is a phrase from the White Paper of from "1066 And All That"—a cursory glance at the history books suggests that we have been involved in at least 52 significant wars. In all our 52 wars of self defence, we have had two opium wars, two Sikh wars, two Maori wars, three Burmese wars and four Ashanti wars. We completed a third Maratha war and the eighth and ninth Kaffir wars. We even managed an invasion of Afghanistan. Indeed, to prove to the Russians that anything they might do we could do better, we invaded and occupied that country twice. *[Interruption.]* Not since 1815.

It gives me no pleasure to recall those unsavoury events which earned our country such a sinister reputation in so many parts of the world and prompted so many people to suspect our motives and fear our ambitions. If we use history to demonstrate the threat perception of the enemy, we must have the gumption to realise that our enemy will use our history to demonstrate their threat perception of us. It helps to have a more balanced view. It helps to move away from the infantile historical perspectives that seem to characterise the Government's defence White Papers. The Prime Minister had the cheek to tell the Conservative women's national conference in May this year that the Labour party needs to have a better understanding of history. Even the Prime Minister's impertinence pales in comparison with that of the Secretary of State for Education and Science who, on his recent visit to a Moscow school, declared to his hosts, with Mellor-like diplomacy, that we all had to acknowledge that history was a problem for the Soviets. It is not half as much of a problem for them as it is for the Tory party.

It is not just the Government's historical background that is inaccurate. In their statistical comparisons between

[Mr. Sean Hughes]

NATO and the Warsaw pact inaccuracies abound. The Government constantly talk up the preparedness of the Warsaw pact compared to NATO. I should say in passing that that is a dangerous line of argument for a Government who have been in a position to so domething about that for nine and a half years.

According to the White Paper, it is not just in military doctrine that the Warsaw pact displays a great conformity. It is displayed in economic structures, personnel reliability and inter-pact co-operation. The casual White Paper reader must be under the impression that the Warsaw pact is some great monolithic cohesive mass. There is not even a hint, despite the speech of the hon. Member for Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Wilkinson), that events in Poland, Hungary, Romania or Czechoslovakia are suggestive of some diversity, to say nothing of events within the Soviet Union itself from as far apart as Latvia on the Baltic to Azerbaydzhan in the south.

I have no inclination to argue that the Warsaw pact represents a loose association of democratic states, free to come and go as they please. However, for the Government to argue that the pact is a great monolith is nonsense. All the military experts I have read now argue that any comparison between the armed strength of the Warsaw pact and NATO, if it is to be meaningful, must take account of the potential for unreliability within the pact.

A similar word of caution must be given to the casual White Paper reader when the Government indulge in their annual bean count of who has what and where. The White Paper make a slight genuflection to the problems inherent in comparison by stating that

"the complexities of comparing capabilities of specific equipments are well illustrated in the case of tanks."

However, 12 paragraphs later it dismisses that acknowledgement by saying:

"older Warsaw Pact tanks, for example, are more easily written off on paper than on the North German plain . . . it is a false and dangerous delusion to discount the reality of numbers."

That is the problem with the way in which the White Paper argues. We are back to a black and white interpretation of everything. No one is suggesting——

Mr. Julian Brazier (Canterbury): Twenty years ago the imbalance in the number of tanks was frequently thought by experts to be balanced by the supposed technological superiority of Western tanks. Today the modern Soviet tanks—they are building many new ones at a much faster rate than the West—are, in some respects, superior to ours.

Mr. Hughes: I shall come to the qualitative comparison in a moment.

No one is suggesting that we discount the reality of numbers. We are simply saying, as my hon. Friend the Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) said yesterday, that if we are to have a meaningful defence debate we should try to discover what the reality is. As the White Paper makes specific reference to the complexities of the tank comparison, I shall take that as an example. According to the Pentagon's 1988 assessment of the Soviet threat, there are 53,000 Soviet main battle tanks in the area from the Atlantic to the Urals. The same figure is given in the International Institute for Strategic Studies report that was published yesterday. According to the report of Senator Carl Levin, the chairman of the Senate arms services sub-committee on conventional forces and alliance defence, there are 52,200. According to the White Paper, there are 51,000, which is proof that it is easier to wipe off between 1,200 and 2,000 tanks on paper than it is to wipe them off of a north German plain.

Perhaps the Minister will explain that discrepancy, because normally the White Paper talks of the Warsaw pact's capability. Why is there an underestimate, unless it is to enable the Government to back their claim that over half the Warsaw pact's tanks are modern?

The White Paper claims that in the Atlantic to the Ural region and on the central front more than half the Soviet tanks are modern, but the Pentagon claims that the figure is about 40 per cent.

To prove that the Warsaw pact not only has a quantitative lead but is catching up with NATO's qualitative lead, the Government not only flagrantly wipe out between 1,200 and 2,000 tanks but change their definition of "modern". By their definition, the Chieftain tank, which was introduced in the mid-1960s—to which my right hon. Friend the Member for Dudley, East (Dr. Gilbert) referred and which the hon. Member for Weston-super-Mare (Mr. Wiggin) yesterday referred to as an aging weapon—is not sufficiently modern for Britain and needs to be replaced by the Challenger tank. In the same breath, they argue that all Warsaw pact tanks introduced in the mid-1960s must be classed as modern and so, QED, they prove that over half the Warsaw pact's tanks are modern.

Everything that I have read suggests that the greatest danger from the Warsaw pact is a surprise attack, although it is difficult for the layman to imagine a surprise attack of over 50,000 tanks. As the decision to go nuclear would be taken early in the hostilities, speed is of the essence. When we talk of large numbers of tanks, we must cope with what Mearsheimer has identified as the "crossing-the-T" phenomenon. Simply put, there is not enough room for the attacker to place all of its 24 divisions at the point of the attack. As the size of the attacking force increases, the logistical as well as the command and control problems increase proportionately:

"Although the notion is perhaps counter-intuitive, bigger divisions are not necessarily better divisions when an attacking force is attempting to effect a blitzkrieg. A Pact defensive would have to traverse the obstacle-ridden terrain which covers almost all of Germany and restricts the movements of large armoured units."

In other words, there is a danger of a monumental traffic jam in the middle of central Europe. Instead, the White Paper conjures up the nightmare of swift, massive progress.

In a section of the White Paper entitled "Quality of Men", paragraph 16 makes a dismissive comment that

"Soviet military doctrine. . . does not require the soldier in the field to show initiative. . .".

The observation on Warsaw pact training does not exactly fit the Government's nightmare of a huge, monolithic, well-trained and up-to-date machine.

The White Paper declares that the Warsaw pact's plans are as well-rehearsed as NATO's. The Warsaw pact declares 22 exercises involving 13,000 or more soldiers, while the White Paper lists 23 major NATO exercises in 1987. No reference is made to the fact that, as Jonathan Dean, the former American ambassador to the mutual and

balanced force reductions talks reminded us last year, NATO's annual exercises of 250,000 men and more are over twice the size of the largest Warsaw pact exercises.

The White Paper refers to the geographical advantages enjoyed by the Warsaw pact, with consequent benefits for its reinforcement capability. In terms of the Warsaw pact's ability to achieve a quick victory—we cannot overemphasise the importance attached to speed when considering the doctrine of flexible response—geography works to NATO's advantage. That is why, as General Bernard Rogers, who until last year was supreme allied commander of NATO forces in Europe, said:

"It is important to remember when assessing the role of non-strategic weapons that numbers per se are not critically decisive. It would be as foolish for us to try to match each Soviet nuclear system with one of ours as it would be foolish for us to try to match them man for man and tank for tank at the conventional level. . . As a defensive alliance we do not need to match the Warsaw Pact one for one in any category of forces".

Why then has the defence debate been conducted throughout the country at that level? It is because that suits the Government. The Government do not want a defence debate. They simply want an exchange of slogans. Some Conservative Members' speeches towards the end of the debate were a perfect example of that. We should all remember that, when we relegate the defence debate to an exchange of slogans, we play into the Government's hands.

The Conservative party acts as though it has a monopoly on patriotism. The tone is set by the Prime Minister. Returning from a NATO summit in March this year, she said that the Labour party had

"no memory, no stomach, no spine and no guts".

The Conservative party had already plunged into new depths in the general election last year with its now infamous poster, depicting a young soldier with his hands raised in surrender, and entitled, "Labour's defence policy." Conservative Members may think that is smart, but that poster and their attitude, which was repeated tonight, are deeply offensive to millions of Labour party members and supporters whose patriotism is unchallengeable.

Sir Antony Buck (Colchester, North): Some of us are prepared to concede that we do not have a monopoly on patriotism, but we are interested in knowing the defence policy of the hon. Gentleman and his colleagues.

Mr. Hughes: The great divide in defence polices in Britain cannot be so shamefully characterised as being between the patriotic and the treacherous, nor can it be so ridiculously dismissed, as the Prime Minister seems to think, as between those with stomach, spine and guts and those without those attributes. The great divide is between those who want to find a way of removing the nuclear option from the strategy of the two blocs and those who believe that the possession of nuclear weapons, however tenuously independent, somehow confers on the owner the title of super-power.

The White Paper pompously declares on its opening page:

"More open internal policies, which bring the Soviet people more information about their own country and the world outside, are self-evidently desirable"

—and that from the Government of GCHQ, "Spycatcher" and Zircon.

The misinformation should stop. The ludicrous warping of history should stop. The implication, the very meaning of the doctrine of flexible response should be spelt out so that the people of this country know what it is. General Rogers has written:

"the people of the sixteen sovereign nations that constitute the Atlantic Alliance have a decisive role to play concerning our strategy. No NATO strategy wil be credible or effective unless there is a broad-based consensus within the Alliance that it is appropriate, unless there is substantial support for it, and unless there is a firm commitment to provide whatever measures are necessary to sustain it."

I do not disagree with that. But we cannot have a broad-based consensus, substantial support or firm commitments for and about strategies which are deliberately obscured. That is why the claim at Brighton last week by the Secretary of State, that we must all admit that the Government's defence policy was the will of the British people, is so ludicrously absurd.

We could make a start tonight. We could see how much time the Minister allocates to the doctrine of flexible response. We could see how much time he devotes to commenting on the recent words of Robert McNamara, the former American Secretary of State and the man who, more than any other human being alive, was responsible for formulating the doctrine of flexible response. We could see how much time he devotes to agreeing with or rebutting McNamara's comments that most Americans, and to that we can add Britons,

"are simply unaware that NATO strategy calls for early initiation of the use of nuclear weapons in a conflict with the Soviets. Eighty per cent. of them believe we would not use such weapons unless the Soviets used them first. They would be shocked to learn that they are mistaken. And they would be horrified to be told that senior military commanders themselves believe that to carry out our present strategy would lead to the destruction of society. But those are the facts."

Whenever we press the Government about this, they reply that it is not the use of nuclear weapons that is of value but their deterrent effect. The doctrine of flexible response is mentioned on three occasions in the White Paper. Most of us had believed that the nuclear weapon was always a weapon of deterrence, and was used as a threat to prevent the enemy from using their nuclear weapon first. That is not the role of nuclear weapons in flexible response. There is a clear commitment that, faced with a conventional attack from the Warsaw pact, NATO would go nuclear at some stage.

I am under no illusion that the 1 million Warsaw pact soldiers assembled in the central region are there for their health, or that the 50,000 or so tanks are there for lack of garage space, but common sense tells me that the Warsaw pact must have the odd suspicion about us. It should be the role of the British Government to reduce tension, and they should not lag behind in every initiative for peace. We hear a great deal from the Government about the need to modernise our weapons. We hear nothing about the need to modernise our strategy.

The White Paper proclaims 1987 as a successful year for the Conservative defence policy and points to the INF treaty as proof. I have always held that it is one of the more endearing characteristics of Conservative Members that, while they resolutely refuse to accept responsibility for any of their own actions, they consistently claim credit for the achievements of others. It ought to be remembered that, since the death of Stalin, the influence of the Soviet military in the formulation of Soviet defence policy has grown. That is why the dismissal of Defence Minister Sokolov and Marshals Koldunov and Konstantinov, after

[Mr. Hughes]

the Matthias Rust affair, facilitated an improvement in East-West relations. It is a particularly fitting verdict on the Government that the aerobatics of a West German adolescent have done more for international peace and rapprochement than nine and a half years of Conservative Government. It is no wonder that there is an obligatory Churchill quotation in every defence White Paper, because the Government are set in a cold war time warp. The exciting things that are happening in the world are passing us by.

I believe that changes taking place in the Soviet Union would have taken place, and will take place, with or without hiccups, whether Gorbachev is there or not, because we are seeing there a collapse of a societal model. Nevertheless, we should not underestimate Gorbachev's personal contribution. The Prime Minister has to come to the terms with the fact that he is there, and with the fact that Brezhnev is no longer with us, even if there is speculation about the length of his absence. She has to come to terms with the fact that Stalin is no longer there.

Everything that the Government do is geared to the nuclear pretence. To that end, they unilaterally reduced spending on conventional armaments, bilaterally agreed to rent missiles from the United States and multilaterally agreed at Montebello to modernise the nuclear stock. Unilateral, bilateral and multilateral, all at the same time. What a shambles. To hide the shambles of their policy, Conservative Members try to turn these debates into discussion of a Labour Government's defence estimates —as if the Tory party had not been in power for nine and a half years.

We are in the second year of this Parliament. If recent experience is anything to go by, we are probably three years away from the next general election. It is the duty of the Opposition, in scrutinising the Government's plans, to set out their own objectives. Our objectives are clear. We believe in a well-defended Britain. We remain committed members of NATO and we want to move this country and ultimately both power blocs away from nuclear dependence.

Conservative Members have pressed my hon. Friends to say what proportion of GNP we would spend on defence. It would be irresponsible, and anyway impossible, to say precisely how much it will cost to do this and precisely how much it will cost to do that. We do not have the advice which is available in government from professional advisers. We do not know what the world situation or the domestic situation will be when we come to office, and before acting we will want to consult our allies, but our objective is clear.

I do not know why Conservative Members are getting so excited, because I chose my words very carefully. Lest the same thing befalls me as befell Senator Biden, let me refer to the document from which I took those words. On page 67, under the title "Defence", it is stated:

> "It would be irresponsible, and anyway impossible, to say by precisely how much we shall do this, and precisely how much it will cost. We do not have the advice which is available in government from professional advisers; we do not know what the world situation—or the domestic economic situation —will be when we come to office; and before acting, we should want to consult our allies. But our objective is clear."

That comes from "The Right Approach", a statement of Conservative aims published two and a half years before the 1979 general election. As usual, it is one rule for them and another for the rest of us. I have great pleasure in commending to the House the amendment in the name of my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition.

9.36 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces (Mr. Roger Freeman): The hon. Member for Stockton, North (Mr. Cook), who made a maiden appearance as defence Whip at the Dispatch Box last night, referred to the armed forces parliamentary scheme which is, as he explained to the House, a trial programme to give Members of Parliament a chance to be assigned to an armed forces unit for three weeks a year. It provides experience of the forces, particularly for those, like myself, too young to have done national service. I am glad that he found it a success, and I hope that the scheme continues. The late Member for Epping Forest, Sir John Biggs-Davison, would have approved of the scheme. We miss him tonight. We miss his expert and cogent contribution to this annual debate.

Many questions have been asked during the debate, and I shall try to cover as many of them as I can. The hon. Member for Sheffield, Attercliffe (Mr. Duffy) asked me 14 questions in a very brief speech. He would not expect me to answer all of them, but I shall ensure that Ministers, including myself, respond to all the points that he has raised. I shall ensure that either I or one of my colleagues responds to the question that my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) put to me.

The hon. Member for Knowsley, South (Mr. Hughes) —if I could have his attention for a moment—argued that the Ministry of Defence and NATO have in some way overestimated Soviet conventional capacity in Europe, particularly tank capacity. If he is right, then obviously the Soviets pose less of a threat, but how does that square with the official Opposition's argument throughout the two days of debate that they want increased spending on conventional weapons? Why did he not mention the increased Soviet capabilities in their submarine fleet and long-range aircraft, presumably on account of a perceived threat on the central front? He took in isolation one category of weapons system and did not paint a fair picture.

The hon. Member for Stockton, North and my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries also spoke about the well-being of the young men and women of our armed forces and, particularly, about their pay, allowances, accommodation and opportunities for house purchase. I can assure both hon. Members and the House that we treat those matters most seriously.

On coming into office in 1979, the Government put service pay on a level that was based on the earnings of those in comparable civilian employment. In every year since then, although there was staging in two years, the Government have honoured the recommendations of the independent Armed Forces Pay Review Body. We believe that service men and women generally regard their pay as both fair and reasonable.

The House will know that earlier in the year my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced the outcome of a comprehensive review of armed forces' allowances. It was the first review of that sort to be carried out for many years. It was designed to ensure that service allowances would be up to date, cost-effective and appropriate to the requirements of modern service life. As a result, some

significant improvements have been made. For example, we recognise that nowadays many service personnel choose to buy and live in their own homes. We have therefore substantially increased the financial assistance that is available to them when they are required to move home following a posting to a new location. We have removed many differences which existed between the treatment of single and married personnel. It will take some time for the full effects of these changes to become apparent. We believe that the majority of service personnel recognise that the broad thrust of what we are doing is right.

The hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) referred yesterday to the demographic trough and the effect that this would have on recruitment and on service manning. The three services have recognised the implications of the trough for many years. We take it seriously, and are taking active steps to ensure that we can compete with private sector employers in what, as far as the armed forces are concerned, is a voluntary service. About 5 per cent. of our armed forces' personnel are women, and the figure is much higher in the United States and in Canada. We have no intention of changing our rules on no combat duty for women. We do not intend to change the rules about discharging women when they become pregnant. There is room, however, for the employment of more women in the armed forces. That will go some way to dealing with the demographic trough.

Mr. Wilkinson: It is much to be welcomed that women are to fly as rear crew members in AWACS. Other armed forces allow women to fly communications aeroplanes. As the Royal Air Force has a pilot shortage, could it not do the same?

Mr. Freeman: I cannot give my hon. Friend any assurance that women will occupy cockpits. I cannot give him any comfort on that score. However, we shall keep the matter under review. He is right to say that women will fly in AWACS.

The hon. Members for Rhondda (Mr. Rogers) and for Attercliffe referred to defence expenditure. I repeat for the benefit of the House the three salient features that are expressed clearly in the "Statement on the Defence Estimates". First, since 1979 to the current year there has been a 20 per cent. increase in real terms in the defence budget. Secondly, we spend 4·7 per cent. of our gross domestic product on defence. That is a higher proportion than that of any of our major European allies. Thirdly, when it comes to the future—I share the frustration of the right hon. Member for Dudley, East (Dr. Gilbert) that this debate comes first—the House must await the Autumn Statement.

My hon. Friend the Member for Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Wilkinson) asked for a defence review. Gone are the days when, especially under the last Labour Government, there were periodic reviews. The process of budgeting and reviewing commitments is a much more sophisticated system nowadays. It is a continuous process. We shall not take any special steps to have a major defence review. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has to face difficult decisions all the time, and we shall take them regularly. As regards BAOR, there are no steps afoot to change the role of 1st British Corps or our commitment to NATO.

The right hon. Member for Dudley, East mentioned the problems of developing a command system for the type 23 frigate. They have been faced up to with the cancellation last year of the contract for the original command system and the subsequent placings of competitive project definition contracts for a solution based on the latest technology. It is true that the first type 23s will enter service without a fully operational command system, but their weapons and sensors will be capable of independent action, enabling the ships to fulfil their operational tasks.

Mr. O'Neill: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for conceding that the command and control system will not be available to more than the first of fleet, because the impression we received last year was that only the first of fleet would not have the command and control system. As he has now admitted that this is so, what limitations will there be on the operational capabilities of the frigates when they come into service?

Mr. Freeman: We expect no significant operational limitations. The number of ships affected will depend on the success of the contracts that we have placed.

My hon. Friend the Member for Ilford, South (Mr. Thorne) raised the subject of the Gurkhas. I repeat the commitment which Ministers have given before about the future of the Gurkhas after we leave Hong Kong. I know that the Select Committee plans a visit to Nepal towards the end of the year, and I hope to follow it there. The Government will announce their conclusions next year about how that commitment to the Gurkhas will be fulfilled.

My hon. Friend also asked about the AWACS offset deal. Boeing's first report listed contracts totalling $141 million, and, following our evaluation, we have allowed a total offset credit of $96·5 million. The second report listed contracts totalling about $192 million, bringing the cumulative total of contracts placed to $333 million. We are now evaluating the second report—*[Interruption.]* There is a long way to go, but a long time is still available.

My hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries and many other right hon. and hon. Members spoke about low flying and aircraft safety. The need for training in low flying has been recognised by all for some time and accepted by successive Governments. There is understandable public concern about the risks in low-flying training. It came to the fore as a result of the tragic accident on 9 August in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Penrith and The Border (Mr. Maclean), when two Tornado aircraft engaged in training at night were involved in a mid-air collision and four aircrew were killed. A board of inquiry is still sitting. As a result of that accident, a detailed re-examination of the procedures for low-flying training at night has taken place.

It is important to bear in mind that, of major aircraft accidents in the past five years, only about one in four has occurred when the aircraft was engaged in low-flying training. In those cases, the primary cause of the accident was not always attributable to the low-flying training itself. Nevertheless, changes have been made following the re-examination.

With effect from 10 October, steps have been taken to allocate separate days by command: strike command, Royal Air Force Germany, and the United States Air Force; and aircraft will move, well separated, broadly in a clockwise direction around the United Kingdom low-flying system.

[Mr. Freeman]

In future we intend to introduce a computerised notification and warning system in the United Kingdom low-flying system, based on a central computer with a larger network of terminals extending to every low flying squadron. Such a system will accept notification of sortie details and in return provide information on other aviation activities, warnings and restrictions in low flying areas—information which is now fed manually into the system. I hope that the House accepts that the steps that we have taken as a result of the tragic accident have been in the right direction——

Mr. Bill Walker: As my hon. Friend knows, I fully support the necessity for low-flying operations, which are carried out extensively throughout Scotland and in my constituency. Will he bear in mind the good public relations that we obtain from the use of the helicopter flight at Leuchars, which substantially offsets the aggravation caused by low, noisy and fast jets? We can explain it by saying that they both come from the same air force, and therefore that the benefit of the helicopters substantially offsets the disadvantages of the jets.

Mr. Freeman: I can give my hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) and also the hon. and learned Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Campbell) and my hon. Friend the Member for Devon, North (Mr. Speller) that assurance.

Dr. Reid *rose——*

Mr. Freeman: No, I am answering my hon. Friend.

I can give an assurance that when we reach a decision —and we have not done so yet—about search and rescue deployment for those areas of the United Kingdom about which we have not made an announcement we will take into account the benefit that, in the minds of the public, search and rescue is perhaps the acceptable face of low flying.

Dr. Reid *rose——*

Mr. Freeman: I am sorry, but I have only 10 minutes left. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will forgive me, but I must make progress.

I shall deal briefly with the points raised by other hon. Members concerning the reserve forces.

Mr. Michael Jopling (Westmorland and Lonsdale) *rose——*

Several Hon. Members: Oh!

Mr. Jopling: My hon. Friend has made a most important statement regarding low flying, which causes immense difficulties in many parts—especially the north of England. Will he give an undertaking that the welcome and important announcement that he has made tonight means that never again in future ought pilots of low-flying aircraft find that there are other low-flying aircraft in the same area without their knowledge?

Mr. Freeman: No, I cannot give my right hon. Friend that assurance. The assurance I can give him is that, in a particular area, both aircraft will be well separated and flying in the same direction. I hope that that answers his concern.

Dr. Reid *rose——*

Mr. Freeman: No, I must finish answering the remaining points.

I must answer my hon. Friends the Members for Weston-super-Mare (Mr. Wiggin) and for Kingswood (Mr. Hayward), who raised the question of the reserve forces. The equipment used by the Territorial Army and the Regular Army is the same as they have the same role. We have taken positive steps to increase the bounty, particularly for those who have served for more than three years.

My hon. Friend the Member for Kingswood specifically asked me about over-commitment of the Territorial Army. We shall ensure that all TA units are made well aware that the minimum requirement is clearly explained. It is wrong that TA soldiers who are giving their own time should become over-committed and be expected to do too much. That way lies bad recruitment.

This has been a one-sided debate, because most of the debate has been on the Opposition Benches. *[Interruption.]* Then Opposition Members have not been listening. The hon. Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas) rightly said that there is room on the Labour Benches for only two positions that, to use his words, are credible, and that the electorate would understand. He said that the first was to keep Trident. That is not only the policy of this Government but has, by extension to Polaris, been the policy of all Governments, both Labour and Conservative, since the war. I may say to the right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn), who asked a specific question about targeting and Trident, that Trident does not depend—I repeat, does not depend—on a United States satellite system for its operation and targeting. It is independent of that system. The right hon. Gentleman does not believe me, but I give the House that assurance.

The second of the credible options to which the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West referred was to scrap our independent deterrent, and by definition to scrap also United States bases. That is what he talked about as being the credible alternative. That is in the amendment of the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn). That is the neutralist position that the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West believes is the second alternative. The neutralist position is unacceptable to the British electorate, and any political party that adopted that platform would become permanently unelectable.

Dr. Reid: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. May I bring to your attention the fact that the Minister is not replying to the debate? He has refused to give way to me, and has refused to answer questions about the Royal Ordnance factory in Bishopton.

Mr. Speaker: Order. There are five minutes to go, and we have no idea what the Minister is going to say. As far as I am concerned, what he has been saying is in order, and that is my responsibility.

Mr. Freeman: The hon. Member for Dunfermline, West also said that there was no room for shilly-shallying as far as the Opposition Front Bench was concerned. He was referring directly to his right hon. and hon. Friends on the Front Bench. I think that shilly-shallying, by his definition, is what we get from the Opposition Front Bench. As far as my hon. Friends and I can understand, their policy is to believe in complete nuclear disarmament in return for an

insignificant Soviet nuclear disarmament. That is what "something for something" means. It means all our strategic nuclear capability in return for some of the Soviets' capability.

According to the right hon. Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Healey), who spoke at the Labour party conference, that equation is four of our submarines—Polaris or Trident—in return for eight Soviet submarines. That is an inadequate policy to place before the House and the electorate. Furthermore, their policy would be to shelter under the United States nuclear umbrella, which is a dishonest policy.

Mr. Cryer: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Freeman: No. The hon. Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer) said yesterday that he did not know into which Lobby he would pass tonight when we vote on the Opposition's amendment. He said that he would be thinking very carefully about which way he, and presumably some of his colleagues, would be voting in the first Division. Presumably, by definition, the right hon. Member for Chesterfield will also be thinking very seriously. I ask both of them, and their colleagues, to consider three aspects of the Opposition Front Bench policy that we have been discussing in the past two days, and to decide whether they can support that policy. First, the Opposition Front Bench——

Mr. Cryer *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Minister is not giving way.

Mr. Freeman: First, the Opposition Front Bench specifically made no commitment to scrap Trident on coming into office, which they will not in 1992. Instead, they have suggested an inadequate barter compromise: all our nuclear capability in return for some of the Soviets' nuclear capability. Secondly, there is no mention in the Opposition's official policy of removing American bases. Thirdly, there is no promise to switch any defence savings to social programmes in the United Kingdom. If the hon. Gentleman votes with them tonight——

Mr. Rogers: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. It is two minutes to ten.

Mr. Rogers: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Five right hon. and hon. Members have brought up the issue of Royal Ordnance factories, and the Minister has not the guts to answer.

Mr. Freeman: The hon. Gentleman's point of order was born of his frustration about the differences of opinion on the Opposition Benches between Opposition policy and the policy suggested and espoused by the hon. Member for Walton.

The policies advocated by the Opposition Front Bench spokesmen do not represent united Labour party policy. If they are offered to the electorate at the next general election, the Opposition will surely lose. Unless there is a radical change, the Labour party will remain permanently unelectable.

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 197, Noes 321.

Division No. 448] **[10 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Boyes, Roland
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Cousins, Jim
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fyfe, Maria
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles

Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Wall, Pat
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Alun Michael.

NOES

Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cartwright, John
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Sir Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Sir Charles
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis

Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertfordshire N)*
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'cester)*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Sir Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones and
Mr. Michael Neubert.

Question accordingly negatived.
Main Question put:—
The House divided: Ayes 311, Noes 34.

Division No. 449] **[10.15 pm**

AYES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
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Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
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Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Hordern, Sir Peter
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Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
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Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
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Irving, Charles
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Jessel, Toby
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Kirkhope, Timothy
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Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
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Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
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Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
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Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Sir Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Sir Charles
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael

Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertfordshire N)*
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'caster)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones and
Mr. Michael Neubert.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bidwell, Sydney
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Clay, Bob
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Cryer, Bob
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Flannery, Martin
Gordon, Mildred
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Heffer, Eric S.
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Livingstone, Ken
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Primarolo, Dawn
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Skinner, Dennis
Wall, Pat
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Wise, Mrs Audrey

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Eddie Loyden and
Mr. Dave Nellist.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House approves the Statement on the Defence Estimates 1988 contained in Cm. 344.

Trade Barriers (European Community)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Fallon.]*

10.26 pm

Mr. Phillip Oppenheim (Amber Valley): I begin by expressing a measure of sympathy for my hon. Friend the Minister who is to reply to the debate. He is having to defend a position to which the Government are acquiescing but which goes against virtually all their stated objectives of encouraging consumer choice, deregulating and fostering industrial efficiency.

Although we have heard a great deal of noise over the past year or so about 1992 and the opening of the European market, we have heard less about the corollary of that, which is that many civil servants within the European Commission believe that as we open our internal market we should steadily close the external market to prevent non-EEC manufacturers from taking advantage of our more open internal market. Therefore, as we are seeing barriers within the European Community being broken down, we are seeing a fortress-Europe mentality being introduced by many within the EEC establishment.

For example, many car manufacturers are already talking about introducing a 15 per cent. EEC import quota for Japanese cars after 1992 to replace the series of national quotas which currently exist. Britain now has an 11 per cent. import quota for Japanese cars, France has a 3 per cent. quota and Spain and Italy allow only a few thousand Japanese cars to be imported each year. Most of the other EEC countries have no quotas or import restrictions. Therefore, a 15 per cent. quota in 1992 will in many cases mean less consumer choice and more protection than at present.

Apart from the quotas being proposed there is already a wide range of EEC-wide quotas. The EEC currently imposes quotas on imports of compact disc machines, videos and televisions. Significantly and topically, there are also quotas on imports of steel. It is almost impossible for non-EEC producers to import steel into the European Community. That has severe ramifications for steel-consuming industries within the EEC.

Apart from the quotas already in existence and those being proposed and taken seriously within the Commission, the increasing use of what I consider to be spurious anti-dumping duties by the Commission is dangerous. In recent years, the Commission has imposed severe anti-dumping duties on imports of photocopiers, computer printers and electronic typewriters. I understand that it is proposing duties on imports of facsimile machines and microchips.

The 1982 regulations, which are the basis for the anti-dumping regulations, have been drawn so widely that the Commission can say that almost anything is dumping. I should like to draw the Minister's attention to two particular examples. The first concerns constructed prices. Rather than send its investigators to Japan and Europe to find out at what prices the products are being sold, the Commission artificially constructs prices. The structures by which it does so are different in Japan from those in Europe. In Japan, the price includes much of the overheads and marketing costs, but in Europe it does not. That obviously makes the European cost at which the

Japanese are selling far lower than that of their home market, thereby making a large dumping margin when in reality there is none.

The second example is the system whereby the Commission can say that any company or industry selling products on the EC market at a loss is automatically dumping. It is well known that start-up companies, especially when they are opening a high-volume factory, may for the first year or two not reach full economic volumes. By the Commission's regulations, they will be selling their products at a loss on the European market and will therefore be dumping. A penal anti-dumping duty will be imposed on them, with the result that the Commission will have the power to strangle almost any new non-EC entrant to the market at birth.

In its defence, the Commission says that the European Court has ruled that it is imposing its anti-dumping duties legally, which is right. Companies that fought the Commission in the European Court found that the court expressed much sympathy but said that the Commission was working well within its own regulations, even though they are drawn up unfairly.

The other excuse that is used is that the anti-dumping regulations fall within the general agreement on tariffs and trade. The problem is that the GATT guidelines are drawn so widely and vaguely that almost any regulations would fall within their parameters. I do not consider that to be a defence to the Commission's stance.

I have mentioned these problems to European industrialists, European civil servants and the many defenders of protectionism, including many Socialists. In their more candid moments, they admit that these measures are blatantly protectionist, but their main justification for them is that the Japanese have been protectionist so we must be protectionist ourselves. Everyone knows that the Japanese were very protectionist in the 1950s and 1960s, but we fool ourselves if we believe that Britain, Europe and the United States were not and are not extremely protectionist in a variety of ways. The fundamental difference is that, while the Japanese are making genuine efforts to reduce their protectionist barriers, we in Europe, and to a large extent America, are erecting ours.

One of the reasons why people mistakenly believe that Japan is a protectionist country is that the Japanese market is difficult in a variety of ways and many western manufacturers have come to grief by trying to sell the wrong product and not persevering. The Japanese, with a relatively small home market, have had to sell their products in the west, whereas for many western manufacturers it has been far easier to sell into the linguistically and culturally similar markets in Europe and the United States, or to old colonial markets, which were protected and offered substantial advantages. There has not been the incentive for western manufacturers to sell into the Japanese market in the same way that there has been a necessity for Japanese manufacturers to sell into western markets. That is one reason why Japanese export penetration into Europe has been higher than western penetration into Japanese markets. Anyone who studies the Japanese market will find many examples of western companies, producing the right product at the right price, that have done extremely well.

Before being fortunate enough to be elected to this place, I worked in the information technology industry, editing a business consumer magazine which covered many of the products that are subject to EEC Commission anti-dumping investigations or have had duties imposed on them. I know that the Japanese succeeded primarily because they produced the right products at the right price and marketed them creatively.

The Japanese have done well with photocopiers because they produced in volume. Because they did that, they were able to incorporate features in their machines which were formerly the preserve of the top name products. The Japanese also marketed creatively, cutting costs by introducing dealer marketing rather than direct sales. Many European industries and even Xerox, the American-owned company, were slow. They did not sell the right products and were not agile in marketing. The Japanese have succeeded not through predatory guile but by producing and selling the right products at the right price and delivering on time.

Unfortunately, it is far easier for European manufacturers who have failed in the Japanese market, and failed against Japanese competition in their home markets, to whinge, whine and complain about unfair trade practices. If they can palm the blame off on to the Japanese, it obviously means that they are not at fault.

The other major argument to justify protectionism is that protectionist barriers forced the Japanese to set up in Europe. Examples in Britain which have recently been given much publicity are the Nissan car factory in the north-east and a variety of typewriter and office equipment factories. I make it clear that I welcome with open arms foreign investment of all types. If that investment is represented only by assembly plants, that is better than nothing. If that foreign investment comes into this country only to jump over import barriers, the rest of the economy must pay the price.

I should like to quote Nissan as an example. Obviously, it has been of great benefit in the north-east and people there have warmly welcomed the Nissan factory. The company has also been of benefit in a wider sense by its example to the British economy in general. But it is important to recognise the disadvantages. Although it may deny this, Nissan came to Britain largely because of Britain's 11 per cent. import quota on Japanese cars, the so-called gentleman's agreement which was introduced in 1976 by a Labour Government, supposedly to give Austin-Rover a breathing space. However, that plan does not seem to have done much good. I believe that it is a good argument against protectionism.

Although Nissan brought many benefits in its train, the quotas which brought the company here in the first place have resulted in an annual extra cost by distorting the market for United Kingdom car buyers by about £1 million a year. That sum represents the costs over and above the costs that should be paid by British industry which are diverted from efficient and productive industry into less efficient, less productive industry.

Import barriers can also be damaging to the rest of the economy because they limit choice. Once again, I shall adduce Nissan as a good example. Nissan produces in relatively low volumes in this country. It has to have longer product runs to make those volumes competitive and economical. The company cannot introduce in the British market the new models that it would introduce in a free market. For example, the Nissan Bluebird, which is produced in the north-east, is an obsolete model. In far eastern markets, Nissan introduced a new Bluebird more than a year ago. Nissan denies this, but the fact is that,

[Mr. Phillip Oppenheim]

because the company needs long production runs to make its plants economic, it cannot introduce new models as quickly as it might otherwise do, so choice is limited.

Exactly the same has happened with the Rover Group, which has an agreement to assemble certain Honda products. Most of the group's product line are Honda-designed and developed.

Rover produces a car called the Rover 200 that is effectively the same car as one that it assembles for Honda, which is called the Honda Ballade. That, in turn, is the old Honda Civic model, which has long since been replaced in other markets but because the Rover Group had to have long runs of this model it will be unable to replace it until next year. By limiting consumer choice, such practices make our market less competitive, and that damages not only consumers but the industry.

Mr. Christopher Gill (Ludlow): My hon. Friend said that the Nissan car company came to this country because in doing so it was able to leap the protection barrier. Would he say that the grants that were made available to this company when it came here were not significant or did not enter into the company's thinking when it planned to open the new plant?

Mr. Oppenheim: My hon. Friend is right. I said that import quotas were one of the reasons why the company came here, but I agree that another was generous assistance from the Government. Furthermore, it found that Britain, compared to other countries, was a good place in which to do business, and we should recognise that. However, import quotas were a major element when it made the decision to come here, although the company might deny that.

Mr. Gill *rose*——

Mr. Oppenheim: I hope that my hon. Friend will forgive me if I do not give way again, but I have to leave enough time for my hon. Friend the Minister to give me a considered reply.

I know that the Minister is concerned about screwdriver and anti-dumping duties. On top of proposing a series of protectionist duties, which, to an extent, encourage Japanese industry into Europe, now that the Japanese have come to Europe, the Commission is saying that they must use a high proportion of local components. That is not necessarily in the interest of the assembling country, and it is not always possible for the companies to find high quality components locally. That is damaging, and it compounds the damage already done by the protectionism that is the result of many of the Commission's policies.

The casual listener—I accept that there are not many casual listeners here tonight, but I trust that I am not immodest in hoping that some people will read this debate —may think that I am arguing on behalf of Japanese industry. I should like to emphasise that I am not. I am arguing for our industry because I believe that protectionism damages our industry in a number of ways. First, it increases prices, often of industrial feedstocks. For instance, the import quotas on non-EEC steel mean that our steel consumers, which include the car industry, have to pay more for their steel than they would if they were buying it in another country.

Another good example are microchips. Not only has the EEC placed anti-dumping duties on Japanese chips, but there is already a ludicrous system whereby the import duty on non-EEC chips is higher than the import duty on fully built computer boards and computers. That means that it is often far cheaper to import fully built-up boards than to import the chips, which can be used to build products here. That is largely the result of lobbying by the big European chip makers—Siemens, Philips, Thomson and SGS ATES. The result is that assemblers of products using chips, such as the Amstrad company, find it cheaper to import fully made-up products, whereas, if the duties were equal, they would find it more economic and preferable to assemble the products here.

Protectionism not only increases the cost of feedstock to our industry, but indirectly helps the Japanese, by creating artificially high markets from which they are able to profit. The Japanese make huge profits out of selling cars to the protected European markets—Britain, France, Italy and Spain—and those profits are repatriated to Japan, so that helps. Ultimately, protectionism does not help the industries that it is supposed to protect. It puts off the time when those industries have to sort out their own houses and become efficient and effective. Thus, it compounds and continues their inefficiencies. If a company cannot compete in its home market with the Japanese, how does it expect to be able to compete in overseas export markets?

There is a further danger in protectionism because, if we allow ourselves to be convinced by failed European industrialists that the Japanese have succeeded as a result of predatory trading practices, we shall have no incentive to improve ourselves and to learn the many valuable lessons that they can teach us to help us sort out our industrial problems. Some of the real reasons for the success of the Japanese are not so much predatory guile, but rather the fact that, ever since the war, they have had consistently right of centre Governments who have followed extremely sound economic policies. They have a first-rate education system which churns out a highly skilled and literate work force, and the country as a whole has not suffered from Socialist anti-business and anti-profit attitudes, but has a solidly and robustly pro-business, pro-enterprise ethos.

I therefore urge my hon. Friend to look carefully at the protectionism which exists and is being built up by the Commission because that protectionism runs counter to the Government's avowed policy of deregulation, industrial efficiency and consumer choice. I accept that my hon. Friend probably does not know a great deal about the protectionism because much of it that arises in the Commission probably comes on to his desk or those of his colleagues with a little note from civil servants saying, "This is all right. Sign." Many anti-dumping orders are probably signed without my hon. Friend and his colleagues knowing what they are signing. I am sure that, if they realised what they were signing, they might well have second thoughts. Ultimately, it is extremely dangerous for European industry, if it knows that it has an easy path, to go whingeing to the Commission asking for protection rather than sorting itself out.

10.46 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Corporate Affairs (Mr. Francis Maude): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Amber Valley (Mr. Oppenheim), first, on having gained this opportunity and, secondly, on having used it so skilfully and, in his usual measured way, having deployed a formidable and detailed range of knowledge of a difficult subject. He will understand that one or two other matters were occupying my mind today, but, none the less, I am grateful to have the opportunity to reply to the serious and well thought out points that he has made.

There is not all that much difference of opinon between my hon. Friend and me. He knows that the Government's stance is essentially a liberal one in respect of trade. We are not a protectionist Government. We reject protectionism, for very much the reasons that he set out. He talked about the way in which the single European market is likely to develop; and the way in which it is perceived to be developing is as important as the way in which it does develop. There is no doubt that it is crucial to the long-term success of completing the single market that it conducts its external trade relations after 1992 in a sensible way.

With the United States and Japan, the Community is one of the world's three great trading blocs, and that imposes great responsibilities which we have to live up to. We are already deep into the Uruguay round of trade negotiations which aims to reinforce the system by which the international rules of trade are multilaterally agreed and applied. We are seeking major reforms in that system so that it can better serve the interests of all trading nations in the decades ahead. The Community, and especially the United Kingdom Government, are well aware of the benefits that we draw from open trade in terms of growth, investment, technological advance and consumer satisfaction and we have therefore made it clear right from the start that, in our view, there can be no question of a "fortress Europe" or of us using the completion of the single market to raise external trade barriers. That would make no sense and would tend to isolate the Community from developments elsewhere.

The Secretary of State made our position absolutely clear in the White Paper, "The Department for Enterprise", which he published in January. It is worth pointing out that the European Council strongly reaffirmed the same principle at Hanover in June of this year, as did my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister in her speech at Bruges last month, but, as I have said before, it is not just what the Community does; it is how it is perceived that matters.

A fear is often expressed in countries outside the Community that the development of the single market will be paralleled by increased protection against outside competition, especially from the United States and Japan. I have recently visited two or three countries in the far east, where I found that it was accepted as a certainty that that would happen. I hope that I managed to instil a doubt in the minds of those to whom I spoke. Their preconception is very much that Europe is turning itself inwards and closing itself to trade from outside. We must resist such moves. The single market process must help to reduce external barriers, not increase them. Raising Community barriers would be self-defeating. It would encourage inefficiency and a lack of competitiveness. Whatever we were to gain at a cost to consumers and our economies, we would lose internationally.

There is a real danger, if our trading partners misunderstand our intentions, that there could develop a retaliatory spiral of protectionism, with the various trading blocs, which are increasingly developing around the globe, erecting ever more severe trade barriers. I do not need to spell out the disastrous consequences that that would hold. We could suddenly find that there was a clamp on world trade, with serious effects on economic growth worldwide. I hope that all our partners in the Community will express as robustly as we do a commitment to a liberal policy in trade. The consequences of doing otherwise could be severe.

There is already misinterpretation on this side of the Atlantic of the American Trade Bill. It is interpreted as being more protectionist than it is. There is misinterpretation in the United States of what is happening in Europe. Similarly, there is misinterpretation in the far east. Whenever uncertainty and discordant voices emerge from one of the trade blocs, there is a tendency for our trading partners to make an interpretation that is in the worst possible light. There is thus the danger of a retaliatory round of trade barriers being erected. That could happen suddenly and without notice, with serious consequences for world trade.

It is clear that the removal of the internal barriers in the Community will bring great benefits to nationals of other countries and to the subsidiaries of foreign firms that are established in the Community. They will profit from the single market in the same way as Community nationals. That gives the lie to some of the more exaggerated fears that have been expressed, especially in the United States press. Foreign-based firms play a dynamic part in the economies of all the member states and we need to encourage the dynamism, not seek to repress it.

We can look to our partners to continue the process of liberalisation, and we must do so. We are doing this already in the way in which we are negotiating in the GATT to extend the multinational rules to services, with the aim of progressively opening services markets worldwide. We in the Community as a whole will continue with this process. The Uruguay round provides the mechanism with which it will be possible for the Community, in an appropriate instance, to claim credit for the external liberalisation that will occur with the completion of the single market.

My hon. Friend the Member for Amber Valley referred to imports. It is part of the Government's policy to provide an economic climate that promotes the enterprise and prosperity that will enable both the manufacturing and service sectors to compete in world markets. A policy of open markets—of free but fair trade—is an indispensable element in this policy. Imports at fair market prices provide both a significant input to our manufacturing effort and a competitive spur, which help to keep costs down for both consumers and industrial users and to widen choice.

Since 1985, as part of our initiative of competition, we have been reviewing the justification for the voluntary restraint agreements that have typically been concluded between a United Kingdom industry and its counterpart overseas. I answered written questions on 30 March and subsequently which were tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Darlington (Mr. Fallon), whom I am

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delighted to see on the Government Front Bench. I am sure that the whole House will wish to join me in congratulating him on his elevation to the Whips' office, even if, as a result, we shall be denied the pleasure of his contributions to our debates for the time being. As I explained in my answer to the questions that he so pertinently asked, in assessing the costs and benefits to the United Kingdom economy, we concluded that in most cases such arrangements were not in our interests, and we advised the industry concerned accordingly. But in the cases in which we believed that there was some justification, we continue to keep those arrangements under review.

My hon. Friend spoke about anti-dumping. He is absolutely right that anti-dumping measures must not be used as an easy way out. When complaints about dumping are made, we have to ensure that the proper procedures are followed. In case my hon. Friend has any doubts about this, I can assure him that I have at no stage signed an anti-dumping order, whether I have read it or not. And I know that my hon. Friend the Minister for Trade, before whom these matters may come, exercises great diligence and care before committing his name to anything.

We need to ensure that these processes are not abused and that, when complaints are made, the proper procedures are followed. For the most part, we believe that that happens. The danger is that, if the procedures are thought to be abused—there is no doubt that in some parts of the world they are thought to be used too freely, and conclusions that meet the anxieties of the protectionist lobby are thought to be too freely reached—great damage will be done to the reputation of the European Community, which is based on economic liberalism.

It was right of my hon. Friend eloquently to raise the other side of the coin. Too often, for Governments and public authorities generally——

The motion having been made after Ten o'clock and the debate having continued for half an hour, MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.*

Adjourned at four minutes to Eleven o'clock.

House of Commons

Friday 21 October 1988

The House met at half-past Nine o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Education and Industry

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Lightbown.]*

9.34 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. John Butcher): I hope that it is significant that the first Friday debate after the summer break concerns the importance of developing links between industry and education. It would appear that this is a subject whose moment has arrived. Both inside and outside the House there is a growing and healthy interest in ways in which we can make education more employer friendly and ways in which our employers can acquire a greater understanding of the needs and objectives of education in the late 1980s.

As adults become more and more distant from their own schooldays, so their memories become increasingly selective. They remember hard seats, long hours, some dull lessons, bleak classrooms and cold showers. They tend to forget the more pleasing aspects—the joy in discovery, the satisfaction to be had from cracking a difficult problem or mastering a new concept—but children are very much aware of, and seek out, the pleasure and fun to be found in learning. That is particularly true when they are being treated as grown-ups.

The idea of treating young people as adults and showing them the world of adult life is not new. Some five years ago I arranged for a young sixth former from Perry Barr school in Birmingham to "shadow" me when I was at the Department of Trade and Industry. She took part in a number of visits to industrial and commercial sites in the west midlands and she found those visits a revelation. She saw intelligent people facing challenging problems every day and the fact that she found this novel suggested an unacceptable gap in young people's awareness of industry and commerce. Incidentally, I might add that Samantha Clark is now in her final year at Sheffield polytechnic reading chemistry and computer studies. I am confident that her experience in 1983 will play an important part in her approach to the choice of a career.

From that beginning, there have been impressive developments. The first step was the shadowing of 12 chief executives, in different regions, by 12 schoolgirls; and that in turn brought about a programme set up by the Institute of Directors in which 3,000 sixth formers are shadowing managers up and down the country. Work-shadowing has now received the ultimate accolade of becoming the subject of a new, and extremely entertaining, novel. Of course, shadowing is only one way of ensuring that young people have some experience of what goes on in the world of work; but other sorts of activity are also on the increase. As a result, today two out of three children receive first-hand experience of the world of business before they leave school.

Why is it important for children to have this contact with industry and commerce? Did we not, after all, spend much of the last century trying to get young children out of factories? To start with, children enjoy the contact. They learn from it and learn fast. I will quote some examples of what some schoolchildren have said about their work experience. Sylvia Boumbourou from Mount Carmel school said:

> "When I went into the International Department of the bank it was incredibly busy and I thought I'm not going to like this . . . Then I learned about telexes and I typed and sent one. I felt really good with myself—I'd done something worthwhile."

Tony Hall at Holloway school said:

> "Early in the week it was really quiet in the shop with hardly any customers. Friday was much better, really busy."

Ukpong Anderson from Islington Green school said:

> "When we went to the building sites . . . I would write things down. Later on I was able to do some details on real plans. After a while it was as if I'd been working there for ages . . . in fact I got so into working there I almost thought it was my job."

Those children who have had the chance to experience it at first hand see the world of industry as an exciting, adult world. We may find that surprising; but it is because we are all too aware of the responsibilities of adult life—the need to pay the mortgage, the gas bill, saving for a holiday. Children, have a fresh outlook, and are able to perceive the opportunities offered them by adult and working life.

Experience with industry—and by that I do not just mean heavy industry, but all types of manufacturing and service employers, everything that contributes to our economic well-being—helps children to mature into adults with adult attitudes. The process of introduction to work-related activities is no longer the haphazard event it was in our childhood. Now it is properly planned and monitored. Arrangements are made in advance, and they are made with care.

More important still, those experiences are subsequently integrated into each child's education back at school. There is now an explicit understanding by a great many educational institutions and businesses of the importance of that activity and its valuable role in preparing responsible and valued citizens. That is not to say that there is no scope for improvement. I am sure that there will be many suggestions in this debate as to ways in which we can take those various programmes forward, and that a number of new ideas will be advanced. There is scope for improvement, and I shall come to that point shortly.

For example, the recent report of the CBI's education task force, chaired by Sir Adrian Cadbury, pointed out that more than half the firms in its survey did not have regular links with schools. That will have to change. But let us first look at the background to these concerns, to see what lessons should be learned by education and employers in taking matters forward.

During the 19th century, our education system faced the task of ensuring not just that children grew up with a knowledge of the industrial and commercial processes that were beginning to transform the world, but also that they developed traditional character attributes of self-reliance, self-discipline, respect for authority and service to the community. That ideal was not a cynical philosophy designed to produce obedient factory fodder. It was an

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attempt to educate the whole man: Not the universal man of the Italian renaissance—the growth in knowledge meant that was virtually impossible—but rather a self-sufficient personality with powers of analysis and reflection, with sober judgment and ease of communication—to quote Cardinal Newman:

"a cultivated intellect, a delicate taste, a candid, equitable, dispassionate mind."

Unfortunately the interpreters of Newman and of the Arnoldian tradition failed to take on board the true implications of these ideas. Their "whole man" was really only half a man, who had received a rarefied and esoteric education in which the "cultivated intellect" and "delicate taste" were carefully nurtured, but the more fundamental aspects of society and its economic basis were thought to be beneath notice. All too often, those who had made their fortunes in industry sought in this way to rid their own children of its unsavoury associations. That approach bred a generation who, well-fitted though they may have been for the life of a district commissioner in the empire, were neither equipped nor disposed to become captains of industry.

For the others—the vast majority of children—education meant a brief period of rudimentary schooling and then, from a very early age, learning about industry at first hand in the heat of the factory floor. In that way, the thirst for knowledge, for self-improvement, was for most people stifled; they became unwilling, and thus under-achieving, participants in an industrial society. Our objective is, as always—that much used group of words —"broad, balanced people".

The legacy of the polarisation that I have just described survived, regrettably, in attitudes which were—and perhaps still are—to be found in the 20th century. For far too long, education considered the world of industry to be a last resort for those of its products who were unable to find "respectable" jobs elsewhere, and in consequence ignored it. Equally, industry tended to expect school leavers to come fully equipped with everything they needed to be model employees. Both attitudes exemplified a fundamental misunderstanding of the role that education can and should fulfil in our society.

What is needed is a balance; and the means of achieving it has bedevilled the discussions of educational philosophers throughout the 20th century. Of course young people need to leave school with a broadly based knowledge of the world about them, but they must also have the basic skills on which to build the capabilities that they need to function as adults in the world of work. To put it the other way round, young people must get from their education the ability to survive and prosper economically in order to contribute usefully and productively to society. But they must also have an understanding of that society and their responsibilities within it to be able and equipped to serve and improve it.

The Government's view is that a balanced and successful society needs both utilitarian and cultural elements. No longer can we be satisfied with the ideal of the "all-rounder" if it does not include an awareness of the practical realities of working life as well as cultural values. We need more engineers, more technologists and more managers; but we need to ensure that qualities such as the power of judgment, the ability to communicate and the will to imagine are developed equally by students in technology and science as by those who study the humanities and the arts.

A very old joke is touted around, which I am delighted to say is now out of date. It concerns an engineer who, having been subjected to that well-balanced and rounded education, observed, "I wanted to be a well-rounded engineer, and now I are one." That engineer is a human of the past. Our engineers are becoming more articulate and more multidisciplinary. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] Judging by the reaction of my hon. Friends on the Back Benches, there are some engineers among them who look forward to demonstrating the proposition that things have changed.

In the Government, we feared that many of our schools were still in some ways reflecting the old division between education for work and education for life. There can no longer be any such division. There must be both. The one complements the other. The desirable qualities that I mentioned earlier are of universal application and not the preserve of erudite scholars. Education in all its phases and variety must be available to all.

The Butler Act in 1944 ensured that all children would have access to free education from the age of five to—ultimately—the age of 16. This was a great leap forward, but its focus on fundamental provision meant that it would not treat the school curriculum as a priority. It has become increasingly clear that the education system has not been producing the well-rounded and adaptable school leavers the country needs.

For too long there have been complaints from many quarters. Some parents felt that their children were being taught values and attitudes that were not the traditional ones they had learned. Employers felt that school leavers knew little of industry and lacked the appropriate attitudes and adaptable skills that could be developed in work. Those charged with maintaining the fabric of society may have felt that young people were lacking in social values and a proper concern for the community in which they lived.

For too long, education has been seen as being about academic achievement alone, and either measuring up to it or failing by it. All too often, success has been measured in terms of achievement in the sciences, arts or professions. That has been at the expense of the acquisition of understanding and skills with industrial applications. One could say that we have neglected the enterprise culture to our cost.

So the Government are working hard on a number of fronts to change those attitudes. Let me outline some of the initiatives leading towards that objective.

First, and most fundamental, is the introduction of the national curriculum and the range of targets, monitoring and assessment measures and records of achievement that goes with it. The national curriculum will guarantee that no pupil leaves school without a proper grounding in basic areas of essential learning and skill. It will provide a framework of objectives and programmes of study.

At the core of the national curriculum are the three most basic subjects—English, mathematics and science —and seven other foundation subjects—history, geography, technology in all its aspects, a modern language for secondary school children, art, music and physical education. In addition, all schools will continue to be required to provide religious education for all their pupils, unless their parents stipulate otherwise.

This will mean that all pupils will receive an education that is broad, balanced, relevant to their needs and set in a clear moral framework. It will not longer be possible, for example, for girls to give up science or technology or for boys to abandon modern languages, and relevance and the application of understanding and skills are to be a main feature of all the core and foundation subjects.

Let me quote from the Government's proposals for science, based on advice from the science working group and published in August:

"We share the Group's view of the importance of developing scientific skills through appropriate practical and investigative work. We also recognise the importance of ensuring that pupils are able to communicate effectively about what they have done. We shall not raise the standards of science of the kind the nation will need in the future, unless these aspects of science are tackled in schools. Nor do we believe that pupils should study science without reference to economic and social considerations."

Of course, simply bringing in the national curriculum will not of itself guarantee that school leavers will achieve appropriate standards across the whole range of subjects, but we are tackling this by introducing quality control measures in the form of assessment of pupils' attainments against clear targets. This will have two effects. First, it will act as a diagnostic device so that teachers will know which pupils are experiencing difficulties and will be able to arrange for the extra help that they may need. Secondly, it will serve as a check on the performance of the system as a whole.

We are also ensuring that examinations are able to give a useful indication of what pupils have learnt and are capable of achieving. We are improving the information that school leavers will carry with them as they seek their first job, so that employers will have a much better picture of the skills, abilities, aptitudes and personal qualities of the individual applicant than they were ever able to get from the bald fact that he or she had five O-levels, or CSEs, or whatever. These are important ways of making the education service more "employer-friendly".

These developments are also very significant steps towards the fulfilment of "the educational needs of industry", because in essence industry's needs are precisely the same as the needs of the rest of society. Society requires its young people to be introduced to a wide range of concepts, experience and skills, and as a result to be equipped with the knowledge—and the understanding and flexibility to apply it—that they will need to fulfil all their adult responsibilities towards families and friends, towards employers and colleagues, and towards the community and society as a whole.

But there are other ways—less wide-ranging and visible, but no less significant—in which schools are working with industry to ensure that they understand its needs and take them into account in what they do. Links at local level between individual schools and local firms are growing. The Departments of Education and Science, of Industry and of Employment are working together to foster and encourage these local initiatives, and the range of possibilities is very wide.

Let us take activities based in the workplace, for example. I have already mentioned the impact of work-shadowing. Work experience, in which a young person spends perhaps two weeks in a local firm doing a real job, provides the sort of first-hand experience of the world of business that no amount of teaching, however skilful, can supply.

Dr. Keith Hampson (Leeds, North-West): It strikes me that, although what my hon. Friend has been saying is absolutely true, it was all being said by Labour Ministers back in the early part of 1978. Some of us on the Conservative Benches criticised them then for limiting themselves to mere exhortation. It seemed clear that neither schools nor business men, particularly in the smaller businesses, had the time or inclination to get together with any depth or understanding. Would my hon. Friend consider a system of field officers—based on either the chambers of commerce or the system of science and technology regional organisations—to act as a permanent bridge to bring the two sides together?

Mr. Butcher: I think that my hon. Friend has signposted one of the subjects of debate for this morning. The first point to note is that such people are being put into place now, as a result of the initiative announced by the three Secretaries of State last week. Those advisers will be signposting employers and schools in the appropriate manner to forge such links.

I hope that my hon. Friend agrees—indeed, I hope that there is universal recognition in the Chamber today—that the climate has changed fundamentally. It may have been simply the misfortune of that Labour Administration that the climate was not right then. I think that the exhortation of the past six or seven years has had a very beneficial effect, and it is now focussed even more by the demographic trend that a number of us may wish to discuss today.

I hope that my hon. Friend will be of good cheer. We have a much more positive environment in which to work, and I believe that both schools and employers are of their own volition taking many initiatives that they would not have considered back in those interesting days of 1978.

Mr. Tim Rathbone (Lewes): May I remind my hon. Friend of the activities of the RSA, which have been funded not just by exhortation but with Government money? The "Industry Year" of 18 months ago has now turned into "Industry Matters", and is a continuing concern.

Mr. Butcher: My hon. Friend and I share a close connection, and indeed affinity, with the RSA, which has started something that I consider of long-term significance. As we discuss this issue we shall find it fairly easy to list a large number of bodies concerned with it, both within education and outside in the industrial and commercial world. An awful lot of people are marching towards the problem with considerable enthusiasm, and we must commend them for it. I hope that we can get through the debate with an appropriate mention for each of those bodies and that we shall not miss any out, for I do not wish to offend gratuitously those who have been working for such a long time.

We have discussed work experience and work observation, in which pupils are guided around the workplace to see employee activities. But it is also significant to note the way in which schools are managed and the changes that are coming along, so that we can involve the local community—particularly the business community—in a much more meaningful way. The new composition of governing bodies will give parents a greater say in the running of their children's schools, and the presence of co-opted governors—who in most schools will form the largest single category on the governing body

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—will serve to broaden the range of interests represented. If none of the elected or appointed governors can be considered a member of the local business community, at least one co-option must be from that community.

The governing bodies of most schools are now being reconstituted under the new arrangements. In making their co-options, the new governing bodies will be looking to recruit a range of people from the community served by the school. They may be choosing bank managers, shopkeepers, police officers, firemen and people running their own small businesses.

The new governing bodies will include people with an enormous variety of backgrounds and experience. They will give their time partly as a matter of public service, but also because they recognise that this is a key opportunity to influence the direction that education is taking, and the preparation that our young people receive for adult life and employment. We believe that the new arrangements will enrich the life of each individual school and will make a significant contribution towards higher standards of education.

Many hon. Members wish to participate in the debate, but I should be grateful, Madam Deputy Speaker, if I could catch your eye later in the proceedings. I hope that what I have said so far has been an appropriate framework in which to pursue our discussions, and I look forward to hearing the comments of hon. Members on both sides of the House.

9.58 am

Mr. Derek Fatchett (Leeds, Central): I take this opportunity to welcome the Minister to his new responsibilities in the Department of Education and Science. This is his first intervention in an education debate or in any education business in the House. I was impressed by the extent to which he was prepared to discuss ideas and to consider the philosophy of education. I am sure that that will enrich our future debates.

Much as we welcome the hon. Gentleman's arrival, those of us who have regularly attended education debates in recent years will mourn the passing of the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown), whose contribution to education debates provided some of the more enlightening moments. After his intervention yesterday during Prime Minister's Question Time, he, too, may feel that he would serve the House much better if he returned to looking after his party's education brief. It is noticeable that, so great is his influence within his party, he has left a void in terms of an education spokesperson for the alliance.

The Minister spent a good deal of time on the purpose of education. He stated, in terms with which I wholly agree, that the purpose of education is to develop broad and balanced people who can make a broad and balanced contribution to our society. I welcome that definition. It shifts a good deal of the Government's rhetoric and argument away from what I regard as a limited approach to the debates on the Education Reform Act. We cannot and we must not develop an education system that regards education as providing simply outputs for industry. That is wrong for two reasons.

I do not hold the view that sophisticated manpower planning can forecast what industry will need in 20 years. I suspect that British industry is incapable of knowing what it will require in 12 months, never mind in 10 years or 20 years. We do not have the ability to build up such a sophisticated model of manpower planning. Our experience of manpower planning suggests that we have been far from successful in predicting figures of that kind. We should not develop an education system that will provide people who can be slotted into industry. As industry changes rapidly, because of the new technology, we want people to be able not just to fit into a slot but to move into a number of slots. We have to ask not how we do a particular job but why we do it and how it fits into the much broader picture.

Mr. Patrick Thompson (Norwich, North): Does the hon. Gentleman not concede that the message that all hon. Members are repeatedly getting from industrialists and business people is that their major requirement from the education system is not so much that which can be discovered by sophisticated techniques as the basic skills of literacy and numeracy and the other skills that should be provided by any basic education? Therefore, his point is not valid.

Mr. Fatchett: My point is valid. I shall return later to the hon. Gentleman's point, which is a different one.

The Minister referred to the philosophy and the purpose of education and said that we should not envisage education as the means of enabling people to fit into particular slots. That is restrictive, and bad for industry's future. Education has to be broad. That broadness includes a knowledge of industry and of a variety of other activities.

I always love to refer to the experience of a school in a constituency adjoining my own. I suspect that it is very well known to the hon. Member for Leeds, North-West (Dr. Hampson). A few years ago two teachers at Harehills middle school, which had run into difficulties, took the initiative to develop dance as a compulsory part of the school curriculum. Their initiative was tremendously successful. Out of their initiative have come two professional dance groups—Phoenix Dance and Northern Contemporary Dance. I did not see the programme, but I understand that this week a Channel 4 programme was devoted to them. Phoenix Dance has already had the ultimate accolade of a South Bank programme devoted to it.

The result of that initiative by two teachers has been a significant change in the character of the school. It has come to life. Many good things happen in the school, not just in terms of dance. That initiative has provided the youngsters and the teachers with greater self-confidence and the ability to achieve in other areas. The point that I am making from that experience is that education is about developing the whole person in order to give him the confidence and ability to undertake tasks in many arenas, one of which is industry. The others relate to much broader aspects.

Dr. Hampson: Surely there is another lesson to be learned from it. It has been learnt in inner-city areas in America, in cities such as Boston. It is important, if possible, to put resources into specialised areas to enrich particular parts of the school curriculum, because it can lift the reputation of the school. I should be interested to know whether the hon. Gentleman backs those of us who for more than a decade have been calling for the development

of magnet schools in certain local education authorities. The Leeds education authority could be given a few lessons.

Mr. Fatchett: I am sure that it would not be appropriate to have a debate about Leeds, but I am keen to see the development of special characteristics in our schools. I am not sure whether they should be called magnet schools; I do not want to enter into a semantic argument of that kind. However, the education system should allow schools to develop special characteristics, whether dance or engineering, or something else.

Schools should be able to develop special interests and special characteristics. The fear that some of us have always had about a national curriculum is that it may not allow such abilities to be developed. The national curriculum has to be sufficiently flexible to allow that to happen. I agree with the Minister that we need to develop a broad liberal education that will lead to balanced individuals and a balanced society.

That does not mean that an understanding of industry should not play an important part in education. Any youngster who leaves school at 16 or 18 should understand the society in which he or she lives. They should understand how wealth is created and what happens to it —how and why it is distributed in particular forms. The "how" questions are important. Equally, the "why" questions are important. Through the ability to ask the "why" questions, we stimulate the debate that moves society on and enables progress to be made. We want an understanding of industry. We want an understanding that allows questions to be asked about the purpose of industry and the broader purposes of society.

Mr. Peter Thurnham (Bolton, North-East): The hon. Gentleman refers to the need to understand industry and the need for progress. One of industry's great characteristics is competition, yet when the Government introduced the new city technology colleges the Opposition condemned that initiative. They said that it would compete with their own local authority monopolies.

Mr. Fatchett: I shall refer later to the city technology colleges. It is not inconsistent to say that we need to understand the nature of competition. Whether people accept the value of competition, and some of the more rigorous examples of it, is up to them. They must make political and personal choices. If there is to be any understanding of the capitalist market society, there must inevitably be an understanding of the role that competition plays in it.

Alongside industry, we expect youngsters to leave education understanding other institutions in our society. Industry is one important institution. So are trade unions. So is local government. So is this place. It would be encouraging if more youngsters left school with a greater understanding of how the political system works, the nature of decision making and the role played by Parliament. Such an interest should be developed. Given the opportunity to learn such information, young people are more willing to participate in decision making.

I agree with the Minister that any good education system must be broad and balanced, enabling people to understand industry and to place industry in a broader social context. It must enable people to understand values and to challenge and analyse them. I think that we all agree that we must never have a narrow education system which tries merely to train people to perform specific tasks.

I was glad to hear the Minister say that there was traditionally a sharp division in the English education system. That may be truer for the English education system than for the Scottish or Welsh education systems. As the Minister said, the distinction was between a well trained and well educated group equipped to run the empire and the vast majority of the population who were trained to perform certain tasks in industry. Their knowledge of industry developed haphazardly on the job and was based on experience. We should move away from the first and develop the second so that people see wider opportunities and a wider chance to develop their talents.

Thus far we all agree, but we run into difficulty with the Minister's suggested initiative to enhance the relationship between education and industry, and their mutual understanding. The Minister focused his attention on the Government's introduction of the national curriculum. Those of us who were involved in the long debates on the Education Reform Act 1988 will have been through many of these arguments before, but I should like to put two detailed points to the Minister and then make a broader general one about the national curriculum.

The Minister said that testing will make an important contribution to improving standards and performance. We have always accepted the role of testing. We disagree with the Government about the balance between what may be seen as competitive testing and what may be seen as diagnostic testing. The Minister seemed to come to the side of the argument that we advanced on Second Reading and in Standing Committee on the Education Reform Bill. We have always favoured diagnostic testing and believed that the vast majority of teachers and schools participate regularly in it.

The Minister used the term "diagnostic testing", and we welcome that. We accept the need for it, but will the Minister tell us the Government's intentions with regard to publishing the results of testing at the ages of seven, 11 and 14? To what extent will those results be presented in a competitive context in an attempt to compare schools and local education authorities? We have always felt that there are substantial difficulties associated with that process, as we do not have the sophisticated measures required to show different inputs in different schools or education authorities.

Mr. Butcher: As is his right, the hon. Gentleman is selectively interpreting my opening speech. I am saying that, if we continue the 19th century tradition of educating the whole man, in 20th century terms we shall be educating half a man. If people are unfamiliar with the enterprise ethic and wealth creation activity, they are half persons.

I was clear about testing. I regard it as part of the quality control mechanism that we need in education. Teachers will always deliver according to their own judgment against yardsticks, but testing has to be about quality control and monitoring. That is a legitimate objective in every other walk of life. The hon. Gentleman started by being very kind to me, but his analysis of my opening speech is a little unkind.

Mr. Fatchett: I shall again extend the hand of kindness to the Minister, as I am not sure that the difference between us is substantial. The report of the task group on

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assessment and testing considers the need for assessment against critieria. That is testing, and anybody who has been involved in education understands that it is a necessary part of the education process. The difference between us concerns what happens to the results of testing.

TGAT and the science and maths working party show that testing must rely on individual teachers. There is no question of teachers not being involved, but how will the results be published? What form will they take? For what ages will they be shown? How will the Government take account of the different socio-economic factors that still determine performance of schools and local education authorities to a great extent?

The Minister said—quite rightly, as it is the nature of the Education Reform Act—that the three core subjects of the national curriculum will be English, maths and science. Just over 12 months ago, it was possible for the Government to have arrived, with teachers and political organisations, at a consensual core curriculum which would have provided a framework of agreement for the education system into the next century. The Government and the Secretary of State decided on another course, which involved little consultation and little interest in other people's views.

As a result, the Government now face a severe problem in terms of delivering the national curriculum. If ever there was an example of the Government rushing and then not being able to make pace later, the national curriculum is it. If the Government had talked to the education service, and if they had realised what was said in the three major political parties' manifestos for the 1987 general election, they would have seen the basis of consensus. That is why the Labour party never voted against the principle of a national curriculum.

Instead of building up co-operation before legislation, the Government are now trying to put together a national curriculum without consultation and, to some extent, without confidence. Come the 1991 or 1992 general election, Conservative Members will not be able to talk about delivering a national curriculum. There will have been four wasted educational years, as little of the national curriculum will be in place by then. If the Government's diagnosis of education problems depends on a prescription called the national curriculum, they will not be able to deliver that prescription by the next general election.

I should like to hear the Minister give some further indication of the time scale of delivery. It will not make good news for Conservative Members. I should also like to hear something about the balance of the national curriculum. The Government have had more than 15 months to think about that balance, but there is still no published version and no understanding of it. How much time are we to spend on maths? How much time are we to spend on science? How much time are we to spend on foreign languages? The Government simply do not know the answers to those questions. It is crucial that at some stage, perhaps today, the Minister gives us a breakdown of the national curriculum and sets out its component parts.

The national curriculum presupposes that sciences and foreign languages will be taught to all until the age of 16. We do not disagree with that objective, but we are profoundly worried about it. I do not believe that the Secretary of State has understood the educational difficulties in providing education in science and foreign languages for all until the age of 16. It is not good enough to say that if those subjects are made compulsory youngsters will not have the right to opt out of them as they do now. That may be correct, but if one wants to provide a good education one must understand the means of delivering it. Part of that process involves an ability to maintain the interest of all pupils in science and in foreign languages until the age of 16. When the Minister replies, I hope that he will give us some idea as to the Government's thinking on how to maintain that interest.

My final point about the national curriculum is that, to deliver a national curriculum of quality and one that will improve standards in our schools, we need a well-motivated teaching force. There must be sufficient numbers in the appropriate subjects to deliver that curriculum. That is a major problem that faces the Government and to which they have not related in an effective way.

There is a growing crisis in our educational system because of a teacher shortage and all the evidence points to that. In June, the evidence provided by the Engineering Council, the Secondary Heads Association and the Headmasters' Conference all showed an acute and growing shortage of teachers in the key subjects. Those are the subjects to which the Minister referred as the keys to delivering higher educational standards and higher standards for industry. Those shortage subjects—maths, physics and foreign languages—are the very subjects that are at the core of the national curriculum.

I was involved with a survey published this week which shows that two thirds of local education authorities are now finding it increasingly difficult to recruit teachers of maths, physics, general science and foreign languages. That crisis holds the key to educational performance. The Government, however, appear to be taking no measures to ensure that we have a sufficiently large and well-motivated teaching force. As demographic changes hit this country, the pool of youngsters from which we can recruit our teachers will become smaller and smaller. To maintain our teaching force, we need to take a larger percentage from that pool, but what are the Government doing to encourage people into the teaching profession? The Government have simply failed to come up with any measures that will make teaching more attractive and more rewarding.

Mr. David Lightbown (Lords Commissioner to the Treasury): Oh!

Mr. Fatchett: The hon. Member for Staffordshire, South-East (Mr. Lightbown) may scoff from the Treasury Bench, but the reality is that there is a drain of people from the teaching profession.

Well-qualified teachers are leaving the profession simply because they are not motivated enough to stay. Apart from salary, there are two reasons for that. For nine years we have had a Government who have consistently run down the professionalism of teachers. Such criticism has been one of the occupational pleasures of the Conservative Benches. The results of such criticism are now coming home to roost, because teachers recognise that they are serving a Government who have consistently undermined their performance and status. The Government now are paying the price for that, as teachers leave the profession.

The second Government measure that further undermined morale was the abolition of teachers' pay negotiations. That basic democratic right, supported by international organisations, was taken away from teachers. The Government's entire approach has been to weaken the attractions of the teaching profession.

Mr. Tony Baldry (Banbury): The hon. Gentleman's argument appears to be that there are too few teachers. Perhaps he would like to come home with me and explain to my young son why he was denied a day's education yesterday. The Inner London education authority, finding that it has too many teachers, is seeking, sensibly, to redeploy them. I understand that the hon. Gentleman is sponsored by the National Union of Teachers. What would he say to its London members about their professionalism, given that they denied young children, such as my son, a day's education? What effect does he think that such action has on the confidence of young children in the teaching force? What sort of professionalism is that?

Mr. Fatchett: That was a far from effective intervention, and it was wrong on two points. First, I am not sponsored by the NUT, I never have been, and have never been a member of that union. On that basis I suspect that the case of the hon. Member for Banbury (Mr. Baldry) is rather threadbare. I do not know whether the hon. Gentleman is a lawyer, but I hope that he never represents me and puts a case forward on that basis.

The argument that the hon. Member for Banbury put forward fell apart at first, but I believe that he was seeking to make a serious point, and I shall respond in a similar manner. The hon. Gentleman may be interested to know that the Labour party has said that it supports the approach to compulsory redeployment adopted by our colleagues in ILEA. We oppose those teachers who are making that process difficult for it. We also said to our colleagues in ILEA that we thought that they should have adopted a process of redeployment some time ago as it would have saved money and would have meant that scarce resources were used more effectively. On that basis, I believe that the hon. Gentleman's intervention falls on two counts.

Mr. Ian Taylor (Esher): Will the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) help us by saying a little more about trade union reaction to regional pay bargaining? Many teachers in my area of Surrey would very much like regional pay settlements instead of the nonsense that is currently spoken about everyone being paid the same amount. That is one of the main difficulties in getting good teachers in the south-east.

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): I believe that the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) is sponsored by ASTMS.

Mr. Fatchett: I am glad that somebody has done some homework and provides the necessary information. That union, which has now changed its name, does not sponsor me, but sponsors my constituency Labour party.

Mr. Baldry: What is that union called now?

Mr. Fatchett: I will offer that information so that the hon. Gentleman's next intervention will be correct. My constituency party was originally sponsored by ASTMS and those hon. Members who are interested in industrial relations will now know that it has changed its name to MFS—the Manufacturing, Finance and Science union. I hope that the hon. Member for Banbury does not fall into the same trap as I did, because at the press conference that launched MFS I sadly slipped into calling it MFI.

The hon. Member for Esher (Mr. Taylor) asked about regional pay variations. I do not believe that that is a solution to the problem. The problem is not so much one of regional differences—the survey conducted by the Labour party and other surveys have demonstrated that—the real problem is subject shortages. There is a shortage of teachers of maths, science and foreign languages. Those subject shortages occur not only in Surrey, but in Leeds, the north-east and across the country. There is no regional variation in that. We need to find ways to recruit teachers in those shortage subjects.

If the national curriculum is to improve standards, it needs enough good-quality teachers, but the Government are not providing teachers for that purpose.

My second major point relates to our ability to provide for industry's needs in post-16 education. The substantial failure, which the Education Reform Act 1988 did not resolve, is the ability of the education system to retain youngsters after the age of 16. The biggest single educational loss of talent and ability is at the age of 16. That is an indictment not just of the Government but of the education system. International comparative figures show that Britain's staying-on rate at the age of 16 is half that in many of our competitor countries in western Europe, in Japan and in the United States. Even worse, some of the south-east Asian countries, especially South Korea, will soon have a much more substantial staying-on rate than in the United Kingdom. An article published in the *Financial Times* in June shows that roughly seven out of 10 South Korean youngsters leave school at the age of 18 with technical qualifications approaching or beyond A-level standard.

That is what we are competing against, but the Education Reform Act failed to deal with it. We must create the conditions in which our youngsters want to stay on in education after the age of 16. We shall not compete or provide the Minister's "balanced person" unless we continue to provide good quality education and training beyond the age of 16.

Going around the country, as I and many hon. Members do, and talking to representatives of British industry, the response that we increasingly hear is that we are short of skilled people. Those skills shortages are developing not just in Surrey and the south-east but in other areas, and they are very much a reflection of our teacher shortages. They are specialist skill shortages. Last week, I visited the Vickers factory in Leeds, and the manager told me that the company had difficulty recruiting planners and engineers. Education should make a contribution to resolving that skills crisis, and the real indictment of the Government and the Secretary of State for Education and Science is that at no time during the passage of the Education Reform Bill did they try to aid the development of technical skills and expertise among 16-year-olds.

Mr. James Pawsey (Rugby and Kenilworth): May I take it that the hon. Gentleman would support my right hon. Friend's advice to the interim advisory committee that differentials should be taken into account? Those differentials will ensure that the shortage subjects will

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attract teachers because they will be better remunerated. Secondly, at long last the hon. Gentleman seems to have been converted to the idea of city technology colleges. They will go a long way to resolving some of the problems to which he referred.

Mr. Fatchett: If the hon. Gentleman can see, on the basis of such flimsy evidence, conversion where none exists perhaps he should have chosen the Church rather than politics as a profession.

We need to develop a strategy that helps us to provide good quality education and training post-16, and I offer the Minister three suggestions for developing Government policy. First, we must reconsider—a cost is involved, but it must be faced because it is an investment—the provision of educational maintenance allowances or study grants for youngsters who stay on in education post-16. We know for a fact that youngsters—mainly girls—leave education at the age of 16 for financial reasons. We need to provide the financial incentive and security to stay on, and it would have been a significant education reform if the 1988 Act had included a provision for such study grants.

Secondly, we must broaden the range of skill and qualifications post-16. One of the most damaging acts of the Secretary of State—I sense that it was not his decision but that of the Prime Minister—was to reject at a stroke the Higginson report on the reform of A-levels. The education system cries out for broader provision post-16—a provision that reflects the Government's national curriculum, that will allow our youngsters to maintain a broad and balanced education that will allow them to study science and technical subjects, together with arts and the social sciences, after the age of 16. Britain is unique in the Western world in its provision of post-16 education and training. Only we believe that a tight, specific education is the road to the future. I believe otherwise. We must develop a much broader base for our post-16 education.

Finally, to deal with a point made by several Conservative Members, the Government must reconsider yet again our training requirements. The best way to deal with skills shortages is to return to the provision of long-term training courses—skills-based, employer-based and college-based, but providing genuine skills. I was interested to read an article in *Computing Weekly* of 25 August which showed that the information technology industry has rejected the Government's approach to training. It believes that the Government's courses are underfunded and aimed too low. We need to extend them and to return to long-term provision to deal with the skills and training shortage.

Very finally——

Mr. Pawsey: That is the second "very finally".

Mr. Fatchett: Without all the helpful interventions from Conservative Members, my agenda would not have been extended. The hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey), in his usual mischievous way—I sat through 200 hours of it in the debates on the Education Reform Bill—always wants to extend the debate, and he asked me about my conversion to city technology colleges.

In conclusion, let me say that there has been no such conversion. City technology colleges will not provide the skills and resources that are necessary for all our youngsters. As we saw in *The Times Educational Supplement* last week, the programme has already run into the greatest difficulty. Conservative Members will recall—I am sure that they participated in the statutory standing ovation—that at the 1986 Conservative party conference the Secretary of State described city technology colleges as the most significant reform of the century. It seems that any initiative taken by the Secretary of State is the most significant reform of the century. He said that industry would come into the education system to reform and reshape it and to give it new life.

At the following year's Conservative party conference, the Secretary of State said that this great initiative to open 20 technology colleges had not run as smoothly as he might have hoped. But at that stage he was delighted to announce to the faithful that one of the 20 schools had been opened in Solihull. This year he returned, and somehow the city technology colleges started to slip off his agenda. That is hardly surprising, because he will not now reach the figure that was suggested at the 1986 conference. He will not reach it because industry recognises that it is not its job to finance and resource education: it is the Government's job. That is why industry has not been prepared to come forward with the cash.

If Conservative Members deny this or disagree with it, they should remember that in the early days, in that conference speech in 1986 in Bournemouth, the Secretary of State said that most of the money would come from industry and that the Exchequer—the public purse—would play little part. The opposite has happened: 80 per cent. or more of the spending on CTCs will come from the taxpayer, not from industry. The truth is that the CTC programme is a failure, not because of Labour opposition or the opposition of Labour and Conservative local authorities but because of the opposition of industry. There is no enthusiasm for the scheme. Industry wants the balanced person to whom the Minister referred; and it wants a well-resourced and maintained education system. It wants a system with enough teachers, resources, textbooks and buildings, and it wants an education system and a Government that will start to tackle the problems of the skill shortage in this country.

This Government have failed industry; their policies in education have failed it, too, and we need a great change. Only the Labour party is putting forward the necessary new agenda.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Order. I am keeping a keen eye on the clock. Since the debate opened it has become clear that there is considerable interest in it. Had Mr. Speaker been aware of that at the outset it is likely that he would have imposed the ten-minute limit on speeches. I know that he would appreciate it, therefore, if hon. Members would employ some self-discipline. I should like to call a large number of hon. Members and it would help me enormously if that self-discipline were employed and hon. Members chose to speak for no more than 10 minutes.

10.42 am

Mr. Gerald Bowden (Dulwich): I shall take seriously the suggestion that you, Madam Deputy Speaker, have made. I think that the number of Conservative Members present

reflects the concern in the Chamber about this problem. It was clear from the speech by the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) that there is a great deal of shared ground between the two sides of the House. The difficulty, I suppose, is that we have a different view of the causes of the problem and of the solutions to it. I hope to touch on one or two of these in the short time that I propose to detain the House.

Immediately before entering Parliament I taught in a polytechnic close to this Palace. I was associated with a vocational course. I myself had gone through a fairly traditional university course of three years, at the end of which one might proceed to a professional qualification. However the course on which I taught at the South Bank polytechnic was called a thick sandwich course. The students on it spent three years in college and one year in a professional attachment. The remarkable thing about it was that they spent the first two years gaining basic skills necessary to make the conversion to the world into which they hoped to work. Their third year was spent in the world of business outside the polytechnic, while the fourth was back in the polytechnic putting the final touches to their academic qualifications. That work experience at that age was undoubtedly beneficial and was a formula that might well have been used in other universities. It took the polytechnics to pioneer that sort of vocational training. All this, however, was directed to a professional qualification, as opposed to one for industry, but there are lessons to be learnt from that professional approach in training and education for industry and commerce.

If one thing emerged from my experience in teaching it was that many students with the appropriate grades at A-level arrived on their higher education degree courses without the basic skills of communication, fairly simple numeracy and the literacy with which to express themselves and make it possible for them to communicate professionally and understand the professional instruction that they were required to absorb. So there is a real need to go back a stage before the higher stages of education and specific training for industry, to secondary education and to ensure that the elements in the core curriculum that are important in enabling students to absorb the technical, professional and practical needs of industry are present.

Going back one stage further, we need to ensure that the seeds of good training are sown at the base of our educational system. Our primary and nursery schools must show the way ahead. I well remember going around a nursery school in which I had an interest in placing a child and seeing a purposeful group of children there going about what was referred to not as play but as work. One little scene that attracted my attention was that of a child with a glass and jug. In the jug were beads. The child was pouring the beads from the jug into the glass. Some fell on the floor and were retrieved. I asked the head of the school what was happening and she told me that when the child could pour all the beads into the glass without spilling any he would be able to pour himself a glass of milk from the jug. That was a simple training technique at the early age of three or four. Those were the seeds of education for industry planted at the very beginning of a child's educational career in a school that fostered good motivation. This is not to deny children access to the humanities, the arts and all the other things that we regard as constituting a rounded liberal education.

I agree that motivation in children and parents is important, but I take issue with the remark by the hon. Member for Leeds, Central that Conservative Members have indulged in a sustained campaign of denigrating the teaching profession. Not so. Conservative Members who have been teachers or who have been involved in education applaud teachers who are doing a good job, but that in no way prevents us from pointing the finger at the ones who are doing a poor job, of which there are some. We must make sure that teachers in our schools are conscious of the importance of education to industry, of industry to our economy and of our economy to our civilisation and way of life. These things are all interlocked. One of the failures in inner London was that many teachers have not been conscious of that fact or, if they have been have deliberately fought against it.

I pay a small tribute at this point to Dulwich college in my constituency, one of the most forward-looking of schools, and to its former master, David Emms, who, long before it became fashionable to talk about industry and education, took the initiative in trying to ensure that the boys in his school who were on an entirely academic course were not unaware of the practical application of that course to the world at large and of the importance of that application to the economy.

Mr. Mark Wolfson (Sevenoaks): Does my hon Friend agree that some people in the teaching profession have been unnecessarily defensive about legitimate criticism of some of their performance? There is criticism of management, trade unions and of people in all sorts of other careers, and it should be no oddity that criticism is made of teachers when it is justified.

Mr. Bowden: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for provoking another line of thought. I shall answer him obliquely. A short time ago I spoke to a headmaster who said that when he was appointed to that post he had had no training for the job. He had been a senior subject teacher and was appointed as headmaster of a large comprehensive school. After his appointment he was lucky to receive a two-week training course in administration. He contrasted his experience with that of his brother or brother-in-law—I forget which—who was in the Army and was destined for promotion from major to lieutenant colonel. That promotion would enable him to take over the running of a signals regiment. He had a two-year training course before taking over the regiment. There is an analogy there that should be followed.

When we require teachers to become managers or heads of school and to become involved in the administrative process of management, which is an industrial concern as well, we must make sure that within the teaching profession there should be a way to allow people to develop the skills that they will require to do a proper job. There can be no criticism of the individual who sometimes fails, but there are grounds for criticism of the system if the procedures I have mentioned are not in place.

I am conscious, Madam Deputy Speaker, of what you said about the pressure of time, but I should like to deal briefly with one other matter. We are all involved in the learning process and in education for industry. I should like to pay tribute to the Industry and Parliament Trust. My hon. Friend the Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey) sees conversion where others would not. I welcome that faith and perception, and can tell him that I am a late convert to the Industry and Parliament Trust and recently became involved in one of its programmes. The

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arrogance or complacency of many of us who opine about industry and commerce without being deeply involved in it has shaken my self-confidence.

I go round factories and I hope that I make the right noises and I am certainly told various things. But it was not until I became involved in a fellowship with the EMAP —the East Midland Allied Press, through the good offices of Sir Frank Rogers, who suggested that I might learn something by looking at its operation, that I realised how far industry has moved on from the time when I first had close connections with it. It is important for us to recognise that there is no training for life, but there is training for a phase of employment. Throughout industrial life there is a retraining process during which one re-equips oneself to deal with the challenges of new technology, new industrial demands and new management techniques.

I am conscious, as are all hon. Members, that we have no life tenure in Parliament. We might have to retrain at any time for other careers. There is a need in the country, in industry and in the teaching profession to be prepared to accept that we all may need to be retrained for industry. It is a continuing process involving not only children at school or people in higher education but all hon. Members and everyone in industry. We must respond to the challenge by being prepared to retrain and re-educate ourselves.

10.54 am

Mr. Peter L. Pike (Burnley): Bearing in mind, Madam Deputy Speaker, your strictures about time I do not propose to deal with the arguments by the hon. Member for Dulwich (Mr. Bowden) or to reiterate any of the fine points made by my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett). I should like to take part in the debate for two simple reasons. First, the north-west, the region in which my constituency is based, is an industrial area and always has been. Secondly, before I was elected to the House I worked in industry on a production line on a continental shift system which meant changing shifts every three days. Therefore, I know a little about industry.

The Minister spoke about some of the problems in education and in industry. I had hoped for some insight into how we might set up a system that encourages people to the view that a job in industry, in management, supervision or working on the production line, is important to Britain and that we want people to do those jobs. There is a tendency for people to say not that their daughter should not go on the stage, but that their children should not go to work in a factory. They apply that attitude to management, supervisors and to people working on the production line. That is appalling because industry is of basic importance to Britain.

I do not deride the importance of invisible exports such as banking, insurance or tourism, but at the end of the day our bread and butter and Britain's future depends on a strong manufacturing base. Our industry needs to succeed and must export a far higher proportion of goods than it is able to do at present. Our balance of payments must be improved. The key thing to say to people with ability who are looking for jobs is that if they want to enter management it is good to go into industry. There are also good jobs to be had in supervision and people are needed on production lines.

We must change the concept in industry of a difference between so-called white collar staff and blue collar hourly paid workers. That concept still exists in many industries. I worked for the large multinational Philips group and in our factory all the workers were on staff conditions. When I was a shop steward and involved in negotiations I always recognised that a cleaner was just as important as management to the running of the factory. Everyone working together ensured the success of the factory. We must ensure that people working in factories are not treated as second-class citizens and we must change the attitude that people earning hourly pay are only doing so because they cannot get another job. I do not look at it in that way.

I should like to refer to a letter, of which my hon. Friend the Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw), who has just left the Chamber will have received a copy. It is a letter from Mr. David Tinniswood. I received a copy this week and a copy has also gone to the hon. Member for Rossendale and Darwen (Mr. Trippier), the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment. It is a copy of a letter sent to the hon. Member for Pendle (Mr. Lee), the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment. Mr. Tinniswood is an education and industry liaison officer and has offices in the Pendle constituency. His letter deals with the subject that we are debating. In his letter to me Mr. Tinniswood says:

"North East Lancashire has gained a national reputation for linking education and industry in a very meaningful way but the continuance of this work could be under threat in the near future if some satisfactory method of funding this work cannot be found."

If that is correct, it could threaten the purpose and function of the issue that we are debating today. I hope that the point will be looked at.

Mr. Tinniswood says that his post, which he has held for six years, is on a secondment basis, and because of the threat to local government funding, the county council is not able to make it into a permanent post. He says that three Cabinet Ministers recently launched the Department of Trade and Industry business and education initiative, a launch which he attended, and at which the work done by his section of the education department was recognised. Despite that, his job is in jeopardy. He continues:

"Presently I am heavily engaged in delivering an effective cross-curricular education/industry policy within the National Curriculum, managing the education team preparing the Blackburn Compact and actively involved in meeting the targets set for us in the Business and Education Initiative."

At the end of his letter, he says that he believes that this problem could be solved by a special education support grant to ensure that such a function can be maintained.

This work is a good example of what can be done to develop links between industry and education. It is important to ensure that such exercises in other sectors do not fail. I was involved in the preparation of the bid by Burnley for a compact. It was unsuccessful, and I accept that, because of the deprivation criteria, Blackburn may have had a better case than Burnley. However, we shall continue to go for it, because we do not accept that no as a final answer.

Even if we have the right education for children who leave the education system at 18, 19 or even later, we have to recognise that with the changes in society and industry, brought about by automation and other developments that need to be introduced, if we are to compete in the market place, people will not remain in the same job all

their lives. Much will change, and I hope that we shall provide for those who will have to go in and out of education and training at various stages in their lives. We have to ensure that when people do such education and training, whether they are men or women, they must be able to do so without suffering financial difficulties. I have dealt with a number of cases recently where this has not happened. For example, a woman received a grant for retraining, but that affected her husband's benefit, which was a deterrent to going back to education. In another case, benefit was stopped while somebody underwent a short training course. How such people are expected to live, I do not know.

We must make available education and training opportunities throughout people's working lives as well as in the early school leaving period. That is crucial. Furthermore, the Government have to accept that the man or woman going back into education or training must be able to maintain their standard of life so that they and their families do not suffer poverty or deprivation as a result. This is an important debate, but I am aware of the constraints of time. I am sure that other hon. Members will add other important issues at which we shall be looking.

11.4 am

Mr. Tim Rathbone (Lewes): Whatever the criticisms from parents, students, employees, teachers or politicians, I believe that we can stand proud of the record of what our universities, polytechnics and other institutes of education can do and are doing. Britain must live by her wits. Leading industrialists look to those educational institutions, particularly those in further education, as sources of able, well-qualified and adaptable young people who can keep up with, influence and lead the ever-changing economic, social, political and technological world in which we live.

As change is part of educational life, it is healthy that the curriculum is being reappraised. It must be healthy that centres of excellence are being identified, built up and expanded, that the performance of both academic and administrative staff is better appraised and recognised, that higher students standards are being encouraged, and that more and better bridges are being built between the world at work and the world at study. This includes liason between schools and businesses, technology transfers, co-operative provision of services on and off campuses, encouragement of out-of-work and teach-in opportunities and a far closer relationship between educational institutions and particularly between universities and polytechnics, which are breaking down the historic barriers of yesteryear and drawing together complementary skills for the benefit of teachers, students and industry alike.

That is not to say that all that is beautiful has to be big, even though there is a case for rationalising provision for some kinds of expensive scientific research on an international as well a national basis. For instance, at Sussex university, part of which is in my constituency, the vice-chancellor pointed out at the annual meeting of court earlier this year that there is a group in physics made up of just two members of faculty. However, this group has been awarded hundreds of thousands of pounds of research grants; has established research collaboration with the high resolution electron microscopy facility at Arizona state university, where one of the group is a visiting professor; and, very importantly, has built up close working links with a number of industrial companies manufacturing scientific instruments near the university.

Flexibility must be the password to future success in education as in business. Universities will have to co-operate more with local institutions to develop pre-university foundation and preparatory courses tailored to the new demands of degree courses. Also at Sussex university, the school of engineering and applied science has set up a linked scheme with local technical and sixth form colleges to give potential engineering students specialist training in mathematics and physics and areas of expertise not covered by their colleges.

Degree programmes will have to become more flexible, with increasing acceptance of credit transfers, so that a degree may be fashioned out of compilation courses, sometimes taken at a number of different institutions and at different times—a point made by the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike)—and joint degrees must be developed. We must make an even greater contribution to, and seek ever increasing numbers of people—teachers and students—from overseas universities, particularly within Europe, and we must also allow credit transfers and split and joint degree schemes with them. As degrees and the work leading up to them become more career-relevant, so our universities and polytechnics must prepare provision for mid-career training, with short and part-time courses to update those in professional and technical employment.

As our developed nation and world becomes ever more interdependent with developing nations, we must build stronger educational links with those nations and encourage more and better students from those areas to create a more advanced, better integrated and more extensive information and communications environment throughout the international academic community.

I should like to say a special word about our Open university, which has only slightly fewer than 200,000 students this year and 100,000 graduates to its credit. It is extremely successful, with an established high reputation among students, employers and academics. It will be needed more than ever in the future as either a first-chance or second-chance provider of further education. It claims, with justification, to offer the most cost-effective source of training, retraining and reskilling. Over recent years, it has increased its efficiency, reduced its costs and improved markedly its entrepreneurial earnings from other sources. However, it is now facing such financial pressures that its educational programmes are at risk and soon it may not be able to meet its charter obligations. Therefore, I plead for increased block grant to match more closely the far higher inflation within and across all its cost factors than is found in the country generally. The need for the Open university's special qualities has never been greater. It deserves our proud and realistic support.

Another educational initiative which is especially pertinent to today's debate, and one which comes from outside the formal education system is Education for Capability, which is administered by the RSA, the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce. It is based on the belief that a well balanced education should embrace analysis and the acquisition of knowledge, but must also include the exercise of creative skills; the competence to undertake and complete tasks, the ability to cope with everyday life and the ability to do all those things in co-operation with others.

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The aim of Education for Capability is to encourage and develop in people four capacities that are currently too often under-emphasised in our education system. The first is to improve competence by the practice of skills and the use of knowledge. The second is to enable students to cope better with their own lives and the problems that confront them and society. The third is to develop the students' creative abilities. Above all, the fourth aim is to enable students to co-operate with other people in those capacities. It is those four capacities which Education for Capability is designed to encourage and develop.

New projects are started every year. Three have been launched in 1988—on effective learning, practice and management, on learning by experience in further education, and on higher education for capability. The projects are funded by foundations and trusts, public companies and the Training Commission, but there is still a shortfall for the first of the three years of the programmes, and considerably more money is needed to meet costs during the second and third years. Any encouragement that my hon. Friend the Minister can give, either with funding or to help attract further funding, will be most welcome.

My hon. Friend the Member for Dulwich (Mr. Bowden) mentioned the education requirements and the importance of education at the other end of the education spectrum—the importance of practical and useful learning at the early stage, in nursery school. Nursery schools are the overlooked and often forgotten cornerstone of all other learning and all other life. I hope that the House may have an opportunity to return to that subject and to debate it in depth at some future date, as there is not the time to go into it this morning.

We must remember that the seeds of the industrial revolution can be found in the universities of the renaissance. Together, industry, the universities, polytechnics, colleges and other educational institutions could today make history repeat itself. That is what this important debate is really about. I should like to end by thanking my hon. Friend the Minister for instigating it and for his continued interest in this subject—more strength to his elbow.

11.14 am

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones (Ynys Môn): Without doubt this is a debate on one of the most challenging topics of our generation. It is even more crucial in the light of the fact that there will be 25 per cent. fewer school leavers in 1993 than this year.

We in Wales—I recognise that I carry a heavy responsibility today as I am the only Member from Wales present to participate in the debate—consider that proper education and training for our children and young people is essential to protect our communities from massive rural depopulation. We understand that a diverse, vibrant and healthy local economy depends on a well educated and properly trained work force and on young people being sufficiently motivated to set up in business and commerce.

I was interested to hear the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) refer to certain skills shortages in some of the industries in his constituency. During the summer recess, I visited several factories and workplaces in my constituency and found a similar problem there. There is now a considerable lack of skills in some areas. The harsh and unpalatable reality is that jobs remain unfilled simply because some skills are not available locally.

I hasten to add that the vast majority of employers wish to recruit from within the locality; they know that, if they can do that, prospective employees will have a commitment to the area and to the industry. People from outside often see jobs purely and simply in terms of career development. Clearly, there will be occasions when it is not possible to recruit locally, and of necessity people must be brought in from outside the area. However, where it is possible for us to find properly skilled people within the locality, my experience is that employers prefer that course.

The problem is that companies which are large enough to have their own training resources do their training without anybody else's assistance because they have the expertise. The companies that lose in areas of skills shortages are the ones which are too small to have training resources. They therefore go without the skills which are necessary to enable them to develop. The Government must take that issue seriously.

Our communities are under threat in rural Wales, mainly because our economic base is weak and we face challenges from wealthier regions especially the south-east of England and the midlands. In the past 18 months, that has led to pressures on house prices, which have recently been pushed up and which have exploded out of the reach of local people, especially young people.

One way in which we could meet that challenge is to ensure that schools and colleges of further education give young people every opportunity to go into industry and commerce, and that they encourage them to do so. In the past, there has been reluctance in rural Wales even to regard a career in industry as an option. We must change that attitude if we are to succeed in the task of maintaining a decent standard of living and thus our community life and values, and if we are to defeat the real scourges of rural deprivation, unemployment and depopulation.

I am pleased that the links between schools and industry are developing in Gwynedd and that the local education authority has appointed an education-industry liaison officer to forge even closer links. All sides agree that even more should be done, so in September I launched an initiative entitled Menter Môn or Anglesey Action, which was aimed at improving links between education and industry. The launch was attended by local industrialists, representatives of the Welsh Development Agency and the Wales tourist board, the Gwynedd county council director of education, the education-industry liaison officer and representatives of the economic development department of the borough and county councils.

Due to the initiative's early success in its approach, concrete follow-up initiatives are planned. These will include increasing the number of visits to factories and industrial plants by schoolchildren, better liaison—that is vital—between careers masters and schools and industry, setting up specific projects in schools that are aimed at creating a greater awareness among children of industry and commerce, and creating links between schools and specific industries in their areas.

I realise that industry's recent interest in education and training is not entirely benevolent or altruistic. Industrialists realise that competition for recruits will be fierce in the next decade, and accordingly they are busy offering sponsorships and grants to potential recruits in

our schools. A recent BBC "Panorama" programme highlighted the Compact scheme in London, in which companies target schoolchildren and offer them job prospects at an early age. This is happening because of the reduction in the number of 16-year-olds in the next five years.

Experience and research has shown that contact between schools and industry is patchy. A survey undertaken by Booz, Allen and Hamilton, which was reported in the *Financial Times*, examined the experience of more than 1,500 secondary schools, almost 1,000 companies and more than 80 education authorities. It found that almost 40 per cent. of schools and 54 per cent. of businesses lack regular links. Only one in five pupils has sustained contact with business, and only a very few have an understanding of small businesses in rural areas. It is significant that schools reported that only 16 per cent. of them had links with companies with fewer than 50 employees.

Some teachers are now being seconded to industry to develop links. This is only partial, however, and the experience that is gained benefits very few. The report of Her Majesty's inspectors on a survey of enterprise, education and school-industry links in Wales referred to statistics:

"These figures, however, require careful interpretation because in many schools only a small number of pupils and teachers are involved. Activities may only involve one particular course, or may be restricted to the work of one dept. In these schools the mainstream curriculum is often largely uninfluenced by industrial contacts and the schemes of work in the major subject areas make little reference to applications which could enrich and provide relevance to the learning."

That report suggests that there is a long way to go.

Local technical colleges have an important role to play in preparing young people for careers in industry. I congratulate Coleg Pencraig, the technical college in my constituency, on the steps that it has taken. It has set up courses to meet the changing demands of local industry, including the tourist industry. Even more important, it has entered into a joint enterprise initiative with the WDA that is aimed at encouraging young people to set up in business on their own. It is attempting to tackle the problems that that entails.

Careers teachers in schools work in extremely difficult conditions. On the one hand, they are the vital link between a pupil and his or her career, yet on the other they often lack the time, the resources and the experience to undertake the task successfully. Proper training and resources for careers teachers, and an appreciation of the work that they do, is a top priority. Proper guidance for pupils at the ages of 14 and 15 years, not in my view at 16, 17 and 18, is crucial for their career prospects. Careers teachers should improve the links between their schools and industry. There should be greater liaison between training officers in industry and careers teachers. Seminars should be organised so that they can understand one another better.

We must understand also that there are strains in the relationships between schools and industrialists. We must be wary, as the hon. Member for Leeds, Noth-West (Dr. Hampson) said, of industrialists who see education merely as a vehicle to provide them with a properly trained work force. Education must and should mean more than that. Schools prepare people for jobs, of course, but they have the wider responsibility. The National Union of Teachers' document entitled "Better Schools: an alternative view", states:

"But to see education as the instrument to fulfil the industrial and economic needs of the country is to regard individuals only in terms of socio-economic roles and the education service as an agency to satisfy the Government's manpower plans."

I accept that there must be a balance, but we must be wary that it is not tilted too much to one side.

We must increase links between education and industry. We shall then be preparing the ground for a better balanced economy. There are increasing pressures on the economy of rural Wales, and I warn the House that we are finding them difficult to resist. One way of easing the pressures is to make the local economy more resilient. In the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, inward investment was seen as the answer to rural unemployment and depopulation. The recession in the 1980s proved that to be a flawed theory. We must rebuild our economy in large part from within and through greater economic success, and that will be done partly through education and training. We can thereby preserve our communities and enable our language, culture and traditions to flourish anew.

11.28 am

Mr. Peter Thurnham (Bolton, North-East): I know that Friday is a day for a friendly debate, but I must express surprise at the unevenness of attendance when comparison is made between the number of my hon. Friends who are in their places and the few Labour Members who are in theirs. The minority parties are doing a relatively and proportionately better job than the Labour party in representing those for whom they speak. It is not surprising that official Opposition spokesmen have been seen outside the Chamber trying to find some more Labour Members to fill the Opposition Benches. There are five hon. Members on the Opposition Benches, and when I last made a count there were 16 Conservative Members.

Mr. Richard Page (Hertfordshire, South-West): I beg my hon. Friend not to try to rustle up more Labour Members. If they are brought into the Chamber, some Conservative Members will not be able to contribute to the debate.

Mr. Thurnham: Given the pressure of time, I shall follow Gladstone's example with speeches and taxis, and I shall content myself with a reference to Disraeli, who said over 100 years ago that it was upon the education of the people of this country that the fate of the country would depend.

I congratulate my hon. Friend the Minister on his success in securing this debate and on being appointed a Minister at the Department of Education and Science. I cannot think of a better person to be so appointed. He will be able to make a unique contribution, with the knowledge of industry that he gained before coming to the House and his experience as a Minister in the Department of Trade and Industry.

We and industry wish to see a much greater spirit of competition in our schools, but it is clear that the Labour party is afraid of that. The Labour party is frightened by the idea of competition. The idea of the skills Olympics, for example, must be abhorrent to it. We need the spirit of

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competition, and it is fortunate that the Government are taking initiatives that will allow schools to opt out of the suffocating, monopolistic control of local authorities.

I wonder whether my hon. Friend the Minister had a chance to hear the most excellent appeal on the radio this morning from the parents and chairman of governors of St. James Church of England school in Bolton. They desperately hope that they can opt out of the control of the local authority which is not only suffocating the school, but killing it. The authority wants to close that excellent school. The school is not in my constituency, but many of my constituents have approached me about it, because they are worried about developments.

I should like to think that my hon. Friend the Minister will give every consideration to the school's appeal to opt out. The parent who spoke at the end of the programme, Mr. John Waith, made an important point when he said that he wanted to see the school become the best in Bolton. He followed the council spokesman who said that all schools in Bolton were equal. That is the precise difference in spirit which is so inhibiting the competition that we want. That is the way Opposition Members like to see things. We want competition between schools and more competition within schools to encourage the very best to come forward so that when people enter industry they have a strong spirit of competition.

The hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) referred to Japan where more 16-year-olds remain at school. The whole thrust of the Japanese education system is to encourage the spirit of competition. Children are encouraged to have extra lessons after school to improve and enhance their performance in competition with each other to get into the best college or university. I ask my hon. Friend the Minister to do all in his power to increase the spirit of competition and allow local authority schools to opt out of the suffocating control of local authorities and so proceed on their own to show how well they can perform.

11.31 am

Mr. Frank Haynes (Ashfield): First, I welcome the hon. Member for Coventry, South-West (Mr. Butcher) to the Dispatch Box in his new position as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science. He was at the Department of Trade and Industry, but now he is responsible for a certain section of education. Hon. Members have referred to the way in which education and industry should be working together in the interests of children and the economy. This nation is very important to all of us.

There would appear to be a number of teachers on the Conservative Benches although I do not mean the hon. Member for Hertfordshire, South-West (Mr. Page) whom I have woken up. The teachers on the Conservative Benches know what education is all about. The Conservative party has been in power for nearly 10 years and it has failed the education and training system. Conservative Members should be ashamed of themselves.

I know that one or two hon. Members have a particular interest in youngsters who have left school, but have not had a real opportunity in education. The hon. Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway) and I have tried to help those people by setting up an all-party group for adult education. We believe that we achieved a fair amount of success. We visited different places to see how the system worked and how we in the House could help. I am grateful for the guidance that I received from the hon. Member for Ealing, North, and I acknowledge his great experience in education—*[Interruption.]*

The hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey) keeps saying "Hear hear." He and I often have a natter about things. One of the things that we talk about is the education of our children in preparation for when they leave school to enter industry. We firmly believe that the youngsters of this nation should have a first-class opportunity to prepare for work.

In the past nine or 10 years the education system has been failed. There are schools in my constituency where the conditions are atrocious. We must start with the provision of education and all that goes with it, and go right through to when children leave school and start a job. Schools in my constituency are in a terrible state, but I praise to the hilt the Nottinghamshire county council education committeee for its work over many years. However, its work has been held back because of the cuts in education finance in my county. The education committe wants to do the right thing, but is denied the opportunity because the finance is not available. I hope that the Minister will help to ensure that money is available for forward-looking education authorities that want to do the right things—the things that we believe should be happening in the interests of school children, but are not happening.

I recognise the dedication of teachers to education. I heard serious criticisms from Conservative Members about the education system and the quality of teaching. I am proud that my children are teaching. I am proud that they have degrees, one in languages, a subject which my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) gave a right good going over. I believe that my family has played a part in the system. However, many families are playing a part, but do not receive the leadership that they need from the Government on education and training.

I hear a lot of technical jargon about education. I want to talk about basic and important things because the technical jargon follows on after that. We must have the right things at the beginning before we can talk about what should be happening. I did not get a real chance in education. I was born with a shovel in my hand and I took it to the pit for 35 years. However, I received an educational opportunity from a nationalised industry which allowed me to go back to school and get certain qualifications. I am proud that that industry gave me that opportunity, but it taught me a lesson. I did not have those opportunities way back in the 1930s when I was a kid. We have a real responsibility now for our nation's children. Over the past 10 years we have criticised what has been happening and we are still arguing about it.

Firms in my constituency are squealing out for skilled persons. My hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, Central gave that a good bouncing. Yes, the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth can have a nice big grin on his face; indeed he always has one there. However, firms are squealing out for skilled people and we are not providing them. I will tell you a very brief story, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I hope it is brief.

Mr. Haynes: The local district council in Ashfield is a first-class local authority. As a result of the squealing from local industry about the lack of youngsters from school with computer experience, the authority decided that it could have a go at trying to fill the gap and provide skilled people for local industry. What did it do? It cadged £35,000 worth of obsolete equipment which could be used for its purposes. It will provide a building to house the kids and equipment. We applied to the Department of Employment for financial assistance because Ashfield district council is really pushing the boat out. What happened? There have been letters going back and forth, but no way is the Department saying that it will provide money and help with the problem. I keep having to bang on the Minister's door and try to wake him up.

The finance required is not a great amount. Its importance is that it will give some kids an opportunity, so that after leaving school they can obtain training and then get a job somewhere. Still the Secretary of State for Employment will not cough up the money that is needed.

I make another plea. It is about the only thing that I can do. I am sick of writing letters. Here I am, appealing on the Floor of this Chamber, in the hope that the Minister will listen seriously and himself knock on the door of the Department of Employment and wake it up—because the people there are half asleep. They want telling in no uncertain terms that we need that help.

The hon. Member for Banbury (Mr. Baldry) spoke about his son losing one day's education. The Conservatives have been in office for nearly 10 years, and their policy has caused the loss of more than one day's education over that period, because of the awkwardness of the Treasury Bench. The hon. Member for Banbury wags his head, but unless the Treasury Bench and the Secretary of State for Education and Science get themselves and the education system sorted out in the interests of the children, there will be more problems in the future. The teachers have had a bellyful.

Mr. Baldry *rose*—

Mr. Haynes: No, time is time.

Head teachers are sick to death of being told that they must be accountants. They have been trained to teach and not to serve as accountants. One of my hon. Friends was right to speak about teacher shortages. Teachers are being driven away because of the Government's damned education policy. We ought to be pulling in the specialist teachers on all subjects in the curriculum. I mentioned computing, but mathematics also comes into it. We need more help from the Government. I hope that the debate will give youngsters more opportunity, for it is they upon whom we shall be depending in the future. We have played our part. I am nearing retirement. The hon. Member for Dulwich (Mr. Bowden) spoke of training for another career. I stand here going on for 63, and I am training myself for retirement.

The important point is that we must look after our youngsters and industry. That is what we are supposed to be doing, and I hope that we shall have some success as a result of this debate.

11.43 am

Mr. Patrick Thompson (Norwich, North): I am grateful for the opportunity to speak briefly in this important debate. As one of the ex-teachers on the Government Benches, I was interested to hear the remarks of the hon. Member for Ashfield (Mr. Haynes). I can at least share his passion for education, even if I do not agree with all his conclusions. It was a little unwise of him to refer to the education record of the various political parties. I remember being a teacher in the early 1960s, at a time when the Labour party did grievous damage to the education system from which we are still, in many ways, trying to recover.

Mr. Haynes: Will the hon. Gentleman tell the House what we did?

Mr. Thompson: I certainly share the hon. Gentleman's stress on the importance of this debate.

I was pleased that my hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, North-East (Mr. Thurnham) was able to speak, because he is one of the members of the parliamentary group for engineering development. Earlier this year, this House had a debate on engineering. I am delighted to welcome my hon. Friend the Minister to his new appointment, and I am also pleased that he is replying to this debate. I recall very well him taking part in our earlier excellent engineering debate on 11 March.

My speech will be briefer than it might otherwise have been because many of the points made in that debate by hon. Members present today and by others are totally relevant to the subject we are now discussing. I refer, for example, to the importance of being able to compete with Europe and elsewhere as we approach 1992. There is also the importance of improving our attitudes to industry, which are still not right. That point was stressed in the engineering debate.

Mention has been made time and time again by speakers on both sides of the House of skills shortages. There is no doubt that industry and business face a major crisis, and I am delighted that that issue has been raised today, as it was during our engineering debate earlier this year. In his opening speech, the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) was long on identifying the problems that exist. I agree with much of his analysis, but he was not quite so long on the question of policy. That is a difficulty in which the Labour party often finds itself. When it comes to deciding what should be their education policies, I do not find them anything like so convincing, but I do not have time to develop that theme.

I support my hon. Friend the Member for Dulwich (Mr. Bowden) in his remarks about the Industry and Parliament Trust. I have also been involved in that organisation, having recently done an attachment. Many of the points made in this debate are supported by the experience of those who have been on attachment to industrial firms, and I confirm my hon. Friend's remarks. I welcome the Government's initiatives in respect of education and industry. I refer, for example, to the technical and vocational education initiative, the certificate of pre-vocational education, the National Council for Vocational Qualifications, and to the many initiatives for better links between schools and industry. I welcome them and congratulate the Government on taking the matter so seriously.

Recently, a number of reports, articles and pamphlets on this subject have been published. I refer in particular to the School Curriculum Industries Partnership report, to a recent CBI report, and to a recent pamphlet from the Conservative Bow Group. They all highlight continuing

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concern among business men and others about education. The message coming through, if I may attempt to encapsulate it, is that they are agreed that we need a good education system if industry is successfully to compete, and that education should be given the Government's highest priority. I am able to congratulate the Government on having given education a high priority in the 1980s, and I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will do all that he can to ensure that it continues to enjoy a high priority and may even be given a higher priority in future.

In the surveys to which I refer, business men agreed that the United Kingdom's education performance is poor compared with that of our competitors, and that we are sadly deficient in providing basic educational standards. Hon. Members may have seen recent surveys published in the tabloid press and elsewhere, suggesting that Britons are dunces and that A-level candidates cannot write good English. Even taking account of the exaggeration in which the media so often indulges, there is enough truth in those reports for us all to be concerned and to share the worries that industry and commerce have in that respect.

There is a mismatch somewhere between the needs and beliefs of people in business and industry and the beliefs and statements of those involved in education. If only we can bring those two groups together so that there will not appear to be some kind of warring between them, we would make much more progress. After all, I know that business people share the ideals of educationists; they also believe that young people should have a full and broad education, and should not just be "educated for a job". There is not really a difference, and it is wrong to imply that there is antagonism between the parties involved.

We all believe in a good education for its own sake, but it is also true that industrialists are frustrated by some of the attitudes of educationists. According to one, we must stop producing 50 social scientists for one job while we are able to produce only one production engineer for every 50 jobs, and that encapsulates the frustration felt by industry.

Those involved in education, head teachers and others —I am speaking now about my own profession—should try harder in their public statements to be positive about what they can offer industry. They should perhaps—I choose my words with care—spend a little less time talking about the current political issues that may face education attacking some aspects of the Education Reform Bill with which they are not particularly happy, or discussing teachers' pay. All those things are important, but I should like to hear my old profession speak more about its positive ideas for education and the way in which it can help industry.

My hon. Friend the Member for Sevenoaks (Mr. Wolfson) was right to say that the teaching profession had been a little over-sensitive recently. This country has a high regard for the profession. Why does it not capitalise on that? Let its members criticise the Government by all means, but let them also spend more time emphasising the positive aspects of what they can do.

I realise that I shall not be able to say much more in the time available, but I should like to mention one initiative promoting school-industry links—the engineering education scheme. I was lucky enough to attend the awards presentation at the Institution of Civil Engineers this summer, and I also went to a school in my constituency, Hellesdon high school, which was placed second in Norfolk. This is one of many excellent schemes involving closer links between industry and schools. The only warning that I would give my hon. Friend the Minister is that I have read recently in the press that there is a risk of our having almost too many initiatives, and that confusion is beginning to sweep in. I should be grateful if the Minister could embark on a programme of rationalisation to emphasise the more important initiatives.

I had wanted to spend some time commending and supporting Government policy and actions in both education and trade and industry. It is, in a sense, symbolic that my hon. Friend the Minister is present, because the link between the two is important. I shall, however, conclude by saying merely that there is a need for a revolution in our attitudes towards industry and education. Despite what has been said, it is generally agreed not only that more commitment is needed from industry, but that even more commitment is required from the Government. What we are discussing this morning is critical to the country's future.

Compared with the records of many other countries —I particularly cite Japan and France, because I have been studying them in the past few days—ours is still not good enough. Much more needs to be done, and I hope that we shall all work together to see that it is done—for the good of our young people, and for the good of the country.

11.53 am

Mr. David Madel: (Bedfordshire, South-West): Let me first join hon. Members on both sides of the House in welcoming my hon. Friend the Minister to his new responsibilities. The fact that the Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of Education and Science are coming closer together on this issue makes his move appropriate. The background to our debate is the changing attitude to industry—skills, profits and an appreciation of how vital commercial success is for this country.

The hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) mentioned education maintenance allowances. I take it that when he talked about security he meant financial security for the family. That is a challenge to the Government to make imaginative use of the family credit scheme, the income support scheme or child benefit so that young people from homes with modest means are not deterred from staying at school.

As has already been pointed out, every month brings us closer to 1992 and all that it can mean to our country's commercial success. The first problem is how to define more closely what industry wants from the education service. That does not apply only to school leavers; it is relevant throughout the various stages of craft technician and higher technician, and to the recruitment of graduates and postgraduates.

When it is better established and understood, the national curriculum should go a long way towards meeting industry's basic requirements, provided that we can get the right number of teachers in mathematics, science and technical subjects, where shortages are now appearing. That will require new and imaginative thinking between the Department and industry. We must also look thoroughly and sensibly at what our EEC partners can do to help.

Technology has an important part to play in the new curriculum, but education through technology is more important than education in technology. Education through technology can stimulate the pupil's interest and convince him or her of the relevance of what he or she is learning.

Many useful changes have occurred in higher and further education with the growth of partnership modes and schemes. But we now need more meaningful working partnerships, not only involving the top echelons of technological and scientific thought but enabling line managers and supervisors to become more closely involved with the education system. Technical college staff need to be given industrial roles, not only as observers but as participants and workers—say for a three or four-month period.

Education has made a big effort to get its people into the world of work, but the flow from industry into education has been very small. The Government should be thinking—especially as the Chancellor is months away from his 1989 Budget—about a scheme whereby secondment from industry to education would carry some tax advantage for both the company and the individual —a change in corporation tax, a training allowance or a change in national insurance charges and contributions. Now is the time for us to make such suggestions, before the Chancellor goes into purdah.

There is, of course, the problem of small businesses. Because of the welcome Government support with which my hon. Friend the Minister has been so much involved, the growth in such businesses has been rapid, but their success depends largely on how quickly they can respond to perceived market needs. We now need a better framework of continued support for the more established small company. The needs of small businesses arise at fairly short notice and need a rapid response. I hope that the Training Commission can assist by deploying specific funds to sustain the small business beyond the start-up period, so that the employees at last have secure employment.

The construction industry has established many links with technical colleges, and it knows what it wants. Because expansion has finally come about, people who have training in construction can now get jobs, but the demands on the industry are increasing. We need a new mechanism for the colleges that are trying to help to enable them to seek central support, so that they can do more to help the industry and all that goes with it—electrical maintenance, and electrical installations and all the other aspects that are so important to an industry which is at last showing a real increase in the number of people it can employ.

Let me briefly make three final points. First, a major worry for the Government is the number of engineering graduates who do not go into the engineering industry, and I think that the time is ripe for some deep research into that. Secondly, there is need to maximise the number of academics who know and regularly talk to people in industry, and vice versa.

Thirdly, industry must keep a constant check on how much training is done by industry itself in our major competitor countries and how much of an advantage over us that gives to competitor countries. They are often doing more training, through industry doing it itself. I refer not just to shop floor training overseas but to the training of top management throughout the company—from the company chairman right down, through the employees, to those who work on the factory floor.

The debate points to the need for this country to widen rapidly its industrial base by 1992. That is essential for employment. Moreover, by having a wider and more effective industrial base we shall be able to keep state spending at a level that is sensible and thoroughly beneficial to all those who need help from the state. They will be unable to get that help if we do not have a prosperous industry and a thoroughly modern and responsive education system.

12 noon

Mr. Mark Wolfson (Sevenoaks): First may I thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, for calling me. I am mindful of your direction that speeches should be short. Your intervention this morning had the support of all hon. Members. In that context, I pay a particular tribute to the Labour party for so obviously staying away from the debate and for giving those who sit on the Government side of the House the opportunity to be called. We are extremely grateful to it.

I welcome the Minister to his new responsibilities and I echo what has been said by my hon. Friends, who support his appointment to his new job. We shall value the experience and interest that he brings to it, from both a professional and a ministerial point of view.

The debate takes place against the background of a dramatic fall in the number of school leavers. It provides a major opportunity for the education service to meet the needs of industry and commerce that are more important than ever before. In addition, it will increase the opportunities that are available to young people. When they leave school and go out into the world their skills and attributes will be much needed.

As has been said by so many speakers in the debate, "skills" is the key word. Those who are facing long-term unemployment lack the skills that are relevant today. There is universal acceptance in the House that the highest priority has to be given to the development of the skills of those who are going through the education system now so as to enable them to continue to be employed throughout their working lives, even in a world of rapid and continuing change. My hon. Friend the Member for Norwich, North (Mr. Thompson) said that there should be no argument about the different desires of the educationist and of the industrialist. Industrialists are looking not for factory fodder, but for well-rounded, thinking people with initiative, whose approach to their work is positive and who, through their abilities, will be able to ensure that they have a full and satisfying life at work. The educationist, too, wants individuals to develop in such a way as to make the fullest contribution that they can to a satisfying life both at home and at work.

A good education will benefit both the potential employer and the individual. During the last few years the education system has failed to deliver, after they leave school, young people who are able to carry out the work that employers offer to them. We have heard about the skills shortage. We have also heard about the lack of application and of the unrealistic views that some young people have about work. Young people need to be reliable, to be prepared to take responsibility and to be consistent in what they offer on a day-to-day basis at work. Family

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and schools have to bear in mind that it is important to instil in young people a sense of responsibility and knowledge about what the world of work involves.

In the teeth of a good deal of educational and political opposition, the Government have set out on a long and difficult road with the aim of achieving an education system that will be much more in line with the lifestyle and the skill needs of the world of today and tomorrow. Their initiatives have been welcomed by parents, who have never been very enthusiastic about the unrealistic philosophy of certain parts of the teaching profession during the last 20 years.

To give an example, some teachers have adopted a defensive approach to appraisal. It astonishes me that teachers should be so unhappy and that they should resist appraisal systems. They are used in the Civil Service, the services and in industry and commerce, and also to a very great degree in another caring profession about which I know a good deal. I refer to social workers. My wife is a social worker. Many teachers argue that they belong to a caring profession and that their job cannot be appraised, but the basis of competency in social work is based on appraisal. That appraisal is very tightly done and is carried our regularly.

Appraisal has existed for many years. That does not mean that difficulties do not arise in the profession or that problems do not occur, but appraisal is fully accepted as part of the job. Promotion depends upon appraisal. Why, therefore, should teachers resist appraisal? I am pleased that constructive and positive appraisal of teachers' work is now being carried out in many schools. It will help teachers to further their careers.

Some of the Government's initiatives that will lead to higher standards in schools and colleges bear specifically on industry's needs. Numeracy, literacy and scientific knowledge have been well covered this morning but I wish to refer to another factor that relates specifically to the opportunities that are open to young people.

Schools should ensure that youngsters have the ability and confidence to be articulate. If we compare the articulate ability of British and American children leaving school, we find that there is a great difference between them. The education that we provide in other areas can be well ahead of that provided in the United States, but that does not necessarily apply to articulacy. I hope that the education service will pay attention to that problem. It is particularly important that less well-favoured young people should be able clearly to argue their case. Their ability to put over what they mean is important when they are answering the telephone at work or making a sales contact, and in their relationships with other people.

I would like my hon. Friend the Minister to comment on the shortage of teachers of science, mathematics and physics. What action do the Government intend to take to overcome that difficulty? One of the suggestions that has been advanced today is regional pay. Another may be higher incentive payments to teachers in short supply. The stronger our economy gets, the greater will be the opportunities outside teaching for people to earn high salaries. The Government must bear that in mind more closely.

Language teaching is another area of shortage. If ever there was a need for young people in Britain to be able to speak one or two foreign languages, it is now. We shall be left far behind in trade with the rest of the world if we do not overcome this problem. We spend as long at school studying a foreign language as young people in other countries, but whereas they come out speaking English, for example, fluently, our young people leave school having spent as many hours supposedly learning a language yet unable to speak it. That is not just the result of British reticence—it is partly the way in which languages are taught.

I appeal to the Department of Education and Science and ask what action Ministers can take to demand of universities that they give a much higher priority in examinations—60 or 70 per cent. of the marks—to oral ability in a foreign language rather than written work and grammar. If universities made that fundamental change, school examining boards would rapidly follow, and teachers would follow. The result would be a major change in school leavers' ability to converse in a foreign language. The ability to converse must be the priority. If people can first talk in a foreign language, they will later learn to read it in newspapers or technical papers. People need the incentive to speak it, however, and what I have suggested is the most practical way forward.

12.12 pm

Mr. James Pawsey (Rugby and Kenilworth): I agree with what my hon. Friend the Member for Sevenoaks (Mr. Wolfson) said about business and industry looking not for factory fodder but for a more developed individual. That is a pertinent point to which I may refer later if time allows.

I listened to all of the speech of the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett), which was rather more difficult than it sounds. I agreed with at least one part of it, however—his reference to my hon. Friend the Minister, whom we warmly welcome. He will bring a great deal to our discussions on education.

In the past, schools and industry have operated in almost separate vacuum packs and the attitude to industry was almost one of take it or leave it, but it seems to me and, I believe, many other hon. Members that education is too important to be left to the educationists. Industry has a clear right to make a contribution which must be heard.

It is clear from the Confederation of British Industry's report that while business expects a certain amount of cultural knowledge among school leavers, more important are what it describes as relevant skills such as skills in numeracy and literacy and in the use of screens and keyboards—the basic life skills. The CBI says in its excellent report that schools have concentrated too much on pure knowledge and not enough on developing children's talents and abilities. The report was right to remind us that 40 per cent. of engineers' knowledge is outdated within three years.

That message is at last beginning to get through to schools. I am delighted at the number of current initiatives to promote the very qualities that the CBI regards as desirable in a work force. School-industry links now exist in many parts of the United Kingdom. Such schemes provide an opportunity for teachers to discover what takes place in industry. It also gives business an opportunity to see what is taught in Britain's schools and to understand the difficulties that teachers sometimes encounter when trying to educate today's youngsters. Each side is given a better understanding of what the other is trying to do.

Teachers are being seconded to industry and, as a result of the Education Reform Act 1988, industrialists and managers are being encouraged to sit on school governing bodies. I was interested to see that although school-industry links are increasingly being established, 40 per cent. of the 1,500 schools recently surveyed by the CBI education task force still have no regular links with local businesses. I can put that figure into perspective by saying that more than half of the 1,000 businesses surveyed have no regular links with schools. It is therefore important for even greater emphasis to be placed on the need to bring education and industry together.

The technical and vocational education initiative is one way in which to bridge the gap between education and industry. It is necessary for our young people to learn through modern work-related courses which develop skills and aptitudes as well as impart pure knowledge. Such courses should encourage more than just academic skills. I suspect that in the past too much emphasis has been put on the academic high flier who seeks a place in one of the professions and not enough on the average youngster.

The Government recognise the scope of the problem. The hon. Member for Ashfield (Mr. Haynes) made an excellent speech. Nobody can doubt the sincerity with which he speaks. I can reassure him that the Government have not abdicated their responsibilities in education. Indeed, the present Secretary of State is probably the most reforming Secretary of State since Butler. The hon. Gentleman can draw encouragement from that. Measures recently introduced in the Education Reform Act will encourage business to become more involved in school governing bodies. Those initiatives should be commended.

On the core curriculum, however, I take a very different view from the hon. Member for Leeds, Central. I believe that it will provide pupils with a better preparation for adult life and employment. Its emphasis on English, mathematics and science will ensure that they are better able to earn a living. That is one of the more important aspects of education. The core curriculum will ensure that the important subjects cannot be dropped in favour of soft options. Attainment targets will provide a clear indication of what is to be learnt and will be capable of being applied to different levels of ability.

Unfortunately, that message has not reached the Labour Benches. I recall during a session of Standing Committee J, which considered the Education Reform Bill, referring to the need to ensure that young people are adequately and properly trained for industry when they leave school, so that, as a result, they will be able to earn a living. I was then told by a Labour Member that school was not about that. Clearly the message has not reached all Opposition Members.

It is fair to say that, until recently, technology and the learning of technical skills has been a major weakness in British education. That is why we have introduced TVEI. Although it is a considerable help, it does not go the whole way and that is why I support the introduction of city technology colleges. Despite what the hon. Member for Leeds, Central said, CTCs represent a major step forward. I particularly like the fact that industry is directly involved in the funding of those colleges. Industry has a real interest in their success and will invest time and expertise to ensure that CTCs do not fail.

I am delighted that the first CTC has been sited in the west midlands. It is up and running and I hope that others will soon come on stream. With particular reference to the speech of the hon. Member for Leeds, Central, may I say how much I regret and deplore the failure of certain local education authorities to respond positively to the challenge of CTCs by not making available redundant school buildings. That is why we are not seeing more CTCs. It is due not to a shortage of funding, but to the shortage of buildings being made available by LEAs, principally Labour-controlled authorities.

I am at a loss to understand why LEAs cannot appreciate that, in failing to co-operate with the provision of CTCs, they are depriving children in their areas of a good, solid technical education that will equip them to earn a living in industry and play a substantial part in society.

Mr. Fatchett: I am sorry to disturb the hon. Gentleman's flow, but as he condemned local authorities for not taking up the initiative on CTCs, does he extend that condemnation to those Conservative authorities such as Trafford, which has said that it will not participate in CTCs because the proposals interfere with its reorganisation plans? Does he condemn the industrialists in Plymouth, for instance, who say that they want no part in the CTC scheme because it will interfere with good quality local education?

Mr. Pawsey: The few instances that the hon. Gentleman quotes do not damage my argument. Of course I regret any LEA, whatever its political persuasion, not making available redundant school buildings for use as CTCs. The CTCs have a genuine and important part to play in education, and authorities that are so short-sighted about them should be condemned. I believe that CTCs increase the amount of choice that is available to pupils. They should be welcomed and not denigrated, particularly for reasons of political dogma.

I hope that when my hon. Friend responds to the debate he will say that he will accelerate the development of CTCs. Each month, each year lost in their development means that more children are being deprived of a valuable educational opportunity.

I have referred so far to the relationship between schools and industry, but hon. Members will understand that the United Kingdom's long-term prosperity also depends on industry attracting more graduates. In turn, that means that we need more young people entering higher education. We need a greater reservoir of graduate talent. It is projected that there will be a 4 per cent. increase in student numbers by the year 2000, but I believe that my hon. Friend should bear in mind that that may be an unduly modest goal. That percentage needs to be expanded, certainly if the United Kingdom is to compete successfully with countries such as Germany, Japan and the United States. We need more graduates and it would be helpful if the Minister could say how the United Kingdom compares with the countries that I have mentioned.

It is difficult to make a speech on education without referring to teachers; after all, they play a critical part. I believe that the majority of teachers in our schools are dedicated to their profession and to the children in their charge. I was delighted that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, speaking at the Conservative party conference last week, paid tribute to the many teachers who put in a great deal of personal and professional effort to make the GCSE such a success. Teachers, however, are

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not always their own best advocates. Clearly the disruption that has taken place in our schools has left some lasting scars.

The debate is of genuine value because it underlines the importance not only of education, but of industry. I believe that those two pillars are essential to the nation's well-being.

12.25 pm

Mr. Tony Baldry (Banbury): As befits the chairman of the Conservative Back Bench education committee, my hon. Friend the Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey) made an excellent speech on the comprehensive range of measures that the Government are taking to further educational advancement in this country. I support the thrust of his argument.

All the major educational initiatives have come from the Conservative Benches and very new ideas or new suggestions have come from the Labour Benches. We have a "we can do" attitude. It was said that we could not introduce the GCSE in time. We said we could, and we did. It was said that we could not find enough parent governors to take up their places on the school boards. We said that we could and it has happened.

I am sure that the House will be glad to know that on the shortest election manifesto ever I was recently elected a parent governor. My election manifesto said, "Tony Baldry is the father of Edward and Edward is in class 1." I won by two votes and I may adopt that manifesto at the next general election.

The fact that there is a full turnout on the Conservative Benches today is evidence of the genuine commitment of our party to improving education and ensuring that what every good parent wants for his children is achieved—the state providing good education for all our children.

New ideas on education and industry links are extremely important. Today we have heard about a whole range of initiatives that the Government are introducing. One initiative that has not received sufficient attention so far was that launched not by one but by three Secretaries of State, the enterprise and education initiative. My hon. Friend the Minister alluded to that earlier. It is a substantial initiative and I believe that it needs to be flagged up. Under that initiative, the Government have made a commitment that each child will have two or more weeks' work experience in normal school hours before he leaves school, and that every year one in 10 teachers will have business experience. That means that by 1990 about 50,000 teachers each year will have business experience. During the next two years the Government will spend £12 million to pump-prime the initiative and nearly £5·5 million to fund at least one adviser in each local education authority area.

That is a fantastic initiative, and for those who have sometimes criticised the fact that there is no clear focus on whether the Department of Education and Science, the Department of Employment or the Department of Trade and Industry is the lead Department, it was good to see the three Secretaries of State working together on that initiative.

I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will ensure that every hon. Member is given a copy of the press pack that was issued at the launch. I received it only because I publish books on education, and I suspect that the reason why my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, North-West (Dr. Hampson) made the intervention that he did was that he had not seen the press pack. Likewise, I hope that every hon. Member will be sent a copy of the pamphlet entitled "Schools-Industry Links", which deals with the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Norwich, North (Mr. Thompson). One difficulty is that if we are not careful we shall have too many initiatives. That could easily be resolved by those in schools and business and hon. Members knowing what is available.

That point is especially relevant to the business community. In north Oxfordshire there are few big companies. It is a thriving economy with many small businesses, all of which want to do their best for the local community and many of which have strong links with local schools. No primary or secondary school in north Oxfordshire does not have strong, vigorous links with local industry. But what employers find rather confusing is the many demands made upon them. The Department of Employment asks them to become involved in local employer networks. The Department of Trade and Industry comes along with signposting initiatives, and there are suggestions that private industry councils should take over from area manpower boards. But employers do not have much time. Smaller businesses do not have too many people who will become involved in such decisions. They want to make a positive and useful contribution, and we must provide a clear framework in which they can do that.

With the enterprise and education initiative, the three Secretaries of State have made a good start. But of course there will be changes. Funding for the local employer networks will end soon, and there will have to be a discussion of what will replace the area manpower boards as the Manpower Services Commission, as a training agency, is reshaped. I hope that the three Departments involved will remember that these programmes must be delivered on the ground by busy teachers and employers.

The debate has provided evidence of the overwhelming energy and enthusiasm to ensure that the links between industry and education work. The most encouraging factor is that when one visits schools one finds the climate has changed completely from that of a couple of years ago. Then it was all moans, depression and dispirited people, but now—with the exception of a few neanderthals in the National Union of Teachers in inner London—there is a much more optimistic picture, with schools raring to go, embracing the local community and thinking positively. Among head teachers and others to whom I have talked in my area recently, the enthusiasm is infectious. Through the Education Reform Act and measures such as the national curriculum and TVEI, we are putting Britain on the right path—acknowledging the demographic trends—to take advantage of the opportunities of the next century.

There is enormous optimism in the Conservative party, and the pathetic turnout of the Opposition parties today is tragic. The only time that they take part in education debates is at the behest of some teaching unions. But we believe that the enthusiasm and energy that now flows through British education is exciting. We can do a lot more, and we are doing it.

12.38 pm

Mr. Mike Woodcock (Ellesmere Port and Neston): I hope that all contributors to this debate at least share a common belief that education and training needs in industry will increase—and for two reasons. They will increase, first, because demographic trends suggest that over the next few years the United Kingdom will face a shortage of skilled manpower as the number of school leavers entering industry falls. Secondly, they will increase because the retraining of existing work forces will become necessary, as will the re-entry of many maried women to many of our industries.

If we are to survive and succeed in an increasingly competitive world the quality of our management must improve, and it is about that quality that I wish to speak. I want to deal with the need to educate our managers.

I recently returned from speaking at a management development conference in California, a part of the world which, more than any other, has nurtured new approaches to the development of managers. It is 10 years since I last spoke at a management conference in the United States and I remember that at that time British speakers had a major credibility problem. Britain was then world-famous for shoddy goods, poor quality, late deliveries—in short, for what was known as the British disease. British presenters were the ambassadors of failure.

My reception this year was very different, I am pleased to say. Participants were anxious to hear about British success, about how we had managed in less than 10 years to turn the sick man of Europe, languishing at the bottom of the economic growth league, into one of the most successful economies in the world. What part had British managers played in that process? How had they been trained to lead a second industrial revolution?

Managers have to live within the constraints imposed by politicians, but they also have to live and succeed in an increasingly competitive world. It was John Egan who defined business as making money out of satisfying customers, but in the 1960s and 1970s Britain unfortunately largely forgot that truth. We were driven by Keynesian notions, and businesses became mere bureaucracies for employing people. We became famous for shoddy goods, poor service and appalling industrial relations. In those days we were investing only a quarter of what our competitors were in developing managers.

Ten years later our economy is much more consumer-driven; we are more marketing-oriented. Marketing is now seen as satisfying customers, not as a euphemism for moving shoddy goods. We are well on the way to creating an enterprise culture and achieving a widespread recognition that our economic well-being depends primarily on producing the right goods in the right quantity of the right quality at the right price.

To survive and succeed we must be competitive. There is much talk right now about 1992, but many of the challenges that face our managers are more global and even more significant than that. We have to compete not only with our partners in Europe, but worldwide. We must meet the challenge of the Pacific basin countries, the challenge of lower wage rates in many parts of the world, and the emergence of China as a world economic force.

Over the past few years I have been privileged to visit and work with managers in many countries, and it is clear to me that, although circumstances differ around the world, successful managers the world over exhibit a similar set of beliefs. They believe that managers must manage, that only the management group in an organisation has the knowledge, authority and position to determine the mission of the enterprise, to acquire resources and to take strategic decisions. They believe that, as with milk, the cream has to be at the top, that the quality of those who fill management roles is crucial and that management competence must be continually developed throughout working life. They believe that in successful organisations performance must be king and rewards must be linked to performance. They believe that managers of organisations must do the right thing—in other words, they must focus on the right issues and on the things that get results. They also believe that organisations must do things right: they must be efficient if they are to succeed. They recognise that there is no such thing as a free lunch, that in every organisation every activity costs money and that someone, somewhere must pay. That realisation has been hard to achieve in many of our public sector industries.

These managers believe, too, that in the end it is the management that cares that wins, and that when demanding hard work, loyalty, skill, care and honesty from employees, commitment will be given only to managers who are fit to govern. Compassion and fairness bring that committment. They believe that it is necessary in an organisation for the whole work force to pull together, that teamwork is vital at every level, and that a well-organised team can achieve much more than the sum of its parts. They believe that justice must prevail in the organisations of today. They believe that managers have considerable power over people's lives and often act as judge and jury with no right of appeal and that it is therefore necessary for a successful organisation to devise and administer fair rules and regulations. They believe that every organisation needs to study the environment and to know its enemies. That is because in every commercial organisation the world over talented people are planning how to increase their business at the expense of other organisations.

They believe that it is the fittest who survive, that competitiveness is the only answer and that we cannot avoid market forces nor would it be healthy to try. Finally, they believe in the SAS motto, "Who dares wins". Successful managers take calculated risks. They are opportunists. My experience suggests that those 12 beliefs invariably characterise successful managements wherever they are to be found in the world. The emergence, or perhaps the re-emergence, of those beliefs in United Kingdom organisations has substantially contributed to our economic success in the past few years.

In recent years the policies of the Government more than anything else have enabled managers in the United Kingdom to put those beliefs into practice and to lead our economic revival. But beliefs are not enough. Managers must have skills and the competence to meet the challenges of today's world. In the United States we see a culture in which, much more than in the United Kingdom, everyone grows up thinking that to some extent he has to behave as a business man. There is much more emphasis on people owning their own development, which is seen as an investment in their future. A quarter of all undergraduates in the United States are majoring in business studies. The United States produces 170,000 masters of business administration, and 85 per cent. of all top managers in the United States have degrees. There is increased questioning

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of education in business schools and a widespread move to put training back into companies and to link it to practical experience.

When we contrast [illegible] position in the United States with that in the United Kingdom, we find that only 24 per cent. of our top managers have degrees. That compares to 85 per cent. not only in the United States but in Japan. Britain has only 12,000 MBAs compared to 170,000 produced in the United States. By contrast, we have 120,000 qualified accountants compared to 4,000 in West Germany and 6,000 in Japan. In Britain there is, quite wrongly, a belief in pragmatism rather than in professionalism, that experience is the only worthwhile school. We have no well signposted and generally accepted route into business and management, and that may be one of the reasons for fewer entrants to management.

As I said earlier, in the 1960s and 1970s we were investing only one quarter of the amount invested by our competitors in training and development. Managers in many other countries and certainly in the United States, West Germany, France and Japan are better qualified. There is a widespread belief in those countries that managers need to be well and appropriately educated before management and must be helped to develop throughout their working life. Unfortunately that belief is not as widespread in the United Kingdom. We have some excellent managers, but we simply do not have enough. In management development terms we are amateurs rather than professionals.

We must do more, and the way to develop managerial competence is not always through traditional approaches. Classroom learning is weak at dealing with the problems and opportunities that managers face. It is passive and does not utilise experience to the full. It is expensive in terms of time away from work and return on investment. We need more distance learning, which will allow managers to study in their own time and at their own pace and which does not involve time off work. Like the hon. Member for Lewes (Mr. Rathbone) I, too, commend the work of the Open university, the United Kingdom Chartered Association of Certified Accountants and the Henley management college in pioneering distance learning approaches.

Secondly, we need more action learning, which is an effective, work-based alternative to classroom learning—an approach based on managerial improvement through rigorous study of the manager's own and other people's jobs. This concept was originally proposed by Professor Reg Revans, and the International Management Centre from Buckingham, now part of the International Manager Centres organisation, whose president is Baroness Cox and whose principal Professor Gordon Wills, has done some valuable work on it. I commend its work to the Government.

In a recent report written by Professor Wills, which he called "Creating Wealth through Management Development", he argued that the Government should apply to management education and training some of the principles that they have applied to other parts of our national life. Among the recommendations, which I support and commend to the Government, are, first, that the Government should end the funding of mid-career management development except as an employer because it creates the wrong dependent relationship. Industry should call the shots, and industry should pay. Secondly, it recommends that state-supported business schools should be privatised because they will operate more efficiently and respond better to the needs of those who will be paying. Thirdly, it recommends that, as a benchmark, 10 per cent. of the management payroll in our major organisations should be invested in management development; fourthly that managers should make an annual report to shareholders and staff on the development of managers, and finally that universities engaged in management development work should compete for funds to ensure excellence in management development. He argues, and I agree, that our universities have failed to distinguish between scholarship for its own sake and scholarship that helps managers to be more effective.

There is hardly anything more important to the economic success of the United Kingdom than the education and training of our managers. It is they who will largely determine our success in international markets, and through it, our standard of living. In the past we have not done a good job. My principal message to my hon. Friend the Minister is that it is time for us to stop relying so much on the institutions that have let us down and time to start supporting the institutions that have provided more relevant approaches.

12.46 pm

Mr. Richard Page (Hertfordshire, South-West): There is an old story of a teacher who took her charges around the local factory, and, having loaded them into the coach to go home, said, "Right. I have taken you round the factory and if you don't work hard and pass your exams, that is where you will end up." That is the sort of deeply ingrained attitude of the past that is responsible for the position that we are in now.

I think that the attitude is changing, but, nevertheless, there are those in education who wish to see the continuation of the greater emphasis on the arts than on the sciences. To them I say that as we come increasingly on the receiving end of the products of foreign technology —as the balance of payments illustrates every month—it is increasingly unlikely that rafts of young men and women able to claim to be members of Mensa will be able to reverse that trend.

The seriousness of the position was outlined in a letter in *The Daily Telegraph* last week, which I read while I was attending our excellent conference in Brighton, just before the brilliant speech by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science. The letter, which is written by Professor Miller, whom I do not know from Adam, talks about:

"the low undergraduate enrolment in the hard sciences, including engineering, in the English-speaking nations—of the order of 10 per cent. as opposed to close to 40 per cent. in the rest of the developed world."

That position will get worse. We all know how falling school rolls affect our constituencies. We are all faced with school closures and I can see that competition in our professions for qualified and expert people will continue to grow. Unless there is a dramatic change, science and industry will be heavily squeezed in getting the right calibre of people to come forward to be the managers of the

future. What is to be done to change the climate of opinion so that engineers in this country are treated with the same respect as those in France or Germany?

Matters are improving and Government actions are helping. A few years ago we had an "industry year" which was a great success. However, I could not help thinking at the time, "I bet Japan has an industry year every year and not just a one-off effort which is then abandoned."

I welcome today's debate. It is an example of the Government's further commitment to the needs of industry. The discussion is particularly timely, because the CBI's task force report on business and education, was published on Monday. That report points out clearly that the success of the education system is vital if industry and commerce are to be successful.

As I have already said, the decreasing number of school leavers will produce dramatic problems. Industry's needs are relatively simple. It wants school leavers to come out of school able to read and write and with basic mathematical skills so that they can be trained by industry. There is ample evidence, stretching back over the years, that industry has been dissatisfied with the performance of the education system.

In his 1986 publication, "The Illiterate Generation", John Spencer wrote:

"the country cannot be getting value for money from the education system when the present number of youngsters leave school ill-equipped to enter the world of work, with a low standard of literacy and numeracy, few if any other skills, and no qualifications leaving employers and further education to pick up the pieces".

That, if nothing else, is justification for the Government's Education Reform Act 1988. I shall not go into the details of the Act now, but, given industry's attitude to our education system, I am surprised by the Opposition's resistance to the change and the improvements that the Act is trying to bring about.

Life is not just a one-way street, and industry must be equally aware of its obligation to play a positive part in establishing links with education. Companies must encourage managers and employees to take up places as school governors. The sad evidence, which has already been quoted by my hon. Friend the Minister is that about 60 per cent. of firms have no links with their local secondary schools; less than one third of such schools have the necessary links with firms to enable them to provide two weeks' work experience for their fourth-formers, and more than one third of secondary schools have no links with business. That is unacceptable. If that position is not improved, the education system will not be sensitive to the requirements of industry.

Her Majesty's inspectorate published a report on secondary schools in the summer which reveals a slight rise in educational performance since 1979. It seems that the most able children and those below average ability are the least stimulated. The report shows that teachers have a lower expectation of their pupils than is justified. I find that a sad conclusion.

Hon. Members have produced examples of how we compare with foreign countries. I shall not go through that again, but one figure showed the contrast with Japan. About 90 per cent. of Japan's school population studies mathematics to the age of 18; in the United Kingdom that figure is only 18 per cent. If one adds that fact to the other comments made today, one can see that our schoolchildren will have to work harder and longer at school to achieve the levels and standards that they will need in the modern world.

We have high quality for a few of the high fliers in engineering, but there is a vast gap between that and the intermediate level. It must be closed. The CBI mentioned that 60 per cent. of the firms that it surveyed had no links with schools, and anyone can work out that 40 per cent. do. Lever Bros., which is based in the Wirral, has its centenary schools competition. It is fostering closer links between industries and local schools. That is something that all firms should try to do in their area. I have been in correspondence with a Mr. Etches, who is a director of the Express Food Group, which is a subsidiary of Grand Metropolitan. I hasten to say that I have no connection with the company apart from this correspondence. Mr. Etches goes out of his way to say that his company

"welcomes the Government's proposal to arrange for all teachers to have a one-week introduction to industry with commercial organisations".

He adds that it will do everything possible to help. He observes that there are some difficulties, especially when it comes to implementation of the scheme. He says that his company is not assisted

"by an apparent unwillingness on the part of the teachers and pupils to undertake some of the training during school holidays periods. To exclude the school holidays means that there are not enough weeks in the year to enable us to meet these demands."

Mr. Etches requests that all teachers who complete a training course be given, as part of the curriculum, one or two weeks in industry so that they receive a grounding in what is involved and needed in the industrial world.

The Education Reform Act, the introduction of city technology courses and other initiatives show that the Government are on the right lines and are tackling a severe problem. If there is wholehearted effort on all sides, and no split as a result of party arguments, we can produce the ethos and the culture within the classroom that will produce a generation of children that will go into our industries with dedication and the knowledge that wealth creation will create a better society for the whole nation.

12.58 pm

Mr. James Paice (Cambridgeshire, South-East): I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to this wide-ranging debate. Many issues have been raised and I do not want to repeat any of them.

The hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) referred to training and the need to have many more much longer courses. I read into what he was saying the belief that we need to return to the old training systems of many years ago, such as five-year apprenticeships. Since then there have been many changes. Training technology is different from that which prevailed a few years ago. We no longer train by the old sit-by-Nellie syndrome, whereby one gradually gained knowledge by sitting and watching. Modern training techniques mean that skills can be gained far more quickly. The acquisition of skills still takes some time, but there is no reason why most skills cannot be gained in a two-year training programme such as the YTS, with perhaps a one-year extension.

The demographic changes that are coming will have an effect on industry and education, and I do not intend to re-rehearse all the statistics. There will be no room in industry for those who do not have the skills that will be

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required. The hon. Member for Ashfield (Mr. Haynes) told us that he was born with a shovel in his hands and then used it for 35 years. There have been many changes since then. There will be no jobs in future for men with a shovel.

Mr. Barry Sheerman (Huddersfield): What about the pits?

Mr. Paice: Technology is advancing rapidly even in the pits. In future, there will be little opportunity for the manual unskilled worker. That means that we must encourage and enable all our school leavers to do much more than an unskilled manual job. We must remember that children leaving school today will have a 40-year or 50-year working life ahead of them. If we think back and consider how work and employment have changed over the past 40 or 50 years, we must understand what could happen in future and recognise that changes may take place.

There is also a need for greater personal skills among school leavers. In future many jobs will be, as they are now, in the service sector. That sector involves far more customer contact than the manufacturing sector. Such contact requires a greater degree of personal skills which we must emphasise.

Keyboard skills are also very important. The great variation in the provision of those skills in different areas has been brought to my attention. My sons recently changed schools from one county to another and I have seen the great difference in computer provision between the schools. It is now eight years since my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science, as Minister for Industry and Information Technology, launched what was then one of the great reforms of the century, the introduction of computers into schools. However, many schools still have a long way to go in computer provision.

My hon. Friend the Member for Banbury (Mr. Baldry) referred to the confusion among many businesses. The majority of jobs in future will be created in small businesses. One of the features of those businesses is that they do not have a specialist personnel department. They do not have individuals with the time, ability or background information to specialise purely in personnel. One of the big difficulties is keeping up, not simply with the latest jargon, but with the new courses and qualifications. That impinges on recruitment processes.

Over the past few years we have seen the Government's initiatives in schools and further education including the technical and vocational education initiative and the certificate of pre-vocational education. However, we have also seen the efforts of the National Council for Vocational Qualifications which is playing a vital role in improving the quality of qualifications and improving assessment methods and is also trying to set standards for the different qualifications so that employers and users can clearly understand them.

Progress on that appears to be slow. It is important for small businesses that someone—and I believe that it must be the NCVQ—accepts the responsibility to inform businesses of what is happening about the standardisation of qualifications. I know from experience before I was elected to the House that many people are rejected for employment simply because a small employer does not have a clue what the apparent qualification paraded by the applicant actually means. That may be a highly relevant and important qualification, but if the employer does not know what it means, it jeopardises the young person's opportunity. It is important that the NCVQ should publicise its work in that respect.

We must also remember that small business men must be able to understand qualifications to assess their relevant merits to their businesses in terms of standards and the practical or theoretical content. Small businesses must also understand whether qualifications represent an ability to acquire knowledge or a measure of knowledge or skill already acquired. There is quite a difference in that.

The hon. Member for Ynys Môn (Mr. Jones) referred to careers advice and counselling. I endorse the points that he made, and I speak from my own considerable experience of the recruitment sector and of training young people.

There is no doubt in my mind that many careers teachers and careers advisers in the county services do not fully understand industry as we would like them to do. Their heart is very much in the right place, and I should not wish my words to be taken as being critical of them. However, they are not always provided with resources, opportunity and support from their peers in respect of the need to achieve greater commitment and involvement within industry.

We have heard about many of the Government's important initiatives, but I endorse the view that much more needs to be done. We must ensure that teachers do not take the attitude that no one should trespass on their preserve of education. Some industries have adopted in the past the isolationist attitude that education is nothing to do with them, but fortunately that is changing. If we can improve the quality of careers teachers and advisers, we shall be building the bridge with which much of the debate has been concerned; the bridge between education and industry.

It appears to me that careers officers are best placed to provide that bridge. If my hon. Friend the Minister is to take messages from this debate—and there have been many—I hope that he will convey the need to devote greater effort to improving the quality of advisers and increasing the available resources. I refer not only to financial resources, but to time and to the support of those advisers' peers and employers, in improving the quality of careers advice that is available in our schools and building that bridge that we all want.

1.6 pm

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): I join those hon Members who have paid tribute, albeit in his absence, to the hon. Member for Ashfield (Mr. Haynes), for his excellent speech. I also thank him for his kind personal remarks, and acknowledge how much he has contributed to adult education, both with me in this House and with others.

A week ago, I had the honour of sponsoring a centenary dinner in the House for the London Head Teachers Association. It was a great pleasure for me to welcome so many former colleagues on that auspicious occasion. They ranged from a former headmaster of Holland park comprehensive school having 2,000 children, to the heads of many small schools. They ranged

in age from a lady in her 20s who had been recently appointed to another lady in her 80s who had been retired for many years.

In our informal discussions we talked about the links between schools and industry in London over the past 100 years. What came out of those discussions was that there have been considerable links between them, most having been forged by head teachers. I pay tribute, as other hon. Members have done, to the great teaching profession, of which I have been so proud a member, and especially to those teachers who labour under growing difficulties at times.

I was told by east London head teachers, for example, that they had had great links with the docks. Many of the children in their schools were the sons or daughters of dockers, and so those children would visit the docks and knew all about what was going on there. The same has been true of other industries. In my constituency, pupils of the schools around the former Hoover building on the A40, many of whom were the children of the 1,500 people who worked there, frequently visited it. There have traditionally been strong links between schools and industry, and the present drive to strengthen and improve them is much to be welcomed.

Let me sound a word of warning, however. As one who was in teaching for 23 years and headed a mixed school of 2,200 for seven of them, let me say that there is no substitute for the development of a clear and firm work ethic in pupils, or for ensuring that they emerge from their schools with that ethic. In many schools, both today and historically, it has been missing. While bearing in mind that Lord Elton is conducting an inquiry into school discipline, I must warn that truancy and poor work in schools will do more to damage future education and training links between schools and industry than anything else. In some London schools 40 per cent. of children are absent every day, and others are out of control. Whatever we say in the House, they will be in no position to profit much from whatever links are forged.

The House should remember that its first duty is to pay attention to the basic needs of education. A good, clear national curriculum is necessary, as has been said, but only firm discipline gives children the security to work really well. We should also remember that we shall need the 40 per cent. who are truants or irregular attenders in future: they will have to play an important part in our industries if the country is to remain competitive.

Some of those children are difficult, but not many. When there is high employment a small element will always say, "I need not work hard, because I shall get a job anyway." Today, they say, "There is no point in working hard now because I shall probably not get a job"—although, as we all know, unemployment is falling dramatically, which is very welcome. We must take account of the presence of that mentality, because those children are part of our future and it is essential that the educational system meets their needs and instils in them the work ethic that I have mentioned.

There is a bright light on the horizon in the form of the GCSE examination: I am glad to see that the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) agrees with me. In many ways the CSE was more effective than O-level. Many of my hon. Friends may not understand why I say that, but the CSE was effective in that it tested, examined, quantified and assessed course work undertaken over two years. In English and foreign languages there was a strong emphasis on oral and aural work, allied with proper assessment of "physical" work in such subjects as art, as well as written papers. Those four elements gave the CSE an impact that O-level had ceased to have. Throughout those two years pupils knew that each piece of work that they undertook could be submitted to examiners for assessment, and they therefore worked hard. The examination induced much stronger efforts to produce good work.

The GCSE, happily, embraces all the principles of the CSE, which was based on a report by Robert Beloe, commissioned as long ago as the 1950s. That report is much to the credit of the Conservative Administration of the day. It does not neglect the value of testing memory and nerve on the day and the value of a pupil being able to produce a good performance, but it does not say that if a pupil cannot perform well on the day he must fail. Attainment tests will be valuable. They will set targets for children and give an idea of how their aptitudes and abilities are developing. In my opinion, attainment tests are to be welcomed.

At the same time as congratulating ourselves on these great movements forward, we have to note that 16-year-old pupils are about a year, and in some cases two years, behind their counterparts in France, Germany, Holland and other major industrial competitors in basic disciplines, notably mathematics. That is very serious. I hope that the Education Reform Act and the new national curriculum will deal directly with that deficiency.

The Government's aim is to have one in five of the population over 18 years of age in higher education, most of them on degree courses, by the year 2000 and, if possible, to achieve that figure before then. When the Government came to power in 1979, about one in 13 of the population were in higher education—a figure substantially and dangerously far below the figures in other European countries.

A school's first duty is to the children. It must prepare them for life by developing their fullest education potential. In the Prime Minister's memorable words it must teach them "zeal for achievement, above all things." That is a great phrase. Implicit in that achievement is a sound work ethic. Education must help pupils to adopt flexible attitudes and to adapt successfully to new work practices. Most people will have five different jobs, and possibly many more than that, during their working lives.

I welcome the suggestion of work experience for pupils and teachers, but I have reservations about it. It is a very important part of the Education Reform Act, but from my long experience I feel that I must sound a note of warning. Present work experience for pupils is achieving only limited success. If boys or girls of 14, 15, 16 or over go to factories, newspapers or other places of work for two weeks they are not really wanted; they are a bit in the way. They sit around and nobody takes any notice of them. People are too busy to think about them. Not enough is being done for these boys and girls. Unless pupils are given a properly supervised programme of work and unless they are helped to appreciate what they are expected to do, work experience will not be successful.

The same is true of teachers. If teachers are invited to go into industry to have a look but simply hang around there, they will not have an opportunity to see what industry is attempting to do, why it is attempting to do it and how it is attempting to do it. Teachers will use their initiative and make something of it, but more thought

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needs to be given to that aspect. We must not fall back on slogans. We are pleased that this is to happen and it is good that it will, but more thought should be given to what they are to do. Work shadowing is much better than work experience as we have known it and as I have described it.

I hope that, if we recruit more teachers from industry, we will build into schools a relationship between education, training and industry. Such a relationship has been valuable where we already have teachers from industry. I have known teachers come in to teach handicraft subjects, book-keeping and home economics, for example. Such teachers can be recruited from industry. In that way, we can build into schools a valuable relationship with industry.

Why do we not have heads who are recruited direct from industry? The emergency-trained heads who came into schools just after the war, often with only one year of training, were in almost all cases outstanding because they had a background in the forces, industry or other jobs. They gave superb leadership to schools. Dame Margaret Miles was a very successful head of a London comprehensive, but she had never taught before. Arthur Fford was a successful head of Rugby school and had never taught before. The same can be said of Geoffrey Fisher, later Archbishop of Canterbury, who became a head at the age of 26 and without any previous teaching experience. I do not think that the profession would mind that. We should have more teachers from industry and try to find some heads to come directly from industry.

1.21 pm

Mr. Ian Taylor (Esher): The improving climate between education and industry, which the Government have encouraged, has been mentioned by several of my hon. Friends, and I should like to give examples of what is happening in my constituency.

About two years ago, the mayor of one of the boroughs decided to have as his theme for the year a competition for schools in conjunction with industry to develop certain technical and mechanical skills. The theme was co-operation between education and industry. It was a splendid success and most schools took part. There were some remarkable results of applied research. Some of the models looked a bit strange. One looked a bit like a mechanical phallus, but its properities were undoubtedly ingenious and Leonardo da Vinci would have been proud of it.

When I went round schools, I noted the enthusiasm with which they were responding to the challenge, and the tremendous backing supplied by industry. One school in my constituency won a national award for developing research projects with industry.

The hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) spoke of his interesting trade union ties. He will, therefore, wish to know that I have a first-class training centre in my constituency which is run by the Electrical, Electronic Telecommunication and Plumbing Union. Its centre in Esher has provided considerable assistance to unionists who want to increase skills and develop a practical understanding of how industry works. The centre goes wider than that, however. It often runs courses to assist small businesses. It knows that small businesses, which are great providers of new employment, often do not have a proper training scheme. Such a union with foresight and a positive approach to the future is therefore able to assist small businesses by providing expertise. I am sure that my colleagues welcome that initiative.

Until a few years ago, industry and higher education operated largely independently of one another. Universities regarded industry as distant from the real purpose of learning and scholarship and industry was slightly bewildered about how it could relate to universities.

Over the years, the cold light of economic realities, together with Government encouragement, has changed the situation in three ways. First, research, both basic and applied, has increased. Secondly, the training and provision of personnel has altered and thirdly there has been a growing realisation of the need to compete more openly with other countries within the European Community. Industry has come to recognise that it must have people who have had comparable training to those in such countries as Germany.

The changes that have taken place in research should be welcomed and have been of mutual benefit to universities and industry. Companies donate funds, equipment or executive know-how to academic ventures. In turn universities provide research results, a testing ground for new products and access to future markets. The proliferation of science parks in particular represents a major advance. By simply being located on a university campus they are at the heart of the new interface between industry and education.

Universities have also done a great deal to encourage greater research funding from industry and the mutual benefits to which I have referred have been apparent. Salford university is perhaps the best-known example of education and industry working to each other's benefit, but it is not the only one. Hull university's research income from outside industrial resources has gone up by 80 per cent. in the past two years, and it is an interesting model. That university's very existence was threatened a few years ago, but it is now picking itself up and many local industries, not least Reckitt and Colman, are benefiting as a result.

I wish to pay particular tribute to a university that covers my constituency, the university of Surrey. The Surrey research park, attached to the university, is probably the fastest growing university-based science park in the United Kingdom. The university has emerged as a research leader among the technological universities. It is a matter of interest that many of the lecturers and professors are directly involved in industry. The university is known to have one or two shareholding interests in companies that are being developed.

I was particularly pleased that the annual report of the University of Surrey for 1986-87 said:

> "A University therefore has an important role to play in advances in knowledge and information so as to ensure that this country has an adaptable, informed and creative workforce. All connected with the University must regard themselves as part of that workforce."

That is a tremendous statement for a university to make and shows how far we have come in recent years in the realisation of the importance of such matters.

A study of the revenues of the University of Surrey in 1987 shows that research grants and contracts have risen

from £5 million to £8 million while the University Grants Committee grant has remained static at £14 million. Here is a case of a university putting its own house in order.

Of particular relevance to that university's efforts has been the increase in applied research. The research projects in three faculties have attracted millions of pounds of support from industry, from the Government as well as from research institutes and research councils. Among the programmes that are currently in operation are biotechnology, information technology, space satellite engineering, computer-aided design, robotics, drug reactions, artificial intelligence and energy economics. Surely that represents the way forward for universities. They should try to develop the sort of courses that can benefit their students and the country.

I also welcome those schemes that have been developed to utilise university and polytechnic resources for the training of Britain's work force. Of particular importance is the PICKUP scheme, which was started by the Government six years ago. Last year, under that scheme, a nationwide network of PICKUP technology centres was introduced, designed to bring together academic skills and expertise with commercial opportunities. The centres serve as regional offices co-ordinating the activities of those in higher and further education with those in industry and commerce and even local government. Industry has provided cash, people, equipment and facilities for the centres, and for the Government it has been a pump-priming exercise, contributing so much in the first year and tapering off in successive years.

All those developments are to be welcomed, but much more must be done. Universities have responded to the challenge, albeit late and perhaps out of necessity, following the financial restraints of 1981. But industry is still lagging behind. Compared with our European neighbours, the amount spent by British firms on research and development is disappointing. More spending could involve a bigger role for higher education, especially in basic research. That was drawn out by the report of the House of Lords Science and Technology Committee entitled, "Civil Research and Development", which was published in November 1986.

The role of higher education in the provision of personnel is likely to become increasingly important, and industry must be made aware of it. As it is, the number of graduates entering industry has fallen. In the 1970s, an average of 50 per cent. of graduates went into industry. By 1986, the figure had fallen to 29 per cent. I was heartened to see a recent survey in the *Daily Telegraph* showing that 18 per cent. of current students were keen to go into industry, because industry finds it difficult to compete with well-paid jobs in the City and its problems are compounded by the fact that it will soon be fishing from a smaller pool. The demographic changes that have been mentioned this morning mean that the number of graduates coming on to the job market will take a sharp downturn, so industry will be competing for fewer graduates. If during the next six years the number of school leavers falls by 25 per cent., it will have a knock-on effect on universities. That survey, however, also showed that engineering was among the least respected jobs. That is a worrying sign and we must bring to bear ample pressure to change the position.

Industry can do something for itself. Given the demographic changes, it strikes me—it was also very much in the mind of a personnel director to whom I spoke earlier this week—that industry must do more to encourage undergraduates before they go up to university. There must be much more sponsoring of undergraduates by industry, as the Army has done successfully. By sponsoring undergraduates, industries will be sure that they can obtain employees in a competitive job market. It will take pressure off the Government, given the difficulties that will be faced when we require more money for higher education. That is a practical way to ensure co-operation between industry and universities.

1.32 pm

Mr. David Amess (Basildon): All the speeches that I have heard have been extremely constructive when talking about the educational needs of industry. I wish to bring to the attention of the House what we are doing in Essex, and especially in Basildon.

When I became Member of Parliament for Basildon in 1983, more that 10,000 people were without jobs. I am pleased to tell the House that today that number has decreased to 3,439. That is still too many, but each year, each month and each week the number of people without work in Basildon is decreasing. The reason for that is the endeavour of our educationists and of industry. I have visited every educational establishment in Basildon and am about to embark on another tour. I have involved myself with most industrial activities in the town and I am happy to say that communication is improving all the time. In Essex, and in Basildon, we are happy to meet the challenge of industry's requirements for education.

I was heartened, two nights ago, to be invited to attend an open evening of the largest secondary school in Basildon, Chalvedon school. There I found an enthusiastic headmaster supported by a hard-working, united team. He said in his address:

"I have looked forward with relish to the opportunity of showing off the splendid facilities and some of the wonderful work of our pupils.

Our achievements are testimony to the hard work and enormous capability of the teaching staff and also to the involvement of parents."

There was a headmaster who was eagerly meeting the challenges that we face in 1988. All the parents of the children in the feeder schools were extremely impressed by what he said, his speech having shown the school's determination to uphold traditional values and to meet the changing challenges of education.

Essex education committee presides over the largest education area in the country. It is magnificently led by councillor Mrs. Margaret Hutton, who is ably supported by her fellow councillors and an excellent team of officers. In 1986, as part of industry year, Essex local education authority published a directory called "Connections". It listed education's links with industry. In 1986 there were 25 such links, and it is a testimony to the success of the programme that there are now 40.

At the heart of the Essex approach is the need to ensure that all Essex pupils appreciate how the nation earns its living, and that schools and colleges help them acquire the knowledge and skills that are relevant to adult life. I shall give a few examples of the various initiatives that we have introduced in Essex. The first is the extension of the technical and vocational education initiative into all schools and colleges in Essex. That initiative features the development of significant education and industry links, including the formation of employer-led advisory bodies for all schools and colleges in Essex.

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Next, there is work experience for all pupils under project Trident. Every company I visit in Basildon seems to have one of the young children who are training under Trident; the children are enthusiastic and find the experience invaluable. Between 1986 and 1987 more than 8,000 pupils from 100 schools took part in the scheme and more than another 1,000 pupils participated in the Essex work experience scheme.

Finally, we have industrial secondment for teachers and lecturers. The LEA pursues an active secondment programme that enables teachers and lecturers to spend up to two years on joint projects. At the moment, British Petroleum and GEC Avionics are involved in the scheme. The Ford Motor Company has also been extremely supportive. We have training programmes for teachers and lecturers, and school—industry practice in the curriculum. We also have the Essex introduction-to-industry scheme, "Learning for a changing world", and so on.

All these links and more are managed and encouraged by the Essex education committee, which is concerned now that these initiatives in education and industry should all come under one umbrella—that of the Department of Education and Science—and not remain part of the responsibilities of three separate Departments.

An industrial group in Basildon meets regularly to analyse what is happening in our schools. It is concerned about skills shortages and about the increasing demand from a wide range of non-technical and non-engineering industries for scarce technical skills. In addition, the growth sector of small new enterprise industries which operate predominantly in information technology and computer systems drain many trained and skilled people from established industry.

Finally, the traditional engineering companies need to employ a greater proportion of staff with technical skills as our technology develops. Essex education committee welcomes any challenge that industry wishes to put before it. Basildon is increasing all the time the number of initiatives that it takes on board from Essex county council. Standards are improving all the time and I am optimistic that we will be able to meet all the challenges that industry will set for us.

1.40 pm

Mr. Barry Sheerman (Huddersfield): This is a most useful debate and I should like to add my congratulations to those offered by hon. Members to the Minister on his new role. I am not so sure about congratulations for fighting and clamouring for this debate on the first Friday back, but I am sure that the Minister will take those congratulations with a pinch of salt. That is how they were viewed by the Opposition. The Opposition do not have a shadow Minister who has recently transferred from one Department to another, but we have with us two shadow Ministers, one for education and one for employment.

Most hon. Members have spoken from personal experience and many of us spent some time in education. I was not sponsored by the Association of University Teachers but I was a university teacher for 13 years and spent many years in the chemical and construction industries. I was interested in the way in which the debate flowed and in the Minister's speech when he talked about renaissance man and the renaissance concept of the whole man. Nowadays we would not get away with talking about the whole man. I prefer to show the marks of my generation by talking about Herbert Marcusa and one-dimensional man. I suppose we could talk about the multidimensional person because that is largely what the debate has been about. We all want to see an education system that produces multidimensional people. I shall say more about that later.

We had excellent speeches from my hon. Friends the Members for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) and for Burnley (Mr. Pike) and we heard a passionate speech from that well-known personality in the House my hon. Friend the Member for Ashfield (Mr. Haynes). Some of us went to university and got all the benefits of a university education and it does us good to hear hon. Members speak for people who left school at the age of 14 and who had to get their education elsewhere. Sometimes that voice is not heard enough when we talk about education and training.

As some hon. Members have said, in only four years we shall have the reality of the single market in Europe. I have been to conference after conference about 1992 but very little is said about education at that time. There is a great deal of talk about mobility of labour but education and what we should do to enable us to face mobility of labour is not tackled. Mobility of qualification is also important. From 1992 it will be eight years to the end of the century and there will be many challenges to face in terms of making the nation successful and wealth-creating. Those challenges are very real. We shall meet those challenges of creating wealth only if we meet the twin challenges of ever-changing technology and faster-changing markets. If we do not have the skilled work force to meet those twin challenges, we shall not make wealth. The Labour party wants to distribute that wealth in a dramatically different way from the way the Tory party wants to distribute it, but we both agree that wealth creation is the ultimate aim. That is not the only aim of education, but the debate has made clear how important it is.

We have to compete to survive. In that sense, the debate has had some refreshing insights. A great deal has been said about the importance of producing transferable skills. What will happen in 1992 makes it important that we consider seriously the transfer of skills and qualifications across Europe. We need to be planning for educational credit cards and educational entitlement cards, which will be a passport for work and opportunity across Europe. We want the Government to be attending to that now. There should be a dialogue about the reality of that impact over the next few years. People still talk about 1992 as though it is in the distant future, but it will come soon. We shall need transferable credit cards for education and transferable qualifications, transferable entitlement, and the ability to meet that entitlement from a wide range of sources. I do not ignore the international dimension beyond Europe.

A second aspect is the changing nature of work in this and every industrial country and the ever more rapid movement to something touched on in speech after speech —the lack of need for the unskilled. All of us remember going past factories when we were young and seeing a sign saying "Hands wanted". We do not see that sign very often these days. There was an implication that brains need not apply. We had an educational system that, for too long, relied on producing a large number of people that were a pair of hands and little else. The structure of industry—for

example, the structure of the chemical industry when I entered it—was based on a demand for such unskilled people. That demand does not exist any more. There are exceptions, such as the construction and mining industries. The hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, South-East (Mr. Paice) seems to know very little about mines. I do not think that shovels are necessary any longer. I recommend that he visits a mine to check that out.

Most industry does not need unskilled workers, and the challenge of education is to produce brain power and the people that the new generation of industry needs. We do not need narrow skills. We do not need job-specific skills. All the evidence shows that the young person leaving school will need to change and retrain and train again. To give someone a job-specific skill now is to do no service to the nation or to the individual. The nature of education has to move fast.

Many hon. Members have mentioned the demographic changes. I have been here for most of the debate and two specific points have not come out properly. One is that the decline in the number of young people has serious implications for every sector. I am a former university teacher, but I shall say less about universities than about anything else. However, several hon. Members have spoken about the way in which universities will have to compete for a smaller pool of talented people. Both sides have to accept that for far too long universities and higher education have been a preserve for a tiny elite. The number of people going into higher education must be increased dramatically, whichever party is in Government.

Throughout the labour market those changes will be hard felt. I shall concentrate on two categories. For all kinds of reasons part of that demographic change is that there will be more black young people as a percentage of the population. It is important that the House takes notice of that. I do not want to knock employers from the Dispatch Box, but there is evidence that employers have less positive attitudes to black young people than to white young people. A new attitude to black young people and to their possibilities and potential must sweep through British industry. As I have said, as a percentage of the population there will be more black young people in the job market and we must use their talents to the full.

Another demographic change is that we shall be far more dependent on women returners than ever before. We must start taking seriously the job of attracting women back into the labour market and we must take far more seriously the challenge of how we treat part-time employees in our economy. For too long British industry has regarded part-time employment as cheap employment. Some of our major industrial competitors such as the United States and Sweden do not pay women less than men and do not regard part-time employees as working for pin money. They believe in taking that labour resource as seriously as any other labour resource. This country is lagging far behind in terms of attitude to women returners and part-time workers. Decisions about that low-wage attitude to part-time work must be made soon.

We should question industry's record on education. When we talk about education and industry some of us knock education far more than industry. It is fashionable to say that there should be a more positive relationship between schools and industry. I am part of my party's Front Bench employment team and, having listened to many debates—I have been away from education debates for a year or so—I must say that industry's record is not all that marvellous when it is put under scrutiny. Some of the best employers in this country cannot be beaten worldwide. They are super. However, if one looks below the top level, one starts to think that we are a long way behind many of our industrial competitors when it comes to employers' attitudes—CBI report or not.

Let us look at what is happening in the south-east of England and in other parts of the country now that we have a downturn in demographic trends and a slight upturn in the economy. Two or three years ago all hon. Members were congratulating ourselves on the fact that the school leaving age had effectively been raised to 18. We were saying that everyone leaves school at 16, that although there are no jobs for 16-year-olds, they go into YTS if they do not get anything else, or into further or higher education. In the past 18 months with that slight upturn in the economy and with fewer people leaving school at 16, there have been more jobs available. However, we have gone back to the rotten old system of more than 100,000 young people this year going into jobs with no training and being offered nothing—not even YTS.

I introduced a simple little Bill in June saying that there should be a duty on every employer in this country to train young employees to at least the minimum standard of the two-year YTS. If there is a compulsion on young people to take up a YTS place—if we are honest we would agree that it is a compulsion because young people cannot get unemployment or any other benefit if they do not—there should be a duty on employers to train to at least that minimum standard. It cannot be right for a civilised industrialised nation in 1988 to take vast numbers of young people into employment with no training.

Two weeks ago I went to a job fair at Derby. At one end of the exhibition hall was the stand of a wonderful local engineering employer who in some senses was of the old school, although the company had kept pace with changes. It had kept going, even through the difficult times. I refer to NEI, the international combustion company, which provides engineering for the power industry. It takes 50 apprentices a year, and did so even through the bad days. It has an enlightened apprenticeship system, which is vital for engineering. It is unfortunate that this has largely disappeared elsewhere. In come the lads—mostly lads—at 16 to craft apprenticeships. If they were good enough, they went into technicians apprenticeships. If they were better than that, they went into anything. They would go through university and postgraduate work. Two members of the NEI board started as apprentices. That good tradition used to provide a channel for the youngster who left school at 16 with ability but perhaps not with family backing for higher education. Such youngsters were still able to make it, as it were, through the apprenticeship tradition.

At the other end of the exhibition hall was the United Biscuits stand. I believe that the chairman, Sir Hector Laing, is a friend of the Prime Minister. It had a large display stand, most of which was set out to enable those who attended the job fair to try the company's fresh biscuits. The biscuits were pleasant, but I asked the representatives of the company about the training that was provided for school leavers. The company was offering free bus travel to school leavers of 16 years if they chose to work at the buscuit factory at Ashby-de-la-Zouch. I asked whether the company was part of the youth training scheme or whether it offered a different system. I was told: "We don't do that. We give them about six weeks'

[Mr. Barry Sheerman]

training." I took that up and pointed out that that approach ran counter to the feelings of hon. Members on both sides of the House on education and industrial training. It is commonly felt that the good employer should offer a broad-based training for life. The company representative said, "We are training these people only to be biscuit feeders. You do not need more than six weeks' training to be a biscuit feeder."

I observed that later in life some of these young people might want to be something different from a biscuit feeder. I pointed out that the factory might close down. The United Biscuits factory at Halifax, which is near to my constituency, recently announced its closure. I asked what the biscuit feeders would do if that happened. The response was, "Once a biscuit feeder, always a biscuit feeder."

The two attitudes—those of NEI and United Biscuits—are very different. The approach of United Biscuits and that of some other large employers must be changed. Unfortunately, it is one that goes to the heart of the problem that is created by the binary divide in our education system. It is the divide between the academic haves and the vocational nots. We still have not tackled the problem.

I understand that Back Benchers want to be nice to those on the Front Bench on their side of the House. Some of us take that approach on the Opposition Benches, especially when we are looking for promotion. Some might say that there is not much chance of that, at least until the next election. The fact is that we all have to be nice to those on the Front Bench. It is a fact that the binary divide and the problems that it represents has not been tackled by the Government since they took office in 1979. We still have the dreadful system that means that far too high a percentage of our youngsters leave school at 16 years because they are unable to continue in higher education. Many of them are unable to do so for all sorts of reasons, including economic pressures. These youngsters do not have the opportunities that are enjoyed by the academic mainstream, the elite, who pass through the comprehensive system into higher education.

The problem has become worse and there are now three strata. First, there are the privileged young people who go through university and then obtain professional qualifications. Secondly, there are those who stay on in non-advanced further education. They obtain good qualifications but very often their opportunities are not as great as those enjoyed by those who go into higher education. Many of these youngsters in NAFE should be in higher education and gaining degrees and other post-graduate qualifications. Thirdly, there is the group who have no training. These youngsters go into YTS.

Youth training was designed in this country originally as a scheme—and I hope that the Minister will agree with this because I think that he knows something about it—for employed and unemployed youngsters at 16. Apart from 9 or 10 per cent., it has become a programme for the unemployed youngster. If the Government can do anything immediately to change what is happening between education and industry, they should ensure that YTS returns to being a programme for the unemployed and employed young person at 16. The Government have increased the divide between the two sides. The divide between the technical and vocational education initiative and the national curriculum is typical of that rather loose thinking of which the Government are guilty. On the one hand TVEI looks at a spread of coherence across subjects while the new national curriculum deals with matters subject by subject. There is a contradiction in terms of the way in which those two initiatives originate, one from the Department of Employment and the other from the Department of Education and Science. Whatever is said about joint press conferences between three Departments, in many of the areas that we have discussed today, it is about time those Departments got their act together.

The Government have structured matters that way and have reinforced the sharp distinction that I have mentioned. Those Conservative Members who have complained about the lack of ideas on the Labour Benches have not read the material. I had a great deal to do with the Labour party manifesto in this area before the last general election and in the policy groups prior to the election. Our ideas and policies about what we would do for people aged between 14 and 20 were very imaginative and bold. The idea of a building block for every youngster aged 16 to 20 was an offer to which everyone aged 16 could look forward as it would provide education and training for four years. That would at last give the have-nots, who have never had higher education opportunities or the resources spent on them, an opportunity to look forward to at least four years of opportunity to fulfil themselves.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) said, the 16 to 20s problem is the Government's weakest spot. That group is crucial to an education-industry linkage and the position will not be improved unless some very bold decisions are taken over the next year or two. Those decisions will come too late if they are not made soon.

Finally I want to consider exactly what education and industry links really mean. Industry does not mean simply employers of managers. It means everyone working in industry and that includes employees and trade unions. Education also means educationists and experts. It also includes people with expertise in local education authorities who, for donkey's years, have been more interested in eduction and more expert than most hon. Members in this House. During the past two years we have seen a rupture in the consensus on education and training which will do immense damage over the next 10 or 20 years.

The Government's decision to break the consensus in terms of the Manpower Services Commission and their attack on local authorities and trade unions means that it is almost impossible to achieve a fruitful dialogue on the very subject that we have discussed today.

If we really want to go ahead and build a relationship between industry and education we need to do so on the basis of consensus and co-operation. The Government and the Prime Minister do not believe in that. In the short term there may be political advantages in drawing that type of battle line, but in the long term we shall see more evidence of the rupture of the past two months, produced as a result of the Government's decisions. That will mean that many of the things that we have agreed on today, for example that we must have good education and employment links, will fall by the wayside because of the failure to build a consensus that will bring practical and positive measures into practice.

2.4 pm

Mr. Butcher: First, I pay tribute to every contributor to the debate. It is almost a convention of the House that in winding-up speeches, those who respond comment that it has been an excellent and rewarding debate, or words to that effect. There is something about Friday debates, and perhaps about this particular subject, that leads me to make that assertion with a great deal of conviction.

At 10 o'clock, I sat down after saying that I would be interested to hear the observations of hon. Members in all parts of the House. Over the past few hours, we have been treated to a number of very positive suggestions. One could argue that if all education debates were as positive as this one has been, many outside who complain that education is used as a political football would feel a lot easier about how those who deal with the politics of education perform.

I begin by disputing the concluding remarks of the hon. Member for Huddersfield (Mr. Sheerman), in that the whole ethos behind the major and significant policy changes we have witnessed over the past two or three years has been the building of bridges between the consumers and the demanders of educational skill and those who are the suppliers of those skills and capabilities in the schools. For example, if one looks at the curriculum for subjects such as CDT, and at what is happening in the TVEI, it will be seen that we are breaking down the divide to which the hon. Member for Huddersfield referred, and to which we both referred in a historical context, between vocational education and academic trends.

It appears to be a ritual in education debates that contributors must establish their credentials. Although I was most grateful to my hon. Friends for their comments about my industrial experience, I may point out that I spent six years as a member of the city of Birmingham education authority, the second largest in the country, and served as its chairman for two years. I am also married to a teacher, and I assure hon. Members that I become involved in discussions on conditions of service over the breakfast table virtually five days a week.

Something that I found very encouraging about our debate was that, if I compare the terminology used in the education debates in Birmingham in which I participated as a local authority councillor with that used in this debate and generally throughout the country today, there is to be seen a refreshing change in the way in which people discuss the role of education. I was present when the then emissary of Lord Callaghan, Mrs. Shirley Williams, came to Birmingham to indulge in something called the great debate. As I recall, it was concerned with the relevance of education, and the then Labour party was very worried about the alienation that many parents felt towards what the education service was delivering.

We have actually done something about that. There is a growing consensus that if we can bring the market place —if I dare use that term in an education debate, in referring to the demanders of skill, the employers and parents—closer to the teachers, then many of the things that hon. Members have said they wish to see happen will happen. That closeness of itself is a management technique that can deliver the results we want.

I wish to respond to points made by every hon. Member, but before doing so I shall conclude my remarks on the changes in the relationship with school governors and in management practices that we expect will occur over the next few years—being necessary in satisfying the need for closer links between industry and education.

The new governing bodies will include people with an enormous variety of background and experience. They will give their time partly as a matter of public service, but also because they recognise that it is a key opportunity to influence the direction that education is taking and the preparation that our young people receive for adult life and employment. We believe that the new arrangements will enrich the life of each individual school and will make a significant contribution to higher standards of education.

The introduction of local management of schools will rely substantially on the new governing bodies. In my view, this reform—which is part of the general reforms —has been comprehensively underestimated by commentators on the Education Reform Act. The enthusiasm and commitment of governors will be a key factor in enhancing the responsiveness of schools at a local community level and, by keying the education process into local conditions and local priorities, helping to increase the efficiency of the system and to ensure that all pupils are properly prepared to lead an effective and practical working life. Similarly, the new city technology colleges mentioned by two of my hon. Friends will provide their pupils with a thorough preparation for the increasingly specialised requirements that the changing needs of industry will create.

There are many other examples of partnership. Education and employment are brought close together in the compact, in which the Department of Employment will spend £12 million over three years, and in the very successful TVEI scheme. We can all benefit from the personal experience that we gain from talking to youngsters and teachers. One of the most rewarding conversations that I have had recently was with an industrialist who was overjoyed that his hitherto non-academic son had suddenly discovered the joy of learning through TVEI, which triggered his interest in other academic areas. That initiative restored the faith of a wealthy man—whose son had all the advantages—in the education system and its relevance for his son.

Mr. Fatchett: I accept much of what the Minister has said about TVEI, and I have seen very good work related to it in schools up and down the country. Like a number of other hon. Members on both sides of the House, however, I am concerned about how TVEI can be linked with the national curriculum. My hon. Friend the Member for Huddersfield (Mr. Sheerman) spoke of the curriculum being seen very much in "subject" terms. Can the Minister put to rest some of the fears about the relationship between the work in TVEI and the proposals in the curriculum?

Mr. Butcher: TVEI complements a number of parts of the curriculum, particularly CDT. I do not propose this afternoon to say how I would seek to manage the consolidation of disciplines, but I expect that much of my time, particularly over the next six months, will be devoted to that managerial question. [Hon. Members: "Good answer."] It was an excellent answer. If the hon. Member for Leeds, Central had seen the briefing, he would realise how excellent it was.

Much has been said about the consolidation and co-ordination of the various bodies. It has been asked

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whether there are too many, and whether we should try to bring them together. That, too will be very much a part of my preoccupations, and no doubt the House will test me in the coming months on the conclusions that we reach, but I feel that we have made a good start in bringing together the various packages. The variety of interest and approach is to be welcomed. We do not want people to get in each other's way, and we do not want laudable organisations to be ignored or not to receive the attention that they require to meet their objectives, so we shall have to stay very close to them.

Many people outside the House are asking why there has been such a major reform—this immense momentum and dynamism in the politics of education during the past two years. It is because the world beyond these shores so ordained it. The dynamism was not there for its own sake. Those who are competing with us economically, industrially and commercially are running faster and faster and faster. The race for competitiveness—I use those words advisedly—and the economic warfare that is going on in the international markets mean that we have to respond.

John Egan has been quoted. He is a very interesting man—an industrialist who takes the trouble to think about the broader issues. Happily, more people like him are to be found by the day. However, he says that it is not a question of Jaguar competing with Mercedes but of the people of Coventry being able to compete with the people of Stuttgart. What we are able to do to enhance the capabilities and the skills of our people will decide who wins that race. That is why there has been this immense impetus for change in the education system. If we do not respond to what our competitors are doing we shall become the nation of the whole man who is only half a man because he knows nothing about the needs of commerce, industry and enterprise. That is what lies behind a number of the reforms that have been introduced.

We have to think seriously about retraining and re-education, a point that was made by my hon. Friend the Member for Dulwich (Mr. Bowden). We have identified today an interesting consensus. It may have been identified before, but unfortunately I did not witness it. We are now educating people who can be trained. Employers do not want a trained shorthand typist or a trained tool-setter to emerge from the education system at 18. They want people who are equipped with the core skills on to which they can graft the appropriate training. They also want an education system that is flexible enough to enable people to undertake further regrafts of skill and capability five, 10 or 15 years later.

I welcome the growing movement between the public and the private sector at the further education and the higher education levels. They are doing deals, they are recognising opportunities, they are getting money into the universities from both the private and the public sectors. The further education colleges in particular are moving very fast in that direction. They are responding to the consensus, so we are all on the same side. My hon. Friend the Member for Dulwich clearly identified that point.

The hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike), whose interventions in other debates I have always enjoyed, is absolutely right when he says that manufacturing in this country matters. We shall always have to make and manufacture products, simply because manufacturing output is 80 per cent. internationally tradeable. If we succour and look after manufacturing, we shall be supporting a sector that earns foreign currency most efficiently.

My hon. Friend the Member for Lewes (Mr. Rathbone) reinforced the point that education must continue. We need to focus on the need for re-education and retraining throughout working life. Our graduates need to learn new skills, too. Furthermore, because of the demographic time bomb, considerable attention will have to be paid to the retraining and re-educating of women who leave work to have a family. Those women, who may be professionals, skilled or semi-skilled, will need to be able to return to work seven, 10 or 12 years after they have made the laudable commitment to bring up a family. The same will also apply to some men.

Mr. Rathbone: I made two specific requests—one was for increased block grant to the Open university and the second was for ministerial help by direct funding and encouragement for underwriting educational capability. Can my hon. Friend say a few words about that?

Mr. Butcher: I do not like using those time honoured words, "I shall write to my hon. Friend," but I think that I ought to on this occasion because the issues that he has raised are huge. Moreover, for reasons that he will understand, they are not issues purely for my Department. I shall therefore have to respond in a more considered manner. I give an undertaking that I shall discharge that obligation on those two points.

I must tell the hon. Member for Ynys Môn (Mr. Jones) that I am not a Welshman, but I have the odd sprinkling of his nation's language as a result of spending a lot of time in his part of the world. He will know that there is a famous Welsh folk song called "Dyddian Difyr". If my pronunciation is correct, the hon. Gentleman will know that it has an interesting and subtle meaning. It means interesting days or happy days. I believe that, for education, we are in for a period of "Dyddian Difyr." The profession has to be happy and interested.

There are probably more Welsh teachers in Birmingham and the midlands than there are in Ynys Môn. I am aware that they bring a certain flair to our cultural life in the classroom. The hon. Gentleman was down to earth about careers in industry. He wants us to be more positive about them.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hertfordshire, South-West (Mr. Page) also raised this matter when he talked about the prejudice involved when schoolchildren are crocodiled around a factory and told, "This is where you will end up if you do not get decent GCSEs or A-levels." That must stop. It is coming to an end. The culture is changing and the fusion of the vocational with the academic is, happily, under way.

I agree that where contact between business and the education system is patchy, we should do whatever we can to discover the best practice and see that it is general practice throughout the country.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, North-East (Mr. Thurnham) made some interesting observations. There is nothing wrong with variety, provided that variety of choice produces a general trend towards excellence. That is what we have set in hand.

In his own way, the hon. Member for Ashfield (Mr. Haynes) is a shortage. I do not want him to retire because the Labour Benches need working men. I understand that they are running out of working men, that there are far too many academics and that the number of sons of toil is on the retreat. "Do not retire" is my message to the hon. Member for Ashfield. His party needs him and I suspect that his national executive may call on him shortly. It needs his pithy observations on the real needs of working people.

When discussing skill shortages, we have to be careful to define what we are talking about. I recall a major examination of shortages in information technology four years ago revealing that the shortage was not so much in computer sciences as in physicists and mathematicians who make the great leaps in computer science. Electronic engineers were easier to supply, as the Japanese have found out.

That debate has moved on because some people in the computer industry now say that they want classically trained scholars. People who read Latin and Greek apparently make brilliant systems analysts and software engineers. The argument keeps moving. We cannot say, "Here is a quota for an identifiable shortage. We now need 7,500 electronic engineers." because that target will move almost overnight. Our system must therefore be able to respond flexibly. The new partnerships that are being built up between academia and industry in vocational areas are one of the ways in which we can ensure that we are fast on our feet.

I do not agree with the hon. Member for Ashfield that all our head teachers will have to become accountants. Our head teachers, with their governing bodies, will enjoy the responsibilities that they will have. In every walk of life we see that, time and time again, if one pushes responsibility upstream there is an improvement in responsiveness and quality. The schools will enjoy their responsibilities—I am convinced of that. They will enjoy the fact that they will be able to deploy their own resources within their commitments to teaching and logistic support.

I read a flip comment from one spokesman about what will happen in Cambridgeshire. He said that schools would not run the radiators as hot as they used to because they will now be paying for the fuel. There is something in that comment. If one talks about transferring certain sums of money within a school's expenditure heads of account one does examine critically where one feels one might be wasteful. One also examines most carefully where one definitely needs to spend more money. If a school decides to push up salary grades for maths and physics teachers so be it. We have a sophisticated profession; it is asking for management training support and cash support, which it will get.

Mr. Robert Rhodes James (Cambridge): Is my hon. Friend saying that schools, particularly primary schools, will receive more cash support?

Mr. Butcher: An announcement has already been made that there will be a programme, cash supported, to provide those management skills that a number of our head teachers feel are necessary. We understand and respect that view. I shall have to come back to my hon. Friend the Member for Cambridge (Mr. Rhodes James) about the level to which that support will be given to primary schools and how far down it will go. My hon. Friend will know that there is some discussion as to when that support is triggered as well as regarding the size of the school.

In reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Norwich, North (Mr. Thompson) we need more commitment and we need to be motivated about education. Those who come back from Japan after their first visit always draw the same conclusion: there is nothing that the Japanese are doing either in education or in industry that we cannot do or have not already done. What they have in abundance in Japan is commitment—with a capital C. They are utterly committed to drive to meet their objectives and that is the only distinction between our two industrial cultures. We are acquiring and must continue to acquire that level of motivation. My hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway) found a phrase for that when he talked about zeal for achievement. He quoted a famous person as coining that phrase. I believe that the word commitment should be added to that phrase.

My hon. Friend the Member for Esher (Mr. Taylor) made a telling contribution. I am sure that he would agree that the smart graduate is the one who recognises a trend before everyone else. That is necessary if he wishes to be involved in a career that is lucrative, rewarding and satisfying. I would advise people to buck the hitherto perceived trend of not moving into engineering. That market will have its revenge and salaries will increase if the shortages in certain skills in engineering continue.

If I were a young man or woman of 21 reading an applied science degree I would look hard at the present scenario. I believe that all of us could go out tomorrow and write a speech entitled "Would I let my son marry an engineer?" I believe that that would be a good thesis to examine because women who go into engineering to fill the gaps left by men, who are not going in in sufficient numbers, will be extremely attractive future brides on the basis of their income, their intellect and job security.

I say to my hon. Friend the Member for Basildon (Mr. Amess) that we agree completely that there should be proper co-ordination and consolidation where it is required. But does he agree that, on education and industry links, we are no longer talking about why we should have them but how we have them? That is the major change, and it is to be greatly welcomed.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bedfordshire, South-West (Mr. Madel) wanted to see more secondees from industry in education, and he made an interesting point about how that should be viewed in terms of tax advantages to the company. I shall faithfully report his comments to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer before he goes into purdah to see whether he has any observations to make directly to my hon. Friend.

My hon. Friend the Member for Sevenoaks (Mr. Wolfson) invited me to march into an especially controversial area which I shall not do this afternoon. He was interested in the shortage subjects in teaching. All that I will say now is this: if we are to tackle the problem, we need more flexibility in the way that we reward our teachers. That flexibility must reflect not only skill shortages but geographical shortages.

It being half past Two o'clock, the motion for the Adjournment of the House lapsed, without Question put.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Ordered,

That, at the sitting on Tuesday 25th October, paragraph (2) of Standing Order No. 30 (Questions on amendments) shall apply to proceedings on the Motion in the name of Mr. Neil Kinnock as if that day were one of the days allocated under paragraph (2) of Standing Order No. 13 (Arrangement of public business).—*[Mr. Fallon.]*

Housing Associations (Neasden)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Fallon.]*

2.30 pm

Mr. Ken Livingstone (Brent, East): This issue should not be a source of contention between the parties because it relates to a community in my constituency which shares many of the values that have been severely eroded in other parts of our society. This long-established community is known as Neasden village. It has housed three generations of London Transport workers who have served the community well and from whom we have seen many examples of community service that we would like to spread to the other major cities where that sense of community no longer exists.

The community is seriously threatened by a pernicious property developer, and I fear that what is happening in Neasden will happen in many other areas when the Government's housing legislation, which is still before Parliament, becomes law.

Neasden village consists of 272 homes spread over four streets in a fairly isolated area. It was developed in two phases, with 142 brick houses and 130 concrete houses. As one would expect, the concrete houses need more repairs than the brick houses. The uniqueness of the estate is recognised by the fact that the local council has declared it a conservation area.

The first appalling decision in this case was that of London Transport more than a year ago not to maintain those houses and provide homes for its workers but to sell them on the open market. Given the problems that we are told London Transport has of finding people to drive its trains and buses, it is breathtaking that such an estate should have been put on the market. The Government, through the Housing Corporation, and Brent council backed a reputable local housing association that wanted to purchase the properties and continue to run them in a reponsible fashion. Unfortunately, it was gazumped. A property developer was prepared to pay more than the market rate, determined by the district valuer and the council, and the reputable housing association was unable to buy the houses. The estate passed in to the hands of Asda Securities Ltd.

There is a major problem in terms of the Government's policy for funding housing associations through the Housing Corporation. Housing associations are restricted by the real market value of occupied properties, but a property developer can look at the same properties and estimate how many of the tenants can be winkled out. He can see the longer-term potential for development by emptying the homes and selling them on the open market. So housing associations are hamstrung when in competition with the less desirable property speculators.

The same day that Asda Securities bought the properties it immediately sold the concrete homes—130 of them—to a firm called Unicoin (Neasden) Ltd. The tenants in the homes passed into the loving care of their new landlord, a Mr. Sturt. His approach to housing management seems to have been largely influenced by the activities of the American Mafia, and I am sure that no hon. Member of any party would find his approach desirable or worthy of emulation. Since Mr. Sturt took

over, no repairs have been done. He immediately applied for a £10 a week rent increase, but on appeal from the tenants that was reduced to £1·50.

Then there started a series of harassing visits. Many of the tenants, who are now elderly, received calls at odd times of the day urging them to move and warning them that major disruption would be caused by development works in the area. Confusion and doubt were spread among the community. All sorts of disturbing rumours abounded, but no real information. Mr. Sturt opened no genuine channel of communication with his tenants. He started offering sums of money to tenants to move out. Tenants who resisted have in some cases been offered as much as £15,000. That sounds like a reasonable sum but I can assure the House that a one-bedroom flat in my constituency usually goes for about £60,000. So what good would £15,000 be to a family that had lost its home? It would eventually become a burden on the local council and have to occupy bed and breakfast accommodation. What use would £15,000 be to a pensioner who would have no chance of getting a mortgage to take him up to the £60,000 which is the going rate in Brent?

Mr. Sturt found that, by and large, tenants were not interested in his offer, so he chose to up the pressure—which is why I referred earlier to the Mafia style of housing management. At 6 o'clock one morning this June a group of men claiming to be building workers arrived in the area, climbed on to the roofs of the properties and started to rip the tiles off, throwing them down through the buildings and thus causing even more damage. They started with the properties that Mr. Sturt had kept empty throughout the previous year but they moved on to occupied properties, ripping away the gable tiles and allowing water penetration into occupied homes. Mr. Sturt was achieving his objective: having failed to bribe or harass the tenants to move out he was now engaging in a physical drive to do so by demolishing the houses around them. That was completely illegal, as the place is a conservation area. He broke the law to achieve his ends. Brent council issued a notice that he should desist from his activities, with which he eventually complied.

Since then, Mr. Sturt has taken no action to repair the properties from which his building workers ripped the roofs, and deterioration continues. Moreover, tenants wonder whether a landlord who is prepared to behave like this will not have other extremely unpleasant tricks up his sleeve. Mr. Sturt then had the remarkable gall to say that he would not meet the tenants because they were behaving like a lynch mob. If so, they had my sympathy. Mr. Sturt's housing management record stretches my opposition to capital punishment to the point at which I might be able to make an exception: the limited reintroduction of hanging for this sort of landlord.

Mr. Sturt then applied for planning permission, having recognised that the council would not allow him to demolish the properties illegally. He has now applied to demolish all 130. Where will the tenants living in the properties that are still occupied be rehoused by Mr. Sturt? A community that has lasted three generations is now to be thrown to one side so that Mr. Sturt can make a fast speculative profit with half the homes in a conservation area. He intends to replace them with buildings of different heights, completely altering the nature and scale of the conservation area. The development would consist of 392 yuppie flats and bedsits. If the right hon. Member for Brent, North (Sir R. Boyson) were with us today he would confirm that there is tremendous traffic congestion in this area. The site borders the Neasden roundabout and a busy junction with the north circular road. No member of any political party would support the idea of many yuppies and cars coming into an area that is already a nightmare of traffic congestion. I am sure that opposition to that would unite all the members of Brent council.

The House will be interested to know that Mr. Sturt does not share the Prime Minister's commitment to the environment, which she recently expressed in a speech. He intends to demolish the mature oaks and silver birch trees that have grown on the site over three generations to make way for the maximum number of new tacky homes that he can squeeze into Neasden village.

What should the House ask the Government to do? I appeal to the Minister to consider several matters. The House should say that these homes should be repaired. Simply to demolish homes that have been neglected, especially by a landlord who refuses to repair them, is not the answer. If a house needs to be demolished because there is no possibility of repairing it, it needs to be sensitively replaced so that it blends into the existing community.

The Government face a choice in terms of their funding of housing associations. They can give associations the freedom to bid against the speculative developer and go beyond the price agreed by the district valuer. None of us would welcome that because it would mean spending more public money in a market where property speculators endlessly bid up prices. The alternative that I recommend to the Government would cost nothing extra. It is to support compulsory purchase orders placed by the local council on properties such as those at Neasden, but with the specific agreement that instead of control passing to the council the properties would automatically be sold as soon as the council's compulsory purchase order was confirmed by the Government. They would be sold to a reputable local housing association or to the tenants who could buy them individually or collectively. That would achieve for private tenants what public sector tenants have been given in the right-to-buy legislation—the ability to determine the ownership of their properties. I have no doubt that that would receive overwhelming public support in areas of the country where bad landlords continue to abuse their tenants.

I ask the Government to look at how easy it is for people such as Mr. Sturt to get away with these activities. The penalties for the illegal activities undertaken by Mr. Sturt in a conservation area are laughable. No doubt he could make £30,000, £40,000 or £50,000 profit per property on the sites where he has illegally tried to demolish these houses. No financial penalty imposed by the courts could ever deter people such as Mr. Sturt. He will laugh all the way to the bank. We should compare the penalties that he might face to the penalties being imposed by courts for insider trading in the City where financiers face long prison sentences. An insider trader indulges in evil activities that disrupt people's financial lives, but is it not worse that homes and communities should be disrupted by Mr. Sturt?

We know about the doubt and confusion felt by a person who is mugged on the street. Mr. Sturt's activity damages people's lives by causing worry, confusion and doubt, and the pain felt by many of his tenants ranks with the damage caused by the mugger on the street. When dealing with such vandals we should hand out heavy

[Mr. Ken Livingstone]

prison sentences. I hope that the Minister will look at the severity of the penalties that are available. The only deterrent to people such as Mr. Sturt is the knowledge that they will be put inside for two or three years. We also need to find ways in which we can assist tenants to prosecute their landlords when they refuse, month after month, to carry out repairs.

This is not a party matter. I do not think that any Tory Member would support the activities of people like Sturt any more than they supported the activities of people like Rachman. We should be able to unite against such characters. I know that the Minister will not be able to give a commitment now, and will say that these matters will have to be considered. If Brent council seeks to put a compulsory purchase order on these properties, I beg him to say that the Government will consider that favourably. It would be a warning to many others of Mr. Sturt's inclination if the House were united beyond party divisions to make sure that bad landlordism like this is not allowed to destroy established and respected working class communities.

2.45 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. David Trippier): I congratulate the hon. Member for Brent, East (Mr. Livingstone) on having obtained this debate and spoken on so important a subject. It is extremely gracious of him to say that he understands that the Minister cannot give a commitment, because that is certainly true. It is an interesting exercise for Ministers to guess or second-guess what hon. Members will raise in detail in their Adjournment debates. I was unaware of the vast majority of what the hon. Gentleman told us. I can give him the assurance that I will look at it, but the councils and the tenants to whom he has referred, who are involved in this case, should exercise the legal remedies available to them. I am handicapped by not being able to comment on that because the matter may come before the courts and there may be some legal redress. As the hon. Member has gone wider in his comments by talking about funding, I shall say something about that and return to the specific point about the village later. In this case, it may not have made as much difference as he suggested, but that is a matter for conjecture and not of fact.

The housing association movement has a long and honourable tradition with its rare, if not unique, combination of social awareness and enterprise. In the hon. Gentleman's constituency, the housing association movement has a long and proven track record, with some of the most distinguished and active housing associations in the country. They include the Brent people's housing association, now called the network group, the Paddington churches housing association and the metropolitan housing trust. Others have earned a well-deserved local reputation, often catering for special needs.

In Brent, housing associations own about 6,900 homes —about one third as many as the council, which is a high figure—and more than 7 per cent. of the entire housing stock. There are few aspects of housing provision in which the associations are not involved. They buy property, improve it to the standards that we now expect, convert properties into self-contained flats, and house the homeless and those in special need. I shall come to examples of those later.

The hon. Gentleman is aware that the Government pay grant, known as housing association grant, for approved projects carried out by housing associations that are registered with the Housing Corporation, and this is a capital grant. In 1987-88, the total amount paid was £886 million. This went towards the cost of buying land for development, buying standing properties for use as housing, building work, professional fees and interest on the cost of the projects. There are two routes for applying for grant—through the local authority or to the Housing Corporation—and loan finance may come from either source. When we drew up our recent proposals, we saw an advantage in making the corporation the sole funding agency.

The hon. Member for Brent, East suggested that more money should be made available to housing associations. If the means whereby that could be made available were through the housing association grant, he is clearly looking to the Government—at the moment, there are negotiations with the Treasury—for an increase in future years' allocation for such an exercise. It may be we would agree on that. There may be no political difference between us on that. What interests me in the debate is whether, had there been additional money available for the housing association to which the hon. Gentleman referred, it would have changed the situation. I am allowed to comment on that.

Although the hon. Gentleman is understandably concerned over what has been happening at Neasden village, where the network organisation was unsuccessful in bidding for houses sold by LRT, the figure that the association bid was obviously a matter for its own judgment, based no doubt on qualified professional advice. Naturally, I do not have knowledge of the association's finances, but even if it had had the funds available it does not necessarily follow that it would have increased its bid for the properties. It could have taken the view that expenditure at that level would produce a poor return in housing terms compared with other projects it might have carried out. I ask the hon. Gentleman to accept that that is possible: Perhaps we need to explore that further.

As the village is a conservation area—the hon. Gentleman referred to that—demolition of any of the buildings will require the consent of the local planning authority or of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. As the hon. Gentleman knows, it would be wrong for me to speculate on the future of the village in that sense because the Department plays a semi-judicial role in that respect. However, I can give him an assurance that what he has said will be taken into account when we consider the matter.

On the subject of the tenants, hon. Members will know of the existing legal safeguards against harassment and of our proposals for strengthening them in the Housing Bill. I do not expect the hon. Gentleman to accept all that we are seeking to do in the Bill and he has already spoken about that. However, as far as I am able, I can give him the assurance he seeks that I shall consider the matter. If he wishes to come to the Department of the Environment, I am prepared to meet him to discuss the subject. It would be unwise at this stage to go further.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at eight minutes to Three o'clock.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 25 July 1988

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Free School Meals

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list *(a)* the number of families and *(b)* the number of children (i) eligible and (ii) claiming free school meals for each year since 1979.

Mr. Dunn: Data on the number of pupils receiving free school meals in England since 1979 are available in the Department's annual school meals census, copies of which are available in the Library.

The number of children eligible to receive free meals was included in the October 1987 census, but this information for previous years and the number of families eligible has not been collected by the Department.

Child Care

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what action he is taking to implement the recommendations within his area of responsibility of the European Commission's childcare network report "Caring for Children—Services and Policies for Childcare and Equal Opportunities in the United Kingdom."

Mr. Dunn: My right hon. Friend recently received and is considering this detailed report, which covers the areas of responsibility of a number of Government Departments.

French

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he proposes to take steps to reverse the downward trend in the GCE French A-level percentage of total passes between 1965 and 1985.

Mrs. Rumbold: The Government are concerned to increase the number of pupils continuing to study a foreign language until age 16 and beyond. Our proposals for a national curriculum include a modern foreign language as a foundation subject at secondary level to be studied by all pupils between the ages of 11 and 16. We expect the majority to want to offer it for public examination at age 16 and hope that the greater numbers studying a language up to that age will result in an increase in those continuing their studies to A or AS-level.

School Leavers

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish a table in the *Official Report*, showing for each year from 1979 to the latest year for which figures are available, the number of school leavers with special education needs who left school, broken down by type of institution, and the numbers who went into *(a)* employment, *(b)* education, *(c)* training, *(d)* care and *(e)* who cannot be traced.

Mr. Dunn: Only limited information is available. The estimated number of pupils aged 16 who left maintained and non-maintained special schools in England in each of the years 1981 to 1987 is as in the table. Comparable figures for earlier years are not available. Information for other types of institution attended aond on the destination of leavers from special schools is not collected centrally.

(thousands)

	Number[1]
1981	12·5
1982	11·9
1983	11·2
1984	10·8
1985	10·7
1986	10·5
1987	10·0

[1] Leavers from special schools age 16.

Workers Educational Association

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what level of grant has been allocated to the Workers Educational Association on an annual basis from 1979 to the present day; what the projected support for the Workers Educational Association will be to 1990-91; and what future role he sees the Workers Educational Association playing in adult education.

Mr. Jackson: Grants made by the Department to the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) districts in England in the academic years 1979-80 to date are set out in the table.

Grants to Workers' Educational Association districts in academic years

	£ million
1979-80	1·129
1980-81	1·447
1981-82	1·970
1982-83	2·209
1983-84	2·405
1984-85	2·516
1985-86	2·437
1986-87	2·431
1987-88	[1]2·497

[1] Allocation.

Grants are also paid to the WEA national office to assist in the monitoring and promotion of WEA provision generally. Details of the amounts paid in the financial years 1979-80 to date are set out in the table.

Grants to WEA National Office in financial years

	£ million
1979-80	0·038
1980-81	0·043
1981-82	0·043
1982-83	0·045
1983-84	0·045
1984-85	0·047
1985-86	0·056
1986-87	0·050
1987-88	0·081
1988-89	[1]0·052

[1] Allocation.

Since 1985-86 the Department has in addition made grants to the WEA for the in-service training of staff, as follows:

Financial year	*£ million*
1985-86	0·050
1986-87	0·052
1987-88	0·054
1988-89	[1]0·055

[1] Allocation.

Grant allocations are made on an annual basis and my right hon. Friend is not therefore in a position to state what the support for the WEA will be for the years to 1990-91.

The WEA has asked the Department to review the role and resourcing of the association. Officials are currently discussing with the WEA how this might best be done.

Teachers (Negotiating Rights)

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received concerning the declaration on teachers' negotiating rights (document B2-1187/87) entered in the register of the European Parliament under rule 65 of its procedures, consequent on petition to the president of that body on 9 March by representatives of the National Association of Schoolmasters, Union of Women Teachers and others; and whether he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend has received a small number of letters from NASUWT members, both directly and through hon. Members, drawing his attention to this declaration.

Education Reform

Mr. Madel: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he proposes to establish a special unit in his Department to deal with requests for guidance and assistance from governors of schools in maintained sector who are contemplating applying for grant maintained status for their schools; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dunn: A team of officials in my Department will continue to provide information and advice on request to all those interested in our proposals for grant-maintained schools. Copies of a draft document of guidance on our proposals have already gone to the governing bodies of all maintained schools.

Retinitis Pigmentosa

Mr. Shersby: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list in the *Official Report* in tabular form details of all scientific research being carried out with support from public funds into retinitis pigmentosa, giving for each project (i) its name, (ii) the name of the research worker concerned, (iii) the location, (iv) the amount being spent, (v) the duration and (vi) its expected completion date.

Mr. Jackson *[holding answer 4 July 1988]:* The Medical Research Council (MRC), which receives a grant-in-aid from this Department, is the main agency through which the Government fund medical research in the United Kingdom. I understand that the MRC provided support for the following projects during 1987-88:

1. *Project title:* DNA sequence markers in single gene disorders (retinitis pigmentosum, chromosome x-linked mental retardation, etc.)
   Investigator: Professor H. J. Evans (Unit Director)
   Location: MRC Clinical and Population Cytogenetics Unit
   Duration: Commenced 1 April 1983 and ongoing

2. *Project title:* Characterisation of antiretinal autoimmunity in retinal vasculitis
   Ivestigator: Professor D. C. Dumonde
   Location: Guy's and St. Thomas's Medical School, London
   Duration: 1 March 1984 to 28 February 1987

3. *Project title:* The physicochemical basis of light reception in vertebrates
   Investigator: Professor Sir Alan Hodgkin
   Location: Physiological Laboratory, Cambridge University
   Duration: 1 October 1984 to 30 September 1987

4. *Project title:* Dark-adaptation and light-adaptation of rod photoreceptors
   Investigator: Dr. T. D. Lamb
   Location: Physiological Laboratory, Cambridge University
   Duration: 1 October 1984 to 30 September 1987

5. *Project title:* Phototransduction in vertebrate rods and cones
   Investigator: Dr. D. I. Attwell
   Location: Department of Physiology, University College London, London
   Duration: 1 October 1984 to 30 September 1987

6. *Project title:* Receptoral and post-receptoral processes in colour vision
   Investigator: Dr. J. D. Mollon
   Location: Department of Experimental Psychology, Cambridge University
   Duration: 4 February 1984 to 30 June 1988

7. *Project title:* Molecular structure of the membrane-cytoskeleton network and of rhodopsin and squid photoreceptor microvilli
   Investigator: Dr. Helen R. Saibil
   Location: Department of Zoology, Oxford University
   Duration: 1 July 1985 to 30 June 1988

8. *Project title:* Clinical and functional studies of different genetic forms of retinitis pigmentosa
   Investigator: Professor A. C. Bird
   Location: Department of Clinical Ophthalmology, Institute of Ophthalmology, London
   Duration: 1 May 1985 to 30 April 1988

9. *Project title:* Synthesis and sorting of glycosaminoglycans in the retina; cone cells and interphotoreceptor matrix
   Investigator: Dr. Carolyn A. Converse
   Location: Department of Pharmacy, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow
   Duration: 14 June 1986 to 13 June 1987

10. *Project title:* Temporal visual processing in amblyopia
    Investigator: Dr. R. F. Hess
    Location: Physiological Laboratory, Cambridge University
    Duration: October 1988 to September 1989

These projects are not exclusively directed to research on retinitis pigmentosa. For example, the first project listed, at the MRC clinical and population cytogenetics unit, includes research on a range of single gene disorders. The council's estimate of total expenditure on research directly related to retinitis pigmentosa in 1987-88 is £134,000.

Some support for research on retinitis pigmentosa is also provided by this Department through UGC block grants to universities and medical schools.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Ethnic Minorities

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in which grades people from the ethnic minorities employed in the aid wing in grades 1 to 7 are employed.

Mr. Chris Patten: Disclosure of this information would breach the code of practice agreed with the Council of Civil Service Unions about the confidentiality of ethnic origin information on staff in post, and would risk identifying individuals.

Female Workers

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if the Overseas Development Administration monitors the effect of United Kingdom bilateral aid on the proportion of the female population who are economically active in recipient countries.

Mr. Chris Patten: We evaluate the effects of our aid on women, but it would be impracticable to distinguish the effect of this aid from all other factors which determine the proportion of women who are economically active.

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* showing, for all countries in Latin America, information available to him for the latest year for which figures are available on the proportions of the female population who were economically active, in ranked order and the percentage change since 1960.

Mr. Chris Patten: Following is the information:

	Activity rate (1985) females (per cent.)	*Percentage change in female activity rate 1960-85*
Jamaica	42·5	+39
Haiti	36·2	−30
Uruguay	23·3	+19
Trinidad and Tobago	22·6	+26
Brazil	19·9	+77
Chile	19·7	+39
Argentina	19·4	+15
Panama	19·0	+33
Venezuala	18·3	+58
Mexico	17·9	+96
El Salvador	16·6	+51
Peru	15·4	+14
Costa Rica	15·2	+56
Bolivia	14·8	+6
Colombia	14·3	+21
Nicaragua	14·2	+27
Paraguay	13·8	−1
Ecuador	11·7	+10
Honduras	10·3	+30
Guatemala	8·7	+11
Dominican Republic	8·2	+38

Note: The activity rate is the ratio of the economically active population (all employed and unemployed persons including those seeking work for the first time) aged 10 years and over to the population of all ages.
Source: World Demographic Estimates and Projections 1950-2025, United Nations 1988

OECD Countries

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish tables in the *Official Report* showing, in ranked order, per capita contributions by Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Countries to *(a)* the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, *(b)* the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, *(c)* the World Health Organisation, and *(d)* the Food and Agriculture Organisation for the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Chris Patten: Available information is in the tables. Figures for the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation and the Food and Agriculture Organisation combine assessed and voluntary contributions. Figures for the World Health Organisation cover only assessed contributions to the budget; contributions to voluntarily funded programmes are not available for Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries. Contributions to the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund are all voluntary. 1986 figures are the latest available for UNESCO.

Contributions from OECD Countries to UNICEF, UNESCO, WHO and FAO
Recipient: UNICEF Year: 1987

Rank and donor	*$US per capita contribution*
1 Sweden	9·41
2 Norway	9·39
3 Finland	4·64
4 Switzerland	2·63
5 Denmark	2·26
6 Canada	1·31
7 Netherlands	1·15
8 Italy	1·12
9 New Zealand	0·39
10 United Kingdom	0·34
11 Australia	0·26
12 United States	0·25
13 Germany (FRG)	0·20
14 Austria	0·17
15 Belgium	0·17
16 Japan	0·16
17 Luxembourg	0·14
18 Ireland	0·13
19 France	0·11
20 Iceland	0·09
21 Spain	0·02
22 Greece	0·02
23 Portugal	Negligible
24 Turkey	Negligible

Recipient: UNESCO Year: 1986

Rank and donor	*$US per capita contribution*
1 Switzerland	0·75
2 Norway	0·59
3 Sweden	0·40
4 Denmark	0·31
5 Germany (FRG)	0·31
6 Luxembourg	0·28
7 Iceland	0·25
8 Canada	0·24

Rank and donor	$US per capita contribution
9 Netherlands	0·24
10 France	0·23
11 Australia	0·21
12 Austria	0·20
13 Finland	0·20
14 Ireland	0·19
15 Japan	0·18
16 Italy	0·15
17 New Zealand	0·15
18 Spain	0·12
19 Belgium	0·10
20 Greece	0·09
21 Portugal	0·07
22 Turkey	Negligible
23 United States	Negligible
24 United Kingdom	Nil

Recipient: WHO Year: 1987

Rank and donor	$US per capita contribution
1 Switzerland	0·42
2 Sweden	0·36
3 Denmark	0·34
4 Luxembourg	0·34
5 Germany (FRG)	0·33
6 Norway	0·31
7 Iceland	0·30
8 Belgium	0·29
9 Canada	0·29
10 Netherlands	0·29
11 France	0·28
12 Australia	0·25
13 Finland	0·24
14 Austria	0·23
15 Japan	0·22
16 United Kingdom	0·21
17 New Zealand	0·17
18 Italy	0·16
19 Spain	0·13
20 Ireland	0·12
21 Greece	0·11
22 United States	0·10
23 Portugal	0·04
24 Turkey	Nil

Recipient: FAO Year: 1987

Rank and donor	$ US per capita contribution
1 Denmark	2·72
2 Netherlands	1·87
3 Belgium	1·60
4 Norway	1·53
5 Sweden	1·51
6 Switzerland	1·13
7 Finland	0·68
8 France	0·38
9 Iceland	0·38
10 Luxembourg	0·38
11 Germany (FRG)	0·36
12 Canada	0·30
13 Australia	0·28
14 Austria	0·28
15 Japan	0·26
16 Italy	0·25
17 United Kingdom	0·21
18 New Zealand	0·19
19 Ireland	0·16
20 Spain	0·14
21 United States	0·14
22 Greece	0·10
23 Turkey	0·09
24 Portugal	0·04

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish a table in the *Official Report*, showing for each member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in ranked order, the percentage change in proportion of gross national product given as overseas aid between 1979 and the latest date for which figures are available.

Mr. Chris Patten: Comparative figures are available only for net official development assistance as defined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and not for the amounts actually spent on overseas aid as a proportion of gross national product.

Exact figures are only available for those countries which are members of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee and have been so throughout the period in question. The information is as follows:

	Net official development assistance as a percentage of gross national product		*Percentage change in ratio between 1979 and 1987*
	1979	*1987*	
1. Italy	0·08	0·32	300
2. Finland	0·21	0·50	138
3. Switzerland	0·21	0·30	43
4. France	0·60	0·75	25
5. Denmark	0·71	0·88	24
6. Norway	0·95	1·10	16
7. Japan	0·27	0·31	15
8. United States	0·19	0·20	5
9. Netherlands	0·94	0·98	4
10. Canada	0·48	0·46	−4
11. Sweden	0·92	0·85	−8
12. Austria	0·19	0·17	−11
13. Germany	0·45	0·39	−13
14. Belgium	0·58	0·49	−16
15. Australia	0·53	0·33	−38
16. New Zealand	0·34	0·21	−38
17. United Kingdom	0·51	0·28	−45

Source: DAC chairman's report 1985 and OECD press notice published on 22 June 1988.
Ireland became a member of the DAC in 1985.

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish a table in the *Official Report*, showing for each member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Assistance Committee, for 1979 and 1987 *(a)* the per capita gross national product, *(b)* the

proportion of gross national product constituted by bilateral aid, *(c)* per capita bilateral aid, *(d)* the percentage changes in gross national product on the previous year and *(e)* the percentage real change in bilateral aid on the previous year.

Mr. Chris Patten: The information for 1979 is as follows:

DAC Country	*(a) GNP per capita in $*	*(b) bilateral aid as percent of GNP*	*(c) bilateral aid per capita in $*	*(d) percentage change in GNP on previous year*	*(e) percentage real change in bilateral aid on previous year*
Australia	8,206	0·39	32	11	5
Austria	9,116	0·09	8	18	−51
Belgium	11,433	0·39	45	15	−28
Canada	9,375	0·27	25	10	−15
Denmark	11,706	0·43	51	16	6
Finland	8,583	0·10	9	23	63
France	10,707	0·50	54	21	5
Germany	12,406	0·29	36	18	24
Ireland [1]	—	—	—	—	—
Italy	5,710	0·01	0	24	−15
Japan	8,637	0·20	17	4	31
Netherlands	10,735	0·68	73	16	16
New Zealand	6,434	0·26	17	23	1
Norway	11,294	0·54	61	16	18
Sweden	12,238	0·64	78	16	21
Switzerland	15,595	0·12	18	13	4
United Kingdom	7,371	0·29	22	31	12
United States	10,525	0·17	18	11	8

Source: this information has been derived from various editions of the report of the Chairman of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC).

[1] Exactly comparable information is not available for Ireland which joined the DAC in 1985.

The following figures for 1987 are provisional at this stage. No figures for population in 1987 are yet available. The information given in columns (a) and (c) is therefore based on population figures for 1986.

DAC country	*(a) GNP per capita in $(using 1986 population)*	*(b) bilateral aid as percent of GNP*	*(c) bilateral aid per capita in $(using 1986 population)*	*(d) percentage change in GNP on previous year*	*(e) percentage real change in bilateral aid on previous year*
Australia	11,750	0·28	33	16	−8
Austria	15,426	0·13	21	25	−11
Belgium	14,189	0·30	42	22	−6
Canada	15,778	0·31	49	15	9
Denmark	19,175	0·47	90	25	2
Finland	17,483	0·31	53	25	16
France	15,887	0·61	97	21	9
Germany	18,430	0·28	51	25	−5
Ireland	7,239	0·11	8	17	−6
Italy	13,098	0·22	29	25	−8
Japan	19,634	0·22	43	21	17
Netherlands	14,729	0·66	97	24	0
New Zealand	8,753	0·15	13	13	−47
Norway	19,510	0·65	127	19	−6
Sweden	18,700	0·54	101	22	−7
Switzerland	27,226	0·22	59	26	−3
United Kingdom	11,805	0·15	18	21	−16
United States	18,580	0·15	28	6	−13

Sources: DAC Chairman's Report for 1987, OECD Press Notice published on 22 June 1988 and the DAC Secretariat.

External Debt

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* showing, for each of the years 1973 to 1987, as a total for all non-oil developing countries for *(a)* the current account balance, *(b)* the current account balance excluding interest payments on external debts and official transfers and *(c)* the interest payments on external debt.

Mr. Chris Patten: The information is as follows:

US$ thousand million

	Non-oil developing countries		
	Current account balance	*Current account balance[1]*	*Interest payments on external debt*
1973	−11·3	−9·9	6·9
1974	−37·0	−36·4	9·3
1975	−46·3	−42·9	10·5
1976	−32·6	−29·2	10·9
1977	−29·6	−22·2	15·6
1978	−33·2	−19·6	21·9
1979	−50·7	−29·8	32·2
1980	−73·4	−36·4	49·5
1981	−98·4	−43·6	68·3
1982	−77·4	−12·1	78·4
1983	−41·8	15·4	71·2
1984	−25·9	38·5	78·5

	Non-oil developing countries		
	Current account balance	*Current account balance*[1]	*Interest payments on external debt*
1985	−28·1	31·9	77·1
1986	−13·1	43·8	74·6
1987	6·6	48·9	73·9

Source: World Economic Outlook, International Monetary Fund, 1983-1988.

[1] Excluding official transfers and interest payments on external debts.

Nicaragua

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* showing, in ranked order, for 1986 and 1987, the bilateral aid earmarked for technical co-operation paid to Nicaragua for each reporting member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's development assistance committee.

Mr. Chris Patten: Figures for 1987 are not yet available from the development assistance committee. Figures for technical co-operation provided to Nicaragua in 1986 are as follows:

	US$ millions
Italy	7·12
Germany	5·40
Finland	5·38
Netherlands	4·94
Sweden	3·54
France	2·07
Norway	0·62
Switzerland	[1]0·30
Denmark	0·23
Japan	0·16
Canada	0·06
Belgium	0·02
Australia	—
Austria	—
Ireland	—
New Zealand	—
United Kingdom	—
United States of America	—

[1] Estimate.

Note: "—" in the table signifies disbursements of less than $5,000. Figures compiled by the development assistance committee provide insufficient evidence to rank these countries; they are ordered here alphabetically.

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* showing for each reporting member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee for 1987 the bilateral aid given to Nicaragua in ranked order.

Mr. Chris Patten: Figures for 1987 are not yet available from the Development Assistance Committee.

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the level of United Kingdom Government funding paid to development projects inside Nicaragua co-financed with British voluntary groups; and if he will list the voluntary groups, projects and individual sums awarded.

Mr. Chris Patten: During the last complete financial year—1987-88—grants totalling £47,065 were paid under the joint funding scheme to British voluntary agencies in order to co-fund 10 of their development projects in Nicaragua. The details are:

Agency	*Project Name*	*Grant in 1987-88* £
CAFOD	Agricultural Development	3,117
CAFOD	Vocational Training and Workshops (in tailoring and embroidery skills) for women prisoners	2,477
Christian Aid	Las Segovias; Mother and Child Health Programme	8,403
Christian Aid	Production and Distribution of Medicinal Plants	1,541
OXFAM	Technical Assistance for Project Evaluation/Implementation	3,907
OXFAM	Training Programme for Health Promoters	5,245
OXFAM	INPESCA: Food Production; Purchase of Generators	3,079
OXFAM	Agricultural Development Programme	10,280
OXFAM	Agricultural Development with Rama Indians	6,516
OXFAM	Appropriate Technology Project: Building Techniques	2,500
	Total	£47,065

UNICEF

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he is now able to give finalised figures for per capita contributions to the United Nations International Children's Emergency Relief Fund from Organisation for Economic Co-operation Development member countries for 1987.

Mr. Chris Patten: The preliminary figures I gave the hon. Member on 25 April, at column 167, are now final.

Kampuchea

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Monklands West of 13 May, *Official Report*, column 249, what international efforts the United Kingdom Government has made to organise humanitarian assistance to Kampuchea in the context of international relief efforts.

Mr. Chris Patten: We are considering what response, if any, we shall be making to the Food and Agriculture Organisation appeal for food aid for Cambodia.

Rain Forests

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the specific projects in which the United Kingdom or the European Community are taking part in order to protect the rain forests in *(a)* Brazil, *(b)* Cameroon, *(c)* Ghana, *(d)* Ivory Coast, *(e)* Malaysia and *(f)* other Asian, African or Latin American countries.

Mr. Chris Patten: Bilateral projects in the countries listed are:

Brazil

Rain forest regeneration study on Maraca Island.

Cameroon

Rehabilitation of Limbe botanical garden as a centre for conservation of rain forest species.

Support for Korup national rain forest park.
Research into ectomycorrhizas in nutrient cycling and forest dynamics in lowland tropical rain forest.

Ghana
Inventory of forest reserves and preparation of management plans.

Ivory Coast
Commonwealth Development Corporation loans for the establishment and replanting of tropical hardwood plantations which relieve pressure on natural forests.

Malaysia
No bilateral projects.

Other Countries:

Belize
Technical assistance for the forestry sector review under the tropical forestry action plan.

Costa Rica
Tropical moist forest management research.

Honduras
Technical assistance in broadleaf forest management.

Nigeria
Oban national park, assistance in tropical moist forest conservation.

Sierra Leone
Research in the management of tropical moist forest conservation.

Information provided to us by the European Community on forestry does not indentify projects to protect rainforests. I indicated on 9 May in my reply to the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes), at column 9, the level of forestry support under the European Development Fund. We are also aware of a project financed from the Community Budget to establish an Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) regional research centre in Malaysia to improve wood processing and thereby relieve pressures on forests.

WALES

Home Helps

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Monklands, West from the Secretary of State for Social Services on 13 May, *Official Report*, columns *273-74*, if he will supply similar information on the level of home help provision in Wales.

Mr. Grist: The information is as follows:

Home helps (expressed as whole time equivalent) per thousand population (all ages), Wales 1979-87

As at 30 September

	1979	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	[1]*1987*
Clwyd	0·80	0·77	0·77	0·77	0·86	0·88	0·97	0·99	1·15
Dyfed	0·80	0·94	0·95	1·00	1·00	1·00	1·00	1·03	1·16
Gwent	1·14	1·22	1·25	1·31	1·20	1·42	1·44	1·47	1·53
Gwynedd	1·27	1·08	1·25	1·19	1·18	1·16	1·14	1·18	1·25
Mid Glamorgan	1·21	1·21	1·32	1·33	1·54	1·59	1·62	1·76	1·89
Powys	0·98	0·97	0·92	0·74	0·86	1·03	1·02	1·10	1·09
South Glamorgan	1·00	1·00	1·00	0·89	1·07	1·07	1·01	1·01	1·04
West Glamorgan	0·80	0·81	0·88	1·07	1·22	1·38	1·59	1·50	1·50
Wales[2]	1·00	1·02	1·06	1·08	1·16	1·23	1·27	1·30	1·39

Note:
[1] Provisional.
[2] Figures exclude home help organisers and assistant and trainee home help organisers.

Clinical Immunologists

Dr. Marek: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give *(a)* the number and *(b)* the locations of clinical immunologists in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: The information requested is not available centrally. Clinical immunology is not classified as a separate specialty in the manpower returns collected by the Department. Doctors practising in this field are shown against their main specialty and are therefore not identified as such in central records.

Advance Factories

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will increase the case allocation to the Welsh Development Agency for the construction of more advance factories throughout Wales and specifically at sites on Deeside, Clwyd; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: In January this year I announced a 40 per cent. increase in the Welsh Development Agency's factory building budget for 1988-89 and a target for new industrial floor-space of 1½ million sq ft, nearly 75 per cent. higher than the area completed in 1987-88.

In March, I agreed to the Welsh Development Agency making a start on an additional 200,000 sq ft of property in 1988-89, and to its planning and designing a further 800,000 sq ft of industrial floor space to form a reserve list for the current financial year and ensure a continuous flow of new projects into 1989-90. The total cost of these additional packages is £25 million.

The geographical balance and overall level of the Welsh Development Agency's property development programme are reviewed regularly in the light of demand, and will be factors that I will bear in mind when considering the agency's budget for 1989-90 and later years.

Cancers

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will estimate the expected increase in cancers likely to result among infants, children and adults in *(a)* Wales and *(b)* north Wales as a result of exposure to Chernobyl fallout in (i) the next 10 years, (ii) the next 50 years and (iii) the next 250 years.

Mr. Grist: Such estimates are not available in the form requested.

Howardian High School

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to the answer of 27 June, *Official Report*, column 7, if he has now reached a decision on the South Glamorgan county council's proposal to close Howardian

high school and its implications of that county's ability to reorganise post-16 education in the east of Cardiff; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Yes. Our decision to approve these proposals was conveyed to the authority on 21 July 1988.

Welsh Language Board (Chairman)

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what will be the salary of the chairman of the Welsh Language Board; how many days a week the chairman will be employed; what support staff he will have; and what his annual budget will be.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: These and all other practical considerations necessary to ensure that the board is in a position to discharge its task effectively are under active consideration.

Uniform Business Rate

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what he estimates the net effect in revenue would be for each Welsh council from the application of the uniform business rate.

Mr. Peter Walker: It is not meaningful to isolate the effects of the switch to a national non-domestic rate upon the revenue of local authorities, since it will be introduced together with a different grant system and a different basis of resource equalisation.

Dust (Illness)

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he has received a copy of the medical surveys in West Glamorgan linking high levels of serious illness with dust from opencast coal mining; and if he will carry out similar surveys in other areas of Wales where there is opencast mining or other activities generating significant levels of dust.

Mr. Grist: Yes. It is too early to comment on whether further surveys might be appropriate or on who might carry them out since the material from West Glamorgan has yet to be independently assessed.

Rating Reform

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list for each local authority in Wales what each would have received in 1988-89 from the national non-domestic rate pool the non-domestic rate poundage for 1988-89 and the amount to be received from non-domestic rates in 1988-89.

Mr. Grist *[holding answer 21 July 1988]:* The information requested is provided in the table. It has been calculated on the basis of a national non-domestic poundage for Wales. This has been set to provide an equivalent yield to that likely to be raised from non-domestic rates in 1988-89 and redistributed to local authorities on a per adult basis.

Non-domestic rates based on provisional rating data

	Estimated proceeds from non-domestic rate pool 1988-89 £000's	*Actual non-domestic rate poundage 1988-89 p*	*Estimated non-domestic rates collected 1988-89 £000's*
Alyn and Deeside	1,538	35·1	1,527
Colwyn	1,161	48·1	977
Delyn	1,398	37·0	861
Glyndwr	893	40·7	622
Rhuddlan	1,238	35·9	991
Wrexham Maelor	2,457	42·2	2,468
Carmarthen	1,198	34·8	702
Ceredigion	1,415	27·7	644
Dinefwr	825	25·8	253
Llanelli	1,646	53·4	1,582
Preseli Pembrokeshire	1,524	24·9	956
South Pembrokeshire	865	31·2	1,600
Blaenau Gwent	1,695	50·4	1,420
Islwyn	1,427	43·5	838
Monmouth	1,695	46·4	1,678
Newport	2,799	42·5	4,873
Torfaen	1,955	52·1	2,382
Aberconwy	1,184	53·8	1,331
Arfon	1,158	46·9	1,990
Dwyfor	596	50·3	609
Meirionnydd	713	44·3	1,030
Ynys Môn	1,489	43·3	1,765
Cynon Valley	1,407	38·6	882
Merthyr Tydfil	1,267	46·7	1,169
Ogwr	2,905	49·9	2,525
Rhondda	1,695	50·4	904
Rhymney Valley	2,188	48·2	1,611
Taff Ely	2,017	45·1	2,341
Brecknock	902	43·0	721
Montgomeryshire	1,101	23·3	495
Radnor	479	30·9	384
Cardiff	6,066	20·7	4,276
Vale of Glamorgan	2,502	27·1	1,960
Port Talbot	1,110	39·3	2,415
Lliw Valley	1,335	41·3	919
Neath	1,421	43·4	1,401

	Estimated proceeds from non-domestic rate pool 1988-89 £000's	Actual non-domestic rate poundage 1988-89 p	Estimated non-domestic rates collected 1988-89 £000's
Swansea	4,092	50·9	4,764
Clwyd	45,630	210·0	39,591
Dyfed	39,259	219·9	37,928
Gwent	50,276	208·0	50,755
Gwynedd	27,012	203·0	29,088
Mid Glamorgan	60,305	228·4	46,086
Powys	13,041	210·0	10,136
South Glamorgan	45,015	204·9	57,255
West Glamorgan	41,807	263·0	55,101

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Personal Injury (Compensation)

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Attorney-General if the Lord Chancellor now plans to implement the recommendations of the Pearson commission on civil liability and compensation for personal injury or to act on its conclusions; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: In its report in 1978 the Pearson commission made 188 specific recommendations, falling under 16 broad headings. Many recommendations which called for positive steps to be taken have already been implemented or are in the course of implementation. Certain others remain under review.

Animal Beneficiaries

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Attorney-General what representations the Lord Chancellor has received regarding the administration of the laws relating to the protection of dogs and cats who are beneficiaries of a will.

The Attorney-General: The Lord Chancellor received last week a representation relating to a Yorkshire terrier for whose maintenance the owner had made provision by will.

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Attorney-General if he will review the existing laws regarding protection for animal beneficiaries of a will.

The Attorney-General: Any questions of a reform of the law in this area is a matter for my right hon. and noble Friend the Lord Chancellor, who has no present proposals for such a reform.

Sunday Trading

Mr. Stanbrook: To ask the Attorney-General what representations he has received concerning the decision of the Tunbridge Wells borough council not to issue summonses for alleged Sunday trading offences pending the outcome of the deliberations of the European Court on two cases referred to the court; and what action he proposes to take to secure the enforcement of the law on this subject.

The Solicitor-General: My right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General has received no representations concerning the present policy of the Tunbridge Wells borough council regarding the enforcement of the law on Sunday trading.

PRIME MINISTER

Departmental Advertising

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Prime Minister what is her policy on the way in which paid advertising is used by Government Departments and agencies.

The Prime Minister: This is a matter for departmental Ministers within the Government conventions on the use of paid publicity and advertising.

Deputy Heads of Government (Meeting)

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Prime Minister what response she has made to the proposal of M. Delors, President of the Commission of the European Economic Community for a fortnightly meeting of deputy Heads of member Governments to reach decisions on outstanding matters arising from the Council of Ministers.

The Prime Minister: No such proposal has been made to the Council.

Education (Funding)

Mr. Morley: To ask the Prime Minister whether she has discussed any plans for the removal of funding of education services from local government and replacing it with any form of central Government funding or control.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Bromsgrove (Mr. Miller) on 26 April, at column 199.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Timber Imports

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list the nature, type and value of timber products imported into the United Kingdom in 1987.

Mr. Alan Clark: United Kingdom imports in 1987 were as follows:

	£ million
Wood (SITC Division 24 [less cork])	1,198·5
Pulp and waste paper (SITC Division 25)	657·2
Wood manufactures (SITC Division 63 [less cork]) (excluding furniture)	784·6
Paper, paperboard and articles therefrom (SITC Division 64)	3,238·2

Further detailed information is available from the December 1987 volume of the *Overseas Trade Statistics*, a copy of which is available in the Library.

Equal Opportunities

Mr. Janner: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is the ethnic classification and gender of the equal opportunity officer working in his Department.

Mr. Butcher: The equal opportunity officer is male. It is DTI policy not to reveal the ethnic classification of individual members of staff.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster by whom information on equal opportunities has been and is being collected on behalf of his Department; when and by whom it will be analysed to see whether any further action is necessary; and when he expects that analysis to be completed.

Mr. Butcher: Information is collected by the DTI's equal opportunities officer. The information is or will be subject to various forms of analysis in agreement with the departmental trade union side by the equal opportunity officer, the personnel management division of DTI, and the office of the Minister for the Civil Service. The time scales will differ as I have indicated in replies to other questions from the hon. and learned Member.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether the provision for monitoring ethnic origin in respect of recruitment, promotion, career development and training, respectively, are now in hand or proposed, respectively.

Mr. Butcher: As part of a review conducted by the office of the Minister for the Civil Service, ethnic origin information has been collected since 1 September 1987 at various stages of our recruitment process; arrangements are proposed to monitor a promotion board before April 1989; arrangements are in hand to monitor the postings aspect of career development in three divisions; and two training courses at executive officer level are being monitored for the calendar year 1988.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in what quasi-governmental bodies or other organisations under its aegis he has authority to request or require the carrying out of ethnic monitoring exercises in accordance with the code of the Commission for Racial Equality; and what ethnic monitoring and equal opportunities exercises have been carried out by each such Department.

Mr. Butcher: Non-departmental public bodies and other bodies sponsored by DTI are responsible for arrangements for recruitment and personnel management of staff they employ. Bodies are encouraged to be equal opportunities employers, and to pursue practices in the codes of the Commission for Racial Equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission. No central records are held of ethnic monitoring and equal opportunities exercises carried out by these bodies.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Janner: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) how many of the staff from ethnic minority groups known to be working in grades one to seven in his Department are in grades one, two, three, four, five, six and seven, respectively;

(2) how many of the non-industrial staff as at 1 June from ethnic minority groups known to be working in grades one to seven in his Department are in grades one, two, three, four, five, six and seven, respectively.

Mr. Butcher: The figures, for those non-industrial staff who responded to the ethnic survey, and as at 1 June 1988 are as follows:

Grade	*Number*
1-5	nil
6	6
7	15

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list for 1979, 1984 and the most recent year the numbers of staff by grade in the statistical divisions in the Duchy offices and the Department of Trade and Industry, respectively; if he will differentiate between staff in the statistical posts and staff in administrative posts; and if he will give separate figures for the Business Statistical Office and the Office of Telecommunications.

Mr. Butcher *[holding answer 21 July 1988]*: Direct comparisons with 1979 are not possible because of changes in the Department's internal structure, the introduction of unified grading, and machinery of Government changes. There are no statisticians in the office of the Duchy of Lancaster. The figures available are as follows:

Business Statistics Office

Grade	*1 April 1979*	*1 April 1984*	*1 April 1988*
Grade 3	1	1	1
Chief Statistician	4	4	[1]—
Grade 5	1	1	5
Grade 6	1	1	1
Grade 7	13	8	19
Statistician	9	11	[1]—
Senior Assistant Statistician	2	4	3
Assistant Statistician	3	1	3
SEO	28	22	20
HEO	95	80	80½
EO	230	180	176½
AO	407	277	237
AA	161	97	59½
PS	7	6	6
Librarian	1	1	1
Assistant Librarian	1	1	1
Typing Manager	3	3	2
Typist	22	19	14
Senior Messenger	3	3	2
Messenger	17	13	8
Chief Paper Keeper	1	—	—
Senior Paperkeeper	4	2	—
Paper Keeper	13	8	3
Office Keeper II	1	1	—
Repro Graphics Officer I	1	1	1
Repro Graphics Officer II	1	2	2
Teleprint Operator	1	1	—
Telephonist	4	3	3
Sub total—statistician grades	18	20	6
Sub total—other grades	1,017	731	642½
Total	1,035	751	648½

[1] Following the introduction of unified grading, chief statistician and statistician grades were absorbed into Grades 5 and 7 respectively.

Statistics Division 1

Grade	1 April 1979	1 April 1984	1 April 1988
Grade 3	—	1	1
Chief Statistician	—	3	[1]—
Grade 5	—	—	3
Grade 7	—	—	11
Statistician	—	12	[1]—
Senior Assistant Statistician	—	4	1
Assistant Statistician	—		3
SEO	—	1	1
HEO	—	12	8
EO	—	19	16
AO	—	28	18½
AA	—	2	3
PS	—	4	4
Subtotal—Statistician Grades		19	4
Subtotal—Other Grades		67	65½
Total		86	69½

[1] Following the introduction of unified grading, chief statistician and statistician grades were absorbed into Grades 5 and 7 respectively.

Statistics Division 2

Grade	1 April 1979	1 April 1984	1 April 1988
Grade 3	—	1	1
Chief Statistician	—	3	[1]—
Grade 5	—	—	3
Grade 7	—	1	8½
Statistician	—	8	[1]—
Senior Assistant Statistician	—	2	3
Assistant Statistician	—	1	1
SEO	—	1	1
HEO	—	12	10
EO	—	24½	16
AO	—	42½	43½
AA	—	3	7
PS	—	4	4
Paperkeeper	—	1	1
Sub Total—Statistician Grades		14	4
Sub Total—Other Grades		90	95
Total		104	99

[1] Following the introduction of unified grading, chief statistician and statistician grades were absorbed into Grades 5 and 7 respectively.

Economics and statistics division

Grade	1 April 1979
G3	5
Chief Statistician	10
Statistician	33
Senior Assistant Statistician	13
Assistant Statistician	4
Senior Economic Adviser	9
Economic Adviser	21
Senior Economic Assistant	8
Economic Assistant	4
Grade 7	2
SEO	4
HEO	45
EO	80
AO	173
AA	11
SPS	1
Principal Research Officer	5
Senior Research Officer	1
Research Officer	1
PS	20
Paper Keeper	1
Higher Scientific Officer	1
Sub Total—Statistics Grades	60
Sub Total—Other Grades	392
Total	452

In 1979 the present statistical divisions of the Department formed part of the Economics and Statistics Division.

Office of Telecommunications

Grade	1 April 1985	1 April 1988
Grade 2	1	—
Grade 3	1	1
Grade 4	1	—
Grade 5	3	5
Grade 6	1	—
Grade 7	7	14·5
SEO	2	4
HEO	7	18
EO	9	14
AO	11	15
AA	11	19
Information Officer	1	1
Librarian	1	1
Assistant Librarian	—	1
SPS	1	1
PS	5	6
Typing Manager	—	1
Typist	4	5
Messenger	2	3
Reprographics Officer I	1	1
Telephonist	—	1
Total	69	111·5

Summary Totals

	1 April 1979	1 April 1984	1 April 1985	1 April 1988
Economics and Statistics Divisions	452			
Statistics Division 1		86		69½
Statistics Division 2		104		99
Business Statistics Office	1,035	751		648½
Office of Telecommunications			69	111½

Ethnic Monitoring Survey

Mr. Janner: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he expects the information obtained from the ethnic monitoring survey of his Department's staff completed in April to be analysed; and whether he will place a copy of that survey in the Library.

Mr. Butcher: The form of the analysis is still under discussion by the office of the Minister for the Civil Service with the national trade union side. We will proceed with the analysis when the discussions are completed. A copy of the analysis will be placed in the Library.

National Engineering Laboratory

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list the organisations which have submitted a bid to take over the National Engineering Laboratory, East Kilbride; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Butcher: My right hon. and learned Friend has received bids from a number of organisations interested in taking over the National Engineering Laboratory. Some of these organisations have asked not to be named, hence I do not propose to list them.

Textile Imports

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* showing, in ranked order, the value and proportion of textile imports into the United Kingdom, on a country of consignment basis, for the latest year for which figures are available, indicating whether or not each country is a signatory to the multi-fibre arrangement.

Mr. Alan Clark: The top 22 countries, representing nearly 90 per cent. of the total imports, from which textiles were consigned are shown in the table. A full list including the remaining 125 countries has been placed in the Library.

United Kingdom Imports of Textiles—December 1987

Country of Consignment	*£000s*	*Per cent.*
1 Federal Republic of Germany[1]	581,599	14·08
2 Italy[1]	437,328	10·59
3 Belgium/Luxembourg[1]	402,205	9·74
4 France[1]	275,118	6·66
5 Netherlands[1]	248,220	6·01
6 Irish Republic[1]	213,831	5·18
7 United States of America[1]	172,455	4·17
8 Portugal[1]	170,283	4·12
9 Japan[1]	150,798	3·65
10 Switzerland[1]	135,664	3·28
11 India[1]	104,815	2·54
12 Pakistan[1]	92,932	2·25
13 China[1]	83,461	2·02
14 Hong Kong[1]	79,887	1·93
15 Austria[1]	78,084	1·89
16 Turkey[1]	75,682	1·83
17 Denmark[1]	64,541	1·56
18 Australia	61,445	1·49
19 Spain[1]	60,882	1·47
20 New Zealand	59,273	1·43
21 South Africa	48,917	1·18
22 South Korea[1]	44,102	1·07

[1] Indicates a signatory to the multi-fibre arrangement.

Note:

Textiles are defined as Standard International Trade Classification Divisions 26 and 65.

All figures are provisional.

Source: Overseas Trade Statistics December 1987.

Commodity Prices

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* showing for each year from 1970 the average price index, taking 1970 as 100 of *(a)* cotton, *(b)* metals, *(c)* wool, *(d)* coffee and *(e)* all non-food agricultural products calculating all prices in constant 1987 United States dollars.

Mr. Alan Clark: I refer to my reply to the hon. Member on 17 May 1988 at column *384*. Data for 1987 are in the table:

World Export prices of selected primary commodities[1]

1970 = 100

	1987
Cotton	242
Non-ferrous Metals	186
Wool	249
Coffee	216
Non-food Agricultural Products	266

[1] Based on prices in US dollars.

Source: United Nations.

Single European Market

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what sums have been paid to date for radio, television and newspaper advertising on the current single European market campaign.

Mr. Maude: The estimated costs to the end of July of radio, television and newspaper advertising in support of the single European market campaign are about £56,000, £5,602,000 and £609,000 respectively.

Barlow Clowes

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list the names and nationalities of the directors of the Barlow Clowes companies which have recently collapsed.

Mr. Maude: The names of the directors of Barlow Clowes Gilt Managers Ltd. recorded at the companies registration office in June of this year were as follows:

P. Clowes
Mrs. P. M. Clowes
D. R. Tree
C. F. Newman
B. C. Osborn
M. Tariq
L. Hobbes

All are believed to be of British nationality.

Barlow Clowes International is registered in Gibraltar and information about it is not publicly available in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) what information his Department has concerning the amount of income derived by the Barlow Clowes International operations from *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* overseas sources;

(2) what information his Department has concerning the amount of income invested by the Barlow Clowes International operations in United Kingdom companies.

Mr. Maude: None, at this stage. Barlow Clowes International is in liquidation in Gibraltar and my hon. Friend may wish to seek information from the joint liquidators.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what percentage of the investors in Barlow Clowes international operations whose cases have recently been referred to him are resident within the United Kingdom.

Mr. Maude: The vast majority of letters received by my Department concerning investors who may have placed

money with Barlow Clowes International have involved persons resident in the United Kingdom. Less than 1 per cent. of cases put to the Department have involved persons resident overseas.

Airport Delays

Mr. French: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he has received any representations seeking compensation by holiday tour operators for holiday-makers who have experienced airport delays; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Butcher: I have had no representations from either tour operators or holidaymakers concerning compensation for recent delays experienced at United Kingdom airports. Whether or not a holidaymaker is entitled to compensation in these circumstances will depend on the terms of his contract with the tour operator or on the terms of his holiday insurance policy. Arrangements for holiday makers in the event of airport delays was one of the matters considered by the Office of Fair Trading in its recent review of the operation of the ABTA codes. The office will be publishing its report in the very near future.

Estate Agents

Mr. French: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what representations he has received concerning unprofessional conduct amongst estate agents; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Butcher: My Department has received a number of representations alleging unprofessional conduct by estate agents. The main areas of concern have been failure to disclose a personal interest in a transaction, inadequate or misleading descriptions of property, and excessive commission rates. The Office of Fair Trading, which is responsible for administering the Estate Agents Act 1979, has also received a number of representations and issued 12 banning orders against estate agents guilty of serious misconduct during 1987.

I have invited representatives of the main organisations with an interest in estate agency to meet me to discuss areas of current public concern.

Steel

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will publish a table indicating the steel-making capacity of each EEC member state at *(a)* 1979, *(b)* 1983 and *(c)* the latest date for which figures are available.

Mr. Atkins: The information requested is contained in the table:

Effective Steel Making Capacity (Production Potential) of EC Member States

	Million Crude Tonnes			
	1979	*1983*	*1986*	[1]*1987*
Belgium	19·7	17·0	13·6	13·6
Denmark	1·2	0·9	0·9	0·9
France	32·0	28·8	28·2	27·0
Greece	—	4·0	4·4	4·5
Irish Republic	0·1	0·3	0·3	0·3
Italy	37·0	39·6	35·4	35·5
Luxembourg	7·3	6·4	5·5	5·5
Netherlands	8·4	8·0	8·0	8·0
United Kingdom	28·9	24·5	22·6	23·0
West Germany	68·8	61·4	47·2	46·9
Portugal	—	—	0·8	0·8
Spain	—	—	22·0	22·7

[1]Figures for 1987 are forecasts.
Source: ECSC Investment Survey.

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will publish a table showing the number of employees in the steel industries of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development member states in *(a)* 1979, *(b)* 1982, *(c)* 1985 and *(d)* for the latest date for which figures are available.

Mr. Atkins: The information available is as follows:

Steel industry[1] employment in OECD countries

(thousands)

	1979	*1982*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*
West Germany	204·0	181·3	152·0	147·9	137·4
Belgium	49·0	43·1	35·6	32·5	28·9
Denmark	2·7	1·7	1·7	1·8	1·6
France	125·0	96·8	80·7	71·9	63·0
Ireland	0·7	0·7	0·6	0·5	0·6
Italy	98·0	93·9	71·1	68·9	65·1
Luxembourg	17·0	13·4	12·4	12·5	11·6
Netherlands	21·0	20·5	18·9	18·9	18·8
United Kingdom	162·0	81·9	60·7	56·9	55·0
Austria	39·4	37·4	34·0	32·0	..
Spain	87·4	76·5	64·7	52·2	..
Finland	10·2	10·3	8·3	..	..
Greece	8·5	8·0	4·2	4·3	..
Norway	4·9	4·5	3·9	3·8	..
Portugal	6·5	7·1	6·6	5·9	..
Sweden	44·8	33·6	31·1	29·9	..
Switzerland	3·9	3·4	2·6	2·4	..
Turkey	..	21·6	29·1	32·0	..
Canada	53·0	47·0	42·5	..	..
United States	478·5	323·6	237·5	220·8	..
Japan	281·5	268·5	259·4	251·3	..
Australia	47·0	41·2	29·7	30·1	..
New Zealand	1·7	..	..	..	..
Total	1,746·7	1,416·0	1,187·3	..	..

[1] Definition identical with that used in the treaty setting up the ECSC.
.. Not available.
Sources: OECD annual statistical reports on the iron and steel industry eurostat.

Export Licences

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what number of applications for export licences were received by his Department during the following periods *(a)* April to June 1986, *(b)* April to June 1987, and *(c)* April to June 1988.

Mr. Alan Clark: The figures were as follows:

	1986	*1987*	*1988*
Total applications for export licences received by the DTI in the three months April-June	23,358	25,496	26,211

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what targets he sets for the time, after which an applicant for an export licence should receive his licence.

Mr. Alan Clark: Straightforward applications to export goods to non-sensitive destinations should be granted or refused a licence within seven working days. About two thirds of the applications received by the Department of Trade and Industry fall into this category. Other applications, which may involve extensive consultation with other Government Departments and with COCOM partners in the case of certain export to Eastern Europe or China, take considerably longer. Where practicable, targets are set for these applications according to the nature of the goods, the proposed destination and end-user and the extent of the consultation necessary.

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what was the average length of time taken to process an export licence application, during the following periods *(a)* April to June 1986, *(b)* April to June 1987 and *(c)* April to June 1988.

Mr. Alan Clark: In the three periods stated, some 75,000 applications were received. Applications are handled case by case and details are recorded manually. Information on average processing times could not be provided except at disproportionate cost.

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many staff in his Department were engaged wholly or mainly on export licensing work on the following dates *(a)* 1 April 1986, *(b)* 1 April 1987 and *(c)* 1 April 1988.

Mr. Alan Clark: The numbers of staff up to and including grade 7 (principal) engaged wholly or mainly on export licensing work were:

April 1986	*April 1987*	*April 1988*
52	52	56

Notes:
1. In May 1988 an additional seven staff were posted to export licensing.
2. The figures do not include DTI technical staff who provide technical ratings and assessments of certain applications.

Ranks Hovis McDougall

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will refer the current bid for Ranks Hovis McDougall to the Office of Fair Trading with a view to reference to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: The proposed acquisition by Goodman Fielder of Ranks Hovis McDougall is being looked at by the Director General of Fair Trading under the provisions of the Fair Trading Act 1973. He will advise my right hon. and noble Friend in the normal way on the question of reference to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission in due course.

HOTOL

Mr. Page: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he expects to come to a decision on prospects for HOTOL; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The Government provided 50 per cent. funding to enable proof of concept studies of HOTOL to be carried out. These studies were completed earlier this year since when the two main companies involved. Rolls-Royce and British Aerospace, have been analysing the results. I have since held further talks with the companies. The scale of funding required to develop HOTOL or any similar concept to eventual production would be far too great for the United Kingdom to contemplate on a national basis, particularly since only a relatively small number of such launch vehicles are likely to be required. I have, therefore, concluded that any further development must take place on the basis of international collaboration. The Government will be supporting efforts by United Kingdom companies to find suitable collaborators, but will not be providing any further financial support for the foreseeable future. In the meantime I expect the United Kingdom, as an ESA member and a participant in earlier Ariane programmes, to have reliable access to ESA launchers which promise to be competitive throughout the 1990s.

Alcoholic Beverages

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is his Department's estimate of the anticipated size of the volume of the European market in alcoholic beverages, by major categories of beverage, following the introduction of the single market in 1992.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I have been asked to reply.

The Department does not have estimates of the anticipated size of the European market in alcoholic beverages in 1992. However, the figures in the table, which are based on industry estimates, provide an indication of the size of the market in 1986:

	Consumption in EC.12, 1986 million litres
Beer	25,000
Wine	14,000
Spirits[1]	600

[1] 100 per cent. alcohol.

DEFENCE

Low Flying

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many flights (i) by British military airplanes, (ii) with British military pilots and (iii) with British crew, would be affected in the event of the Parliament of the Rhineland palatinate state deciding to cancel all military low flights below 300 m.

Mr. Freeman: Low-flying training, other than that which is part of a major exercise, is not planned in advance but carried out on a day-to-day basis as weather and other considerations permit. An answer to this hypothetical question is therefore not possible.

Ocean Surveillance

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if the proposed joint ocean surveillance information centre is to be connected to the SSIXS communications system.

Mr. Ian Stewart: It would not be in the national interest for me to comment.

Nuclear Materials (Movements)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if the movement of nuclear materials by his Department is covered by the Department of Transport's code of practice for the carriage of radioactive materials by road; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The safety arrangements for the movement of defence nuclear materials are designed to be fully consistent with the relevant civil regulations.

"British Defence Policy 1988-89"

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Sheffield, Brightside (Mr. Blunkett) on 26 May, *Official Report*, column *327*, how many copies of the booklet "British Defence Policy 1988-89" had been distributed at the latest available date; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Approximately 69,000.

Historic Warship Wrecks

Mr. Onslow: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what steps he now intends to take to ensure that antiquities recovered from the site of the warship Invincible, sunk in the Solent in 1758, will be preserved in museums in accordance with the policy of Her Majesty's Government as outlined in the answer of the Secretary of State for Transport on 8 March, *Official Report*, column *155*, instead of being offered for public sale; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what action he intends to take to provide for the proper management of the sites of historic warship wrecks in British waters; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: The interest of the Ministry of Defence in the excavation of shipwrecks is limited to wrecks of warships of which the Ministry of Defence is the legal owner.

The Department of Transport gives licences under the 1973 Act to excavate all controlled sites such as Invincible and other warship wrecks in this category. The Department of Transport oversees the conduct of the salvors. The Ministry of Defence has a right to reclaim all salvaged property from such controlled sites at a price agreed with the licensed salvors in the form of a salvage award.

As a matter of current policy the Ministry of Defence does not pay such salvage awards as they are not an appropriate charge to Defence votes. The items salvaged are therefore the property of the licensed salvors to dispose of. I understand that the salvors of Invincible offered the items recovered to Chatham historical dockyard trust, which purchased a representative sample. The balance was sold by the salvors at auction.

The law governing recovery of antiquities from wrecks is a matter for the Secretary of State for Transport and I will draw my right hon. Friend's attention to the concern of the right hon. Member over this matter.

Royal Naval Armaments Depots

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has concluded his review of the work of the Royal Naval armaments depots at Trecwn and Milford Haven; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: As my hon. Friend will know, the MOD has for some time been studying the future of several defence activities in Wales. These studies have now been concluded.

A study has recently been completed into the future roles and tasks of RNADs Milford Haven and Trecwn. I am releasing today a consultative document, which concludes that RNAD Milford Haven should be closed, because the task allotted to it has substantially declined in recent years. The work force, trades unions and local authorities will be given a full opportunity to comment on the document before I decide what the depot's future will be. The reduction of the task given to the Trecwn district will also affect RNAD Trecwn which is to be the subject of further study. Meanwhile, I am arranging for copies of the consultative document to be placed in the Library of the House.

A review has also been completed recently on the scope for rationalisation of the various single service forms and publications stores. I have now decided, subject to consultation with the trades unions, that all the stores will be transferred from their existing locations to form a centralised organisation at the former RNSD at Llangennech. The stores are currently located at the Central Ordnance depot, Donnington, Royal Arsenal west, Woolwich, and Her Majesty's Naval base, Portsmouth. The proposal is to colocate all activities at the former RNSD by early 1991, leading to a projected annual saving of about £1·2 million. The colocation of the forms and publication stores at Llangennech should provided around 250 new jobs in the area, most of which would be filled through local recruitment.

Radioactive Waste

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what radioactive waste is stored at RAF Fylingdales; and what steps are taken in relation to its safety.

Mr. Sainsbury: The only radioactive waste stored at RAF Fylingdales consists of old radar system valves, which contain an extremely low level of radioactivity. This

is regularly monitored, and results of this monitoring confirm that there is no hazard to station personnel or members of the public from that source.

Western European Union

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with other North Atlantic Treaty Organisation defence ministers concerning the future role and possible expansion of the Western European Union.

Mr. Ian Stewart: My right hon. Friend has had a number of discussions with NATO colleagues on the WEU, both bilaterally and in multilateral fora. He attended a meeting of WEU Foreign and Defence Ministers in the Hague in October 1987 at which the platform on European security interests was approved, and a further WEU meeting in April this year at which it was agreed to issue an invitation to Spain and Portugal to begin discussions about possible accession to the organisation.

Public Relations

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what is the latest figure for the number of staff presently employed in the press and public relations office of his Department;

(2) what is the latest figure for the number of staff presently employed in the press and public relations office of each of the armed forces.

Mr. Ian Stewart *[holding answer 21 July 1988]:* A total of 206 staff are currently employed in the defence public relations staff. These include staff in single service headquarters as well as in joint headquarters and in the central defence staffs of the Ministry of Defence.

RAF Fleet Aircraft

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will outline the problems which have been encountered recently with the turbines and compressor fans of RAF fleet aircraft.

Mr. Ian Stewart *[holding answer 20 July 1988]:* A wide range of technical problems can arise during the operation in service of aircraft engines. If the hon. Member wishes to specify any particular problems he has in mind I should be happy to consider a further reply.

RAF Fleet (Resparring)

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, why the entire RAF fleet was recently resparred; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart *[holding answer 20 July 1988]:* It was not.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Soviet Union (Cultural Exchanges)

79. **Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many cultural exchanges with the Soviet Union are expected to take place in the current year; in what areas of artistic activity; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: The following major events have taken or are planned to take place in the current year:

	Event
British events in the Soviet Union	
1988	
May	Tour by the BBC Welsh Symphony Orchestra (Leningrad, Moscow, Novosibirsk)
May-June	Tour by the National Theatre Company
August-October	Exchange of Exhibitions between the National Gallery and the Pushkin and Hermitage Museums
September-November	Francis Bacon Exhibition
October	British Film Week
Soviet events in the United Kingdom	
1988	
March-April	Tour by the Novosibirsk Symphony Orchestra
March-April	Tour by the Red Army Ensemble
May	Maly Theatre of Leningrad (Riverside Studios)
May	Concert by the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra (Barbican)
Summer Season	The Moscow State Circus
July-August	Tour by the Moscow Classical Ballet
August	The Kirov Ballet Company
August-October	Exchange of Exhibitions between the National Gallery and the Pushkin and Hermitage Museums
October	Soviet Week in Birmingham
November	Tour by the Moscow Radio Symphony Orchestra

International Debt

Mr. Skinner: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next proposes to meet other Foreign Ministers to discuss the problems of international debt; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 4 May, at column 459.

Commonwealth Secretary-General

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next plans to meet the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth; and what subjects he plans to discuss.

Mrs. Chalker: While my right hon. and learned Friend regularly meets the Secretary-General informally, he has at present no plans for a formal meeting.

Falkland Islands

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has any plans to visit the Falklands.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend has no current plans to do so.

Chile

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had recently with the Government of the United States regarding the current situation in Chile.

Mrs. Chalker: I refer the hon. Member to my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State's reply

of 6 July 1988 to the hon. Members for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore), for Edinburgh, South (Mr. Griffiths), and for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman).

Iran-Iraq War

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will raise at the Security Council the current situation in the Iran-Iraq conflict; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: Following the Iranian acceptance of UNSC resolution 598, the UN Secretary-General has begun work with Iranian and Iraqi representatives aimed at the early and full implementation of the resolution, the first step of which is a ceasefire. The Secretary-General is dispatching a small technical team to discuss the modalities of implementing that ceasefire.

We, as a permanent member of the Security Council, have pledged our utmost support for the Secretary-General in his efforts to bring an end to the conflict.

Central America

Dr. Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Government of the United States of America regarding recent developments in the Central American peace process.

Mrs. Chalker: We have regular discussions with the United States Government on a wide range of issues including developments in the Central American peace process.

Ethnic Monitoring

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what was the grade of the 2 per cent. of respondents in *(a)* the diplomatic wing and *(b)* the aid wing who classified themselves as coming from an ethnic minority.

Mrs. Chalker: I refer the hon. and learned Gentleman to the reply my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary gave him on 22 June.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will place a copy of his updated ethnic monitoring programmes in the Library.

Mrs. Chalker: Our ethnic monitoring programmes are updated regularly as new information is received. Up-to-date figures for the FCO will be included in a further Cabinet Office survey report covering the whole of the Civil Service, which will be published later this year.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he expects processing of applications from the advertisement in the *Voice* to be completed; whether he will then inform the House of the results thereof; and what other newspapers with a large ethnic minority readership he uses for the advertisement of vacancies in his Department.

Mrs. Chalker: The processing of these applications is unlikely to be completed before the end of the year. There are no plans to inform the House of the results.

Both the diplomatic and development wings have advertised in the "South London Press". The development wing has also used the North London Group of newspapers, which include the "Islington Gazette" "The Wood Green Journal", "The Hornsey Journal", and "The Tottenham Journal".

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in what quasi-governmental bodies or other organisations under his aegis he has authority to request or require the carrying out of ethnic monitoring exercises in accordance with the code of the Commission for Racial Equality; and what ethnic monitoring and equal opportunities exercises have been carried out by each such department.

Mrs. Chalker: Non-departmental public bodies sponsored by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office are responsible for arrangements for recruitment and personnel management of staff they employ. Bodies are encouraged to be equal opportunities employers, and to pursue practices in the code of racial equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission. No central records are held of ethnic monitoring and equal opportunities exercises carried out by these bodies.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in which of the grades DS 6 to 7 each of the people from ethnic minorities are employed.

Mrs. Chalker: To provide this information would break the code of practice agreed with the Council of Civil Service Unions about the confidentiality of ethnic origin information, as it might lead to indentification of individual officers.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in which grade the person from ethnic minorities in grades DS 1 to 5 is employed.

Mrs. Chalker: To provide the information requested would normally breach the code of practice agreed with the Council of Civil Service Unions about the confidentiality of ethnic origin information on staff in post, as it could lead to identification of individual officers.

I regret to add that in this case the officer in question has died since the compilation of the statistics included in the answer my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary gave the hon. and learned Gentleman on 22 June.

Equal Opportunities

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the ethnic classification and gender of the equal opportunity officer in the diplomatic wing appointed in June 1988.

Mrs. Chalker: The equal opportunity officer is white and female.

Hong Kong Stock Exchange

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports have now been made to his Department over the events surrounding the Hong Kong stock exchange crash in October 1987; and if he will make a statement on any action to be taken by the Hong Kong Government.

Mrs. Chalker: The Hong Kong Government have been in close and regular touch with us about developments since the events of October 1987. We welcome the recommendations for reform made by the Securities Review Committee, appointed by the Hong Kong Government, in its report published on 2 June. The Hong Kong Government, together with the industry itself, are acting as quickly as possible to implement the recommendations. An independent statutory regulatory body, the Securities and Futures Commission, is to be established as soon as the necessary legislation can be introduced. The Hong Kong stock exchange has just adopted important constitutional reforms which will make its governing body more broadly based and representative. We are confident that this prompt and decisive response will help to maintain and enhance Hong Kong's reputation as an international financial centre.

Broadcasting Exhibition

Mr. Temple-Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if his Department has considered an application for an exhibition relating to broadcasting to the world to be displayed in the Upper Waiting Hall.

Mrs. Chalker: We understand that, under procedures agreed by the Services Committee, arrangements have been made with the authorities of the House for this exhibition to be held in the Upper Waiting Hall for a week from 7 November.

Diplomatic Relations

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs with which member countries of the United Nations the United Kingdom does not have full and normal diplomatic relations.

Mrs. Chalker: We do not have full and normal diplomatic relations with the following member states of the United Nations:

The People's Socialist Republic of Albania
The Argentine Republic
Cambodia
Libya
Syria

We do not have diplomatic relations with the Kingdom of Bhutan, but maintain friendly contacts and conduct official business with its embassy in New Delhi.

Kampuchea

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has received regarding the present situation in Kampuchea; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: We have received a number of inquiries from Members of Parliament and the public about our policy on Cambodia. Our general policy was set out by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State in the Foreign Affairs debate on 30 June. We welcome the talks between the parties to the dispute that are due to take place in Indonesia on 25 July and hope that they will in due course lead to a peaceful settlement of the problem.

Nicaragua

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if Her Majesty's Government will assign a full-time ambassador to Nicaragua, based in Managua; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: We have no plans to make further appointments to the embassy in Managua for the time being, but diplomatic staffing levels at all posts overseas are kept under review.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has any plans to visit Nicaragua; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend has no plans at present to visit Nicaragua.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what has been *(a)* the staffing and *(b)* the running costs of Her Majesty's embassy in Nicaragua in each year since 1979.

Mrs. Chalker: *(a)* There was no resident diplomatic staff at Her Majesty's embassy, Managua from 1979 to 1984. A resident chargé d'affaires was appointed in mid-1984. A second secretary was appointed in late 1986, and a third secretary in February 1988. In addition, Her Majesty's ambassador at San Jose, and three/four members of his diplomatic staff have been and continue to be accredited to Managua. A defence attaché and a first secretary are accredited from Panama City.

(b) Since the embassy at Managua is supervised by that in San Jose, the two posts are accounted for jointly. Because many members of the embassy at San Jose have dual accreditation, it is difficult to isolate those costs pertaining only to Managua. The total costs for San Jose since 1983 (the earliest year for which the figures are available) have ranged from around £300,000 to around £500,000 of which we estimate that about 25 per cent. is attributable to Managua.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many visits have been made to Nicaragua by Her Majesty's ambassador accredited to that country in each year since 1979.

Mrs. Chalker: Approximate figures since 1982, the earliest year for which figures are available, are as follows:

	Visits
1982	4
1983	7
1984	6
1985	9
1986	5
1987	[1]6
1988	4

[1] And one by charge in San Jose.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what has been the cost in each year for travel by Her Majesty's ambassador to Nicaragua from Costa Rica.

Mrs. Chalker: Estimated figures since 1982, the earliest year for which figures are available, are:

	£
1982	828·87
1983	2,523·94
1984	2,754·87

	£
1985	2,576·04
1986	1,466·71
1987	[1]1,622·14
1988	1,456·54

[1] Plus £400 for one visit by charge.

Central American Parliament

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations have been made to the Governments of Costa Rica and El Salvador regarding the ratification of the Central American Parliament treaty.

Mrs. Chalker: We and our European partners have on a number of occasions called on all the signatories of the Esquipulas II peace agreement to fulfil their outstanding obligations under the agreement without delay. Ratification of the Central American Parliament treaty is, of course, a matter for the national Parliaments rather than Governments.

Endangered Species

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to his answer of 19 July, if he will give details of the 143 seizures of endangered species made by the Hong Kong authorities in the first six months of 1988.

Mrs. Chalker: Details of the 143 seizures of endangered species made by the Hong Kong authorities in the first six months of 1988 are:

Species	
Stuffed Sea Turtles	21
Parrots	12 (live)
Pangolin Meat	40 Kg
Birds of Prey and Owls	18 (live); 20 (dead)
Elephant	28 tusks: 200 Kg cut pieces: 1 skin
Deer Antler	29 pieces
Wild Cats	2 carcases: 430 skins and 10 parts
Alligator/Crocodile	4 skins and 11 stuffed animals
Asiatic Bony Tongue Fish	14 (live)
Giant Salamander	1 (live)
Lizard/Snake Skin	3,767 pieces
Otter Skin	1,020 pieces
Seal Skin	1 piece
Butterfly	8

NORTHERN IRELAND

64 Main Road, Cloughey

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether a repair grant has now been approved for the dwelling at 64 Main road, Cloughey; and when this dwelling was constructed.

Mr. Needham: This is a matter for the Northern Ireland Housing Executive but I am advised by the chairman of the executive that an application for repairs grant in respect of 64 Main road, Cloughey, was approved by the executive in March 1988. In the course of processing the application, the executive was led to believe that the dwelling was constructed before 1957 and, therefore, qualified for consideration for grant-aid. It subsequently transpired that the dwelling was constructed in 1964.

Residential Care Homes

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will give the number of voluntary, private and local authority residential care homes for elderly people in Northern Ireland; and, in each case, what is the total number of places available.

Mr. Needham: At 31 December 1986, the latest date for which figures are available, the position was as follows:

Type	*Number of homes*	*Available places*
Voluntary	46	1,239
Private	39	388
Statutory[1]	82	3,506

[1] In Northern Ireland local authorities have no responsibility for statutory residential homes: these are provided and operated by the four Health and Social Services Boards.

Secretary of State's Pleasure

Mr. Hayward: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he is now in a position to make a further statement about Secretary of State pleasure cases in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Tom King: The highest total of persons detained during the Secretary of State's pleasure for murder was reached in 1982, when for a time there were 66 such cases; at the beginning of 1986 there were 55. There are now 33, including one sentenced only on 1 July this year. Of these six have been given provisional release dates, and the judiciary are being consulted (as required by law) in another three cases about the possibility of fixing release dates.

Of the remaining 17 prisoners who have served more than eight years and therefore meet the existing criterion for a first review, one has recently been sentenced to a fixed term of imprisonment for offences related to the Maze escape. Review dates have been fixed by the life sentence review board for all the remaining prisoners. Four of the cases are due for review before the end of this year, seven in February or April next year, four later in 1989 and one in April 1990. Two of the prisoners whose reviews are due in February and June 1989 will have them brought forward to the end of this year in consequence of the review of special category prisoners serving indeterminate sentences which I announced in reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Tatton (Mr. Hamilton) on 7 June at column *464*.

Having given very careful thought to the particular circumstances of this group of prisoners, my right hon. Friend the Minister of State and I have decided to bring forward the timetable of reviews so that all the prisoners who have served more than eight years will have their cases reviewed by the life sentence review board before the end of 1988.

Rural Wales (NPCI Package)

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what account he will take of the NPCI package for rural Wales under the regional fund in his considerations about an integrated rural development plan for Northern Ireland;

(2) what consideration the Government have given to the Hume resolution in the European Parlianent on an

integrated rural development programme for Northern Ireland, the Maher report outlining and recommending such a programme and the European Commission's response to those proposals; and whether the Government have any plans to pursue such a programme.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 20 July 1988]:* In considering ways in which to maximise the benefits to Northern Ireland of funds available from the European Community account is taken of the proposal supported by the European Parliament for an integrated rural development programme and of other relevant proposals.

Housing

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the breakdown of housing stock by percentage and type in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 21 July 1988]:* Details of housing stock by tenure type are given in table 1.2B of "Housing Statistics 87" published by the Department of the Environment (Northern Ireland), a copy of which is available in the Library.

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of the housing stock is terraced housing in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 21 July 1988]:* Details of housing stock by type of building are given in tables 9.2 and 9.3 of "Housing Statistics 87" published by the Department of the Environment (Northern Ireland), a copy of which is available in the Library.

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of the population own their own home in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 21 July 1988]:* The information is not available in the form requested. From reports of the Northern Ireland census 1981 there were 742,719 persons living in owner-occupied acommodation. This represents approximately 50 per cent. of the usually resident population as enumerated in the 1981 census.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Remand Prisoners

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many hours were spent by police officers on the care and custody of remand prisoners in the latest available year.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that a total of 1,240,721 man hours were spent by his officers on the care and custody of remand prisoners in the year ending 31 May 1988. Corresponding figures for other forces could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Passports

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action his Department takes to ensure that British passports, reported lost by holidaymakers, are not subsequently used as the basis for forged passports to gain unlawful entry into the United Kingdom.

Mr. Renton: Security features are incorporated in United Kingdom passports to ensure that any attempts to facilitate their use by another person, through alteration of personal details or substitution of photographs, will be readily apparent on examination of the document at United Kingdom ports of entry.

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many European Community countries have chosen to adopt the common format passport; in how many variations of colour, by country, they will be printed; and when, by country, they will be issued.

Mr. Renton: The majority of the 12 EC member states are already issuing national passports in the EC common format. The United Kingdom will begin to do so next month, and the Netherlands, Spain and Portugal are expected to follow before the end of the year. I understand that, the passports yet to be introduced in common with those already in use, will all comply with the terms of the relevant EC resolution, which specifies that the covers shall be burgundy red.

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will state the monthly demand for passports over each of the past five years;

(2) what was the demand for British passports in 1979; and what is the current demand.

Mr. Renton: The monthly demand for passports 1983-88 is given in the table:

Passports issued

	1983	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*	*1988*
January	122,263	119,037	117,566	132,122	121,591	141,213
February	181,634	185,082	145,259	176,020	192,834	215,925
March	239,562	235,821	188,514	186,379	255,694	270,641
April	228,472	204,945	191,373	270,540	205,582	269,590
May	244,103	222,498	229,189	270,304	172,613	300,501
June	239,578	226,798	194,712	231,996	212,832	276,937
July	226,359	217,231	219,992	257,450	235,608	—
August	172,536	166,461	157,494	178,753	211,763	—
September	106,761	102,644	109,202	128,267	150,137	—
October	83,213	93,064	101,594	116,565	98,602	—
November	82,983	83,116	83,300	91,782	100,419	—
December	52,280	50,608	60,848	70,366	83,545	—
	1,979,744	1,907,305	1,799,043	2,110,544	2,041,220	1,474,807

The annual demand for British passports in terms of the number of passports issued in 1979, 1987 and 1988 to the end of June, is as follows:

	Number
1979	1,809,091
1987	2,041,220
[1]1988	1,474,807

[1] January to June.

I regret that the annual figures for passports issued during 1979, 1983, 1985 and 1987 given in my reply to a question on 23 June at column 679 from my hon. Friend the Member for Barrow and Furness (Mr. Franks) were incorrect. I shall write to the hon. Member when I have established how the errors arose.

Home Defence

Mr. Thorne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what criteria are used in determining the degree of protection provided to the general public in his home defence and civil protection policy.

Mr. John Patten: The level of civil defence protection must be proportionate to the risk of war in Europe, which is presently considered to be very low. Policy development in this area is based upon section 7 of the emergency planning guidance to local authorities, copies of which are in the Library.

Mr. Thorne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what provision he has made for the building, and conversion of existing buildings to offer shelter and protection to the general public in time of war;

(2) what protection is available to the general public against (i) nuclear and (ii) chemical attack in time of war; and if these include the issue of respirators and protective clothing to all citizens.

Mr. John Patten: Public provision of purpose-built shelters cannot be justified because of the high cost. Successive Governments have concluded that people should stay in their homes, using and improving the available protection. Local authorities have a duty to plan for the use of existing structures as shelter for people who would be unable to achieve useful protection in their homes. In the event of a war crisis, advice would be given on expedient measures to improve protection in the home. The manual "Domestic Nuclear Shelters—Technical Guidance", copies of which are in the Library, gives details of designs for purpose-built and improvised shelters. In respect of chemical attack, studies into effects and protective measures are continuing.

Immigration

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many children *(a)* under the age of five years, *(b)* between the ages of five and 15 years, and *(c)* between the ages of 16 and 18 years, were detained under Immigration Act powers by individual Immigration Act detention centres in each of the years 1985, 1986 and 1987;

(2) what was the average length of time spent in detention by the children detained under the Immigration Act powers *(a)* under the age of five years *(b)* between the ages of five and 15 years and *(c)* between the ages of 16 and 18 years in each of the years in 1985, 1986 and 1987;

(3) how many children *(a)* under the age of five years *(b)* between the ages of five and 15 years and *(c)* between the ages of 16 and 18 years were detained under the Immigration Act powers by nationality in each of the years 1985, 1986 and 1987.

Mr. Renton: The information requested is not centrally recorded and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions have been brought under the Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Act 1987.

Mr. Renton: None. The Act creates a liability which is pursuable in the civil courts: no such proceedings have yet been instituted.

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications for *(a)* single entry and *(b)* multiple entry visit visas were (i) received, (ii) granted and (iii) refused at each post in *(x)* the Indian subcontinent, *(y)* Ghana and *(z)* Nigeria in each quarter of 1987 and the first quarter of 1988; and what was the delay between application and interview of those whose applications were felt to need a second or long interview at each of the above posts in (1) January 1987, (2) June 1987, (3) January 1988 and (4) the nearest available date.

Mr. Renton *[holding answer 20 July 1988]:* The information available on applications for a visit visa is given in the following tables. Separate information on applications for single entry and multiple entry visas is not available.

Table 1 Persons applying for a visit visa to the United Kingdom

Number of persons

Post	*Applications*		
	Newly received[1]	*Granted*[2]	*Refused initially*
Dhaka			
1987			
1st quarter	1,600	1,130	370
2nd quarter	2,770	2,070	490
3rd quarter	2,700	1,970	480
4th quarter	1,710	1,190	320
Year	8,790	6,360	1,670
1988			
1st quarter	2,020	1,410	380
New Delhi			
1987			
1st quarter	6,680	5,590	590
2nd quarter	14,640	13,490	1,240
3rd quarter	11,000	9,620	1,050
4th quarter	6,380	5,410	750
Year	38,700	34,100	3,620
1988			
1st quarter	7,120	5,740	800
Bombay			
1987			
1st quarter	6,540	5,910	120
2nd quarter	17,820	17,000	360
3rd quarter	10,900	10,120	340
4th quarter	5,390	4,980	280
Year	40,660	38,020	1,100
1988			
1st quarter	6,650	6,230	260

Post	Applications: Newly received[1]	Applications: Granted[2]	Refused initially
Calcutta			
1987			
1st quarter	1,040	1,010	10
2nd quarter	3,000	29,70	10
3rd quarter	2,340	2,300	50
4th quarter	860	820	30
Year	7,240	7,100	90
1988			
1st quarter	880	850	20
Madras			
1987			
1st quarter	1,580	1,490	40
2nd quarter	3,390	3,320	50
3rd quarter	2,720	2,640	30
4th quarter	1,100	1,060	30
Year	8,800	8,500	150
1988			
1st quarter	1,300	1,280	10
Islamabad			
1987			
1st quarter	5,880	4,510	590
2nd quarter	11,680	9,080	1,530
3rd quarter	8,780	6,350	1,760
4th quarter	5,240	3,330	1,340
Year	31,590	23,260	5,230
1988			
1st quarter	5,650	4,000	1,480
Karachi			
1987			
1st quarter	4,330	3,870	400
2nd quarter	9,990	9,170	480
3rd quarter	7,340	6,230	710
4th quarter	3,700	2,920	540
Year	25,270	22,200	2,130
1988			
1st quarter	4,000	3,310	450
Accra			
1987			
1st quarter	2,620	1,700	740
2nd quarter	2,600	1,990	530
3rd quarter	3,540	2,910	650
4th quarter	1,490	1,320	180
Year	10,240	7,920	2,100
1988			
1st quarter	1,430	1,180	160
Lagos			
1987			
1st quarter[3]	3,310	3,060	170
2nd quarter	14,550	12,300	1,060
3rd quarter	14,500	12,940	970
4th quarter	10,490	9,080	900
Year[3]	42,850	37,380	3,100
1988			
1st quarter	9,430	8,380	710
Kaduna			
1987			
1st quarter[3]	2,620	2,360	70
2nd quarter	2,200	1,870	110
3rd quarter	2,530	2,270	160
4th quarter	1,690	1,480	190
Year[3]	9,040	7,980	530
1988			
1st quarter	1,470	1,280	120

[1] Including applications subsequently withdrawn.
[2] Granted initially or on appeal.
[3] From 1 February 1987 when the visa requirement for Nigerians was introduced.

Table 2 Waiting time for persons applying for a visit visa who required a lengthy interview

Number of days

Post	Waiting time for persons interviewed at end of period: Dec. 1986	June 1987	Dec. 1987	May 1988
Dhaka	—	—	—	—
New Delhi	10	—	—	—
Bombay	5	4	1	14
Calcutta	—	—	—	—
Madras	3	3	2	—
Islamabad	—	—	—	—
Karachi	—	—	—	—
Accra	14	5	2	[1]13
Lagos	[2]	1	1	1
Kaduna	[2]	—	—	—

— Same day.
[1] Figure for end of April 1988.
[2] Visa requirement for Nigerians was not introduced until 1 February 1987.

Rapists (AIDS)

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of the convicted rapists who have been paroled in the last four years were suffering from AIDS when paroled.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: None to our knowledge.

Police Helicopter Landing Pads (South Yorkshire)

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many emergency police helicopter landing pads there are in south Yorkshire for use in emergencies; where they are sited; and if prior permission was sought from local authorities or private landowners.

Mr. John Patten: The following 23 locations have been identified by South Yorkshire police as sites which could be used in emergencies by helicopters hired by the force:

Barnsley District General Hospital
Rotherham District General Hospital
Royal Hallamshire Hospital, Sheffield
Northern General Hospital, Sheffield
Lodge Moor Hospital, Sheffield
Doncaster Airport
Doncaster Racecourse
RAF Finningley
Adwick School, Doncaster
Bentley High Street Middle School
Queen's Ground, Barnsley
Recreation Ground, Park Avenue, Panistone
Dorothy Hyman Stadium, Cudworth
Rockingham Sports Ground, Hoyland Common
Herringthorpe Valley Playing Fields
(rear of pavilion Boswell street side)
Aven Tools, Maltby
Thomas Rotherham College, Rotherham
Phoenix Golf Club, Rotherham
Tinsley Park Golf Club, Sheffield
Balfour Darwin's Sports Ground, Hathersage road, Sheffield
Laycock's, Archer road, Sheffield
(access to site off Periwood Road)
Niagara Sports Ground, Sheffield
Shirecliffe Heliport

I understand that the owners of these sites have agreed to them being used by helicopters operated by or for the police force.

Discretionary Life Sentences

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action his Department is taking in response to the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights on 2 March 1987 concerning discretionary life sentences.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The implications of the judgment are still under consideration. Further applications by life sentence prisoners are awaiting hearing by the European Commission of Human Rights and we shall take account of the progress of those applications in considering whether any amendments may be necessary to our law and practice.

Prison Officers (Ethnic Background)

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what monitoring of the ethnic background of prison officers takes place in prisons in England and Wales; and what information he has available on the ethnic backgrounds of prison officers.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: In a series of regional surveys all Home Office staff, including prison officers, were recently invited to complete a questionnaire. A total of 0·6 per cent. of those in prison service unified grades VI to VIII who responded stated that they were of ethnic minority origin. A further questionnaire is being sent to all those who did not respond.

Citizenship

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the current backlog of applications for British citizenship; and how many letters of application remain unopened.

Mr. Renton: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Max Madden) on 20 July at column *650*. The number of applications outstanding at 30 June was approximately 260,000.

Political Asylum

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will show as a table in the *Official Report*, for each year from 1979 until the latest available year, the proportion of people seeking political asylum in the United Kingdom who were either granted full refugee status or exceptional leave to remain;

(2) if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* showing, for each year since 1979 aggregated, the numbers of people seeking political asylum in the United Kingdom on a country of origin basis, showing the proportion each constitutes of the total number of people so applying;

(3) if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* showing, for each year from 1979 until the latest year for which figures are available *(a)* the number of persons applying for political asylum in the United Kingdom and *(b)* the statistics in *(a)* expressed as an index with 1983 = 100.

Mr. Renton: Information for the years 1979 to 1987 on the numbers of applications for refugee status, grants of refugee status, and grants of exceptional leave to remain, analysed by nationality, is published in tables 1 to 3 of Home Office statistical bulletin "Refugee Statistics, United Kingdom, 1987" (issue 16/88), copies of which are in the Library. More detailed analyses by nationality are published in tables 6 and 7 of this bulletin and corresponding tables in the similar bulletins for 1985 and 1986 (issues 12/86 and 13/87 respectively).

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many representations by hon. Members regarding individual applications for political asylum have not been accepted as sufficient to obtain a stay of removal since 3 March 1987;

(2) if he will show on a monthly basis from January 1986 the percentage of applications for political asylum which had been rejected which were then referred to the United Kingdom Immigrants Advisory Service.

Mr. Renton: No central record is kept of cases in these categories.

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people who had been refused political asylum in the United Kingdom and decided to challenge the decision through the courts have been deported before all legal proceedings were completed, since 3 March 1987.

Mr. Renton: No central record is kept of legal proceedings following the refusal of asylum. There can be no guarantee that an applicant will be allowed to remain in this country whilst all possible proceedings are pursued.

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish a table in the *Official Report*, showing, for the latest year for which comparable figures are available, in ranked order, on a per capita basis for each member country of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the number of applications received by each of those countries for political asylum.

Mr. Renton: Full information is not available in the form requested. Some information about asylum applications in Western European countries was given in response to a question from my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence) on 5 July at column *502*. Information on the population of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries is available from a number of published sources including the "United Nations Demographic Yearbook", a copy of which is in the Library.

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the effects of the operation of the Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Act 1987 on the ability of people who genuinely wish to seek political asylum in the United Kingdom to do so.

Mr. Renton: We do not believe that the Act will stop refugees finding safety and coming to this country when it is the most appropriate place of refuge. In the past the great majority of genuine asylum applications have arrived here without resorting to forged documents.

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if, pursuant to the reply given on 4 July, *Official Report*, column *418*, his Department has yet sent quarterly asylum statistics to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Mr. Renton: Officials have now written to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. I am placing a copy of the letter, with tables attached, in the Library.

Refugees

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received regarding "Charter 87: A Charter for Refugees"; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: Representatives of Charter 87 have corresponded extensively with me and officials. I met a delegation in March. A number of hon. Members have also written on their behalf. Many of the points in the charter are in line with the Government's present policy and practice. Our main disagreement is with the proposal of a full, in-country right of appeal for all asylum applicants at ports. We remain convinced that this would lead to increased abuse of the asylum process.

Magistrates' Clerks

Mr. French: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received about the resignation of magistrates' court clerks and their subsequent employment by the Crown prosecution service; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: Representations have been received from justices' clerks and others about losses of court clerks, especially those qualified as solicitor or barrister, and some of these have made particular reference to staff leaving for employment in the Crown Prosecution Service. I understand that figures collected by the joint negotiating committee for magistrates' courts staff indicate that 19 court clerks left the magistrates courts service to take up posts in the Crown Prosecution Service in the year ending 31 March 1988. This represents 1·5 per cent. of the complement of approximately 1,250.

Birds of Prey

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what was the total amount of fines levied against persons found guilty of stealing the eggs and young of British birds of prey for the last year in which figures are available;

(2) how many successful prosecutions were brought against persons wilfully stealing eggs or young and disturbing the nests of British birds of prey, during the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The information available which may be incomplete and which does not distinguish between British birds of prey and other wild birds, show 89 convictions in 1986 under section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Of these, 79 resulted in fines totalling £6,217 being imposed.

Court Adjournments

Mr. French: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any plans to seek to amend section 48 of the Criminal Law Act 1977 so as to limit the scope for application for adjournments; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: There are no plans at present to seek to amend section 48.

Mr. French: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has received any representations regarding the working of section 48 of the Criminal Law Act 1977; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: We have not received any such representations.

Drug Addiction

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will give the total of registered drug addicts for 1979 and each subsequent year and the estimated total of such addicts, respectively; and if he will give them also by the smallest geographical area by which they are broken down.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Information on the total number of addicts notified to the Home Office in the years 1979-86 is given in table 3.1 of the "Statistics of the Misuse of Drugs in the United Kingdom, 1986" (Home Office statistical bulletin 28/87). The same information is broken down by police force area and is given in tables A3.1, A3.2 and A3.3 of "Statistics of the Misuse of Drugs in the United Kingdom, 1986, Area Tables". Both publications are in the Library. It is hoped that figures for 1987 will be published in September.

Because of the nature of the activity, it is not possible to make any reliable estimate of the total number of unregistered drug addicts in the United Kingdom.

Passport Office (Staff)

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many temporary and part-time staff have been employed by the Passport Office in each of the past five years at each of its local offices.

Mr. Renton: The information is as follows:

Peak number of casual staff in post

	1984	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*	*[1]1988*
London	52	35	47	50	62
Liverpool	27	14	32	49	62
Peterborough	23	28	34	43	62
Newport	20	24	31	51	53
Glasgow	12	13	18	26	40
Belfast	6	6	6	5	6
	140	120	168	224	285

[1] January to June.

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what has been the bill for overtime payments for the passport department for each of the past five years.

Mr. Renton: The information is as follows:

Year	*Overtime expenditure* £
1984	157,494
1985	394,309
1986	746,872
1987	872,015
1988[1]	855,421

[1] January to June.

Fines

Mr. Neil Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the total number and amount of fines imposed by magistrates' courts in England and Wales which remain unpaid to date.

Mr. John Patten: The total amount of fines and fees imposed by magistrates' courts in England and Wales which remained unpaid at 31 December 1987, the latest date for which complete information is available, was £84,660,000. Part of this sum consists of fines for which the time allowed for payment had not expired. The latest available information on numbers of unpaid fines is that at 31 December 1986 there were about 1,280,000.

Lindholme Prison

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on what date the governor of Her Majesty's prison Lindholme took up appointment; on what date the categorisation for Her Majesty's prison Lindholme was altered to enable it to house non-category C prisoners; and what other changes in *(a)* management and *(b)* population have occurred since November 1987.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The governor took up his appointment at Her Majesty's prison Lindholme on 20 June 1988. The establishment has never held inmates in security categories higher than category C, and no changes in the criteria under which prisoners are allocated there have been made since November 1987. Following the conversion of an existing building, an additional 250 places became available at Lindholme earlier this year. Inmates are being allocated to the new places according to existing criteria. Fresh Start working began at the establishment on 3 January this year.

Remand System

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to publish his Green Paper on private sector involvement in the remand system.

Mr. Hurd: The Green Paper "Private Sector Involvement in the Remand System" (Command 434), published today, sets out and invites comment on the options for involving the private sector in the operation of new remand establishments and of associated escort and court duties. The Green Paper identifies the main issues of principle and practice which need to be taken into account. Management consultants, assisted by criminal justice system experts, will shortly begin a detailed examination of the practical implications of involving the private sector in the ways which the Green Paper envisages. The Government will take the responses to the Green Paper, and the report of the consultants, into account in deciding, towards the end of the year, which, if any, of the options to pursue.

Public Expenditure Survey

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will provide a detailed breakdown for the year 1982-83 to 1990-91, by nature of item and functional area of charge, of the receipts to his programme classified as charges for the purposes of the public expenditure survey.

Mr. Hurd *[holding answer 7 July 1988]:* The following figures, which are consistent with those given by my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary of the Treasury on 27 May at columns *375-76* relate to receipts in respect of programme expenditure for which the Home Office is responsible. Receipts in respect of running cost expenditure are not included.

Public expenditure (Home Office): charges 1982-83 to 1990-91[1] *(£ million)*

Description	*1982-83 outturn*	*1983-84 outturn*	*1984-85 outturn*	*1985-86 outturn*	*1986-87 outturn*	*1987-88 estimated outturn*	*1988-89 plans*	*1989-90 plans*	*1990-91 plans*
CIOB	−0·7	0·0	0·0	0·0	0·0	0·0	0·0	0·0	0·0
Court Services (including Magistrates Courts)	−116·9	−131·1	−127·1	−147·5	−163·0	−181·9	−213·1	−225·6	−240·6
Prisons	−15·0	−0·0	0·0	0·0	0·0	0·0	0·0	0·0	0·0
Probation Service	−0·3	−0·3	−0·3	−0·4	0·0	0·0	0·0	0·0	0·0
Police	−97·8	−111·8	−180·8	−142·5	−194·3	−145·5	−111·5	−114·2	−117·1
Immigration and Citizenship	−1·3	−0·8	−1·3	−0·8	−1·5	−1·2	−0·5	−0·6	−0·6
Fire	−7·5	−8·1	−10·1	−7·6	−8·1	−8·9	−10·8	−11·1	−11·5
Central and Miscellaneous Services	+2·4	−4·2	−2·3	−5·4	−5·8	−3·8	−4·5	−11·8	−5·7
Registration of Electors	−0·5	−0·7	−0·6	−0·8	−0·9	−1·0	−0·1	−0·1	−0·1
Civil Defence	−0·2	−0·1	−0·2	−0·5	−0·3	−0·3	−0·2	−0·2	−0·2
Total	−238·0	−257·1	−322·6	−305·5	−374·0	−342·6	−340·7	−363·6	−375·8

[1] Totals may not coincide with the sum of individual components due to roundings.

ENVIRONMENT

Planning Appeals

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will give, for the latest convenient period, the figure for the percentage of planning appeals *(a)* that have been allowed unamended, *(b)* that have been allowed subject to restriction or amendment and *(c)* that have been disallowed.

Mr. Waldegrave: Of the 18,474 planning appeals decided between 1 April 1987 and 31 March 1988, 6,955 (37·6 per cent.) were allowed and 11,519 (62·4 per cent.) were refused. In all cases the grant of planning permission on appeal is subject to a condition that sets a time limit within which the development must commence.

Information on the proportion of planning appeals allowed that were subject to further restriction or where the proposal in the original application was amended is not available.

Housing Associations (Tower Hamlets)

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list *(a)* all applications for consents to dispose of properties and-or sites to or for the purpose of use by housing associations at outsanding loan debt or less than market value received by his Department from the London borough of Tower Hamlets between 8 May 1986 and 18 July 1988; *(b)* the date on which each submission was first received by his Department; *(c)* the date on which consent was granted in relation to each application so far decided, *(d)* the latest date by which consent will be given in relation to each application not yet decided and *(e)* the explanation for the delay between application and decision in each case.

Mrs. Roe: The information requested is not readily available in the form required. The Department has the following applications for consent outstanding:

Monteith Estate, received 26 June 1987;
Glenaffric Avenue, received 17 November 1987;
Masthouse Terrace, received 7 December 1987;
Ashfield Street, received 23 December 1987;
Hadrian Estate, received 23 February 1988;
Bishops Way, received 18 April 1988;
Selby Street, received 3 May 1988;
Buckfast Street and Barnet Grove, received 20 June 1988.

Cases have been delayed because all the necessary information from Tower Hamlets London borough council and outside bodies has not been available to the Department. Consents, where appropriate, will be issued as soon as possible.

Government Vehicles

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the total number of motor vehicles supplied by his Department for use by each Government Department and the number that have been converted to run on unleaded petrol.

Mr. Chope: I refer to my reply to the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, North (Ms. Walley) on 25 May 1988. 17 vehicles have been converted so far to run on lead-free fuel.

Wherever possible, vehicles are now being converted to run on lead-free fuel and as new models capable of running on both types of fuel without adjustment come into the fleet the need for conversion will progressively diminish.

Equal Opportunities

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what publicity he has given to the Government's policy statements on the subject of equal opportunities.

Mr. Ridley: My Department publicised the policy statement on equal opportunities in 1984 and 1985 by issuing establishments bulletins, which are seen by all members of staff.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many and what percentage of women are employed by him in grades 1, 2, 3, and 4 respectively, as at 31 May.

Mr. Ridley: The number of women employed at grades 1-4 in my Department as at 1 July were:

Grade	*Numbers*	*per cent.*
1	0	0
2	0	0
3	4	9
4	1	7

Ethnic Monitoring

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many and what percentage of ethnic minority staff are employed in grades 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 respectively, as at 31 March.

Mr. Ridley: The numbers of ethnic minority staff employed at grades 1-6 as at 31 March 1988 were:

Grades	*Numbers*	*Per cent.*
1	0	0·0
2	0	0·0
3	1	2·4
4	0	0·0
5	2	1·6
6	5	1·5

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will place in the Library copies of the results of the ethnic monitoring exercises in the areas of part time working and job sharing, reinstatement, special leave, special training, recruitment and the ethnic origin of staff, carried out by his Department.

Mr. Ridley: I shall place results of the ethnic monitoring recruitment and staff in post surveys in the Library.

Ethnic monitoring of part-time workers and job sharers, those reinstated and applicants for special leave and special training has not been carried out, although monitoring by gender has.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects that the analysis of the ethnic origins of his Department's staff in post in March 1988 will be completed; and whether he will place a copy in the Library.

Mr. Ridley: Analysis of my Department's ethnic origin data is a continuous process. An initial analysis by grade, region and location will be completed by the end of October 1988, and I shall place a copy in the Library.

Promotion Monitoring

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what participation there has been from his Department in the essential training review and promotion monitoring projects respectively.

Mr. Ridley: My officials have completed an OMCS questionnaire on equal opportunities training and have participated in the Cabinet Office-led review on training. My Department is also participating in the OMCS sponsored survey of promotion board monitoring.

Sporting Events (Ministerial Visits)

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the international sporting events attended by the Minister with responsibility for sport, the hon. Member for Lewisham, East (Mr. Moynihan) in the last 12 months and the cost to public funds in each case.

Mr. Moynihan: The following are the principal international sporting events overseas which I have attended in the last 12 months and the costs to public funds in each case.

	Event
26 July	Final stage of the Tour de France, Paris. Cost to public funds, £221.
28 August	World Rowing Championships, Copenhagen. No cost to public funds.
3-7 September	World Athletics Championships, Rome. Cost to public funds, £717.
9 September	England v. West Germany, Dusseldorf. Cost to public funds, £229.
7 November	Final World Cup One Day Cricket, Calcutta. Cost to public funds, £1,905
12-18 February	Winter Olympics, Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Cost to public funds, £2,308.
1 April 2 April 3 April	FC Berlin v. Erfurt, East Berlin. Ice Show, East Berlin. Ladies Handball International, East Berlin. Attended while on an official visit to look at the structure of sport in East Germany, at the invitation of the East German Government. Cost to public funds of entire visit, £690.
12-13 April	British National Skiing Championships, Alpe d'Huez, France Slalom challenge, part of ten events initiative for disabled sport. No cost to public funds
12 June	European Football Championships: Eire v. England, Stuttgart. Cost to public funds, £277.
15-16 June	European Football Championships: England v. Holland, Dusseldorf. Cost to public funds, £341.

North West Water Authority

Mr. Onslow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) whether his Department has asked the North West water authority to explain why 54 of its effluent treatment plants were reported in 1987 as being non-compliant with the authority's own discharge consent conditions; and what estimate his Department has been given of the capital cost and time required to rectify these deficiencies;

(2) whether his Department has asked the North West water authority why 15 of its effluent plants failed to meet the authority's discharge consent conditions in 1987 because of trade effluent; what types of trade effluent were involved in the cases concerned; and how long he expects this situation to continue.

Mr. Moynihan: North West water authority reports that where sewage treatment works failed its consents due to trade effluent this was caused by effluent from farming or agricultural related processes, food production, textile manufacture and chemical treatment.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution is continuing to discuss with North West water authority the reasons for failure of their sewage treatment works. The Government have already announced that water authorities are taking steps to improve the performance of sewage treatment works through major investment programmes to bring all works up to standard by 1991-92. North West water authority expects that of its 55 non-compliant works, 31 will report compliance in their returns relating to 1988. A further 12 are expected to be compliant by the end of this year. Another six works feature in the capital programme at a cost of some £1,400,000. Investigations at the remaining six works are expected to be completed later this year.

Winget-type Houses

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what is his estimate of the fiscal resources which would be required by local authorities in order that all Winget-type houses purchased from council stocks and presently in private ownership could be repurchased at current market prices under the Housing Defects Act 1984;

(2) what information he has on the total current market value of Winget-type houses purchased from local authorities and currently privately owned.

Mrs. Roe: Local authorities in England have reported 175 Winget properties in private ownership. The current market values of these properties will depend, among other things, on their location and condition. It is not therefore possible to estimate reliably the total market value of these houses, nor the costs of their repurchase at 95 per cent. of defect free value, as the housing defects legislation provides.

Defective Housing

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give an estimate of the fiscal resources which would be required by local authorities in order for reinstatement grants to be issued for a satisfactory method of repair to be undertaken in respect of all council housing stock identified as defective in the Housing Defects Act 1984 which has a method of repair agreed by the Department of the Environment with the National House Building certificate.

Mrs. Roe: Under the housing defects legislation local authorities may pay grants to eligible owners of designated dwellings for reinstatement in accordance with the Act's provisions. Such grants are not available towards the cost of reinstatement works to properties in local authority ownership.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what estimate he has of the total current market value of houses identified as defective under the Housing Defects Act 1984;

(2) what is his estimate of the fiscal resources required by local authorities in order for all owner-occupied houses, designated as defective by the Housing Defects Act 1984 and which have no approved method of repair, to be repurchased by local authorities at current market prices.

Mrs. Roe: As market values of individual designated properties will vary, depending, among other things, on location and condition, it is not possible to make a meaningful estimate of the total current market value of all designated properties. Nor is it possible reliably to forecast the total number and cost of local authority repurchases under the housing defects legislation.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many houses defined as defective under the Housing Defects Act 1984 have been demolished since 1984; and if he will give a breakdown of houses demolished against housing type and year.

Mrs. Roe: I am aware that some local authorities have demolished certain designated properties in their areas, but detailed information on numbers and house types by year is not available.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) which housing types have been designated as defective under the Housing Defects Act 1984; and how many dwellings of each type remain in council housing stock in the United Kingdom;

(2) how many houses, and of what type, designated as defective under the Housing Defects Act 1984 have been purchased from local authorities in the United Kingdom since 1980; and how many remain in private ownership.

Mrs Roe: The house types designated nationally under the housing defects legislation in England are as follows. In addition, local designations have been made for certain properties in Dudley; and for Smith houses with additional foundation defects in Dudley, Birmingham, Sandwell and Nuneaton and Bedworth.

Airey
Boot
Boswell
Cornish Unit
Dorran
Dyke
Gregory
Myton
Newland
Orlit
Parkinson
Reema Hollow Panel
Schindler and Hawksley SGS
Smith
Stent
Stonecrete
Tarran
Underdown
Unity and Butterley
Waller
Wates
Wessex
Winget
Woolaway

Information on the numbers, by type, of prefabricated reinforced concrete dwellings designed before 1960 in private and public ownership, was obtained in 1983, and updated in July 1986, to include Smith houses. Copies of this material are in the Library. We have been assembling updated information from local authorities on the numbers of designated types (including Boswell) and this should be available shortly. No information is available specifically on the numbers sold by local authorities since 1980.

The library also contains local authorities' own HIP returns for 1987, giving total numbers of designated properties in local authority and private ownerships, though these figures are not broken down by type.

Water Pollution

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) when figures for 1987 will be made available for the total amount of fines collected following prosecutions under the Control of Pollution Act 1974 in respect of water pollution due to the breach of water authority consents;

(2) on how many occasions the maximum fine has been levied against an offender in breach of water authority consents following the implementation of the Control of Pollution Act 1974;

(3) what was the total amount of fines collected in each year, following the implementation of the Control of Pollution Act 1974, in respect of successful prosecutions brought against polluters in breach of water authority consents;

(4) when figures for 1987 will be made available on the number of occasions when water authority consents for the discharge of pollution into United Kingdom waterways were breached by polluters, the legal action taken by water authorities and the convictions achieved.

Mr. Moynihan: Information collected by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department shows that in 1986, the first year for which figures are readily available, fines imposed following prosecutions by water authorities specifically for breaches of discharge consents totalled approximately £20,000. Magistrates imposed the £2,000 maximum fine on one occasion. Data for 1987 are expected to be available in the autumn.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment why, in view of the number of sewage treatment works breaching his consents, no prosecutions have thus far been taken out against water authorities for breach of consents; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: As announced in our recent response to the Environment Committee, water authorities have major programmes of capital works to bring all sewage treatment works into compliance with their consent conditions by 1991-92. Clearly, where major investment is involved, it takes time to bring works up to standard and, in the Government's view, there is little to be gained by prosecution in these circumstances. However, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution has recently informed water authorities that it will consider prosecution in cases where works are persistently non-compliant, where discharges are significantly affecting water quality and where an authority has no plans for remedial action.

Yorkshire Water Authority

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what action he will take to ensure that the Yorkshire water authority brings all its sewage works up to the legal minimum standard by 1991.

Mr. Moynihan: We have made it clear to Yorkshire water authority that effluent discharges from its sewage treatment works must comply with discharge consent conditions as soon as practicable. The authority is now preparing the necessary investment plans.

House Condition Survey

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when the results of the 1986 English house condition survey will be published.

Mrs. Roe: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister for Housing and Planning on Tuesday 5 July 1988, at column *545*.

Council Houses

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how calculations for national council house vacancies are made; what formula is used; and how the data are collated.

Mrs. Roe: The number of council house vacancies in England is simply the sum of the numbers reported by all the English local authorities for April of each year in their annual housing investment programme HIP1 returns. The number vacant can also be expressed as a percentage of the council housing stock reported in the same returns.

Birds of Prey

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will consider seeking to increase penalties for the illegal theft and disturbance of British birds of prey; and what information he has on the prices commanded abroad for falcons, eagles and hawks.

Mr. Moynihan: I do not propose at present to seek an increase in the penalties for the illegal taking of birds of prey from the wild. I have no specific information on the prices which falcons, hawks and eagles may command abroad.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what action he is taking to reduce and prevent the theft of British birds of prey, including the peregrine falcon and goshawk, for the purposes of sale to falconers both in Britain and abroad.

Mr. Moynihan: Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 makes it an offence for any person to take a wild bird, unless he has a defence under any other provision of the Act. The enforcement of section 1 is a matter for the police.

Public Expenditure

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what level of local government staffing and pay are anticipated in the Government's expenditure plans 1988-89 to 1990-91; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: The Government's expenditure plans for 1988-89, 1989-90 and 1990-91 (Cm. 288 published in January) provided for local authority current expenditure in England of £27,538 million, £28,500 million and £29,360 million respectively. The plans for 1989-90 and 1990-91 were based on the figure for 1988-89 uprated by the GDP deflator then forecast in each year; they thus provided for spending to be broadly level in real terms. The 1988-89 figure is that provided for by the Secretary of State in the rate support grant settlement for that year. On 7 July the Secretary of State announced a proposal that provision for the 1989-90 settlement should be £29,140 million, an increase of about £1·4 billion over Cm. 288 after deducting the cost of polytechnics, which from April 1989 will be the responsibility of central Government. In making provision for a particular year the Secretary of State takes into account, as he is required to do by statute, the latest information about the rate of local authority relevant expenditure; possible fluctuations in demand for services which are not under local authority control; the need for developing those services and the extent to which, having regard to general economic conditions, he considers it reasonable to develop them; and the level of prices costs and remuneration.

Local Authorities (Pay and Manpower)

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the level of local authority pay awards and manpower increases in 1986-87 and 1987-88; what level was allowed for in the plans for those years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: The main pay awards were as follows:

	Pay awards in			
	1986-87		*1987-88*	
	from	*percentage*	*from*	*percentage*
Teachers	1 April 1986	5·7	1 October 1987	8·2
	1 January 1987	8·2		
Further education lecturers	1 April 1986	5·6	1 April 1987	5·0
			1 September 1987	5·3
Police	1 September 1986	7·5	1 September 1987	7·75
Fire	7 November 1986	7·3	7 November 1987	7·3
Manuals	1 September 1986	6·7	1 July 1987	10·6
APT and C	1 July 1986	6·0	1 July 1987	5·0
			1 February 1988	2·5
Engineering craftsmen	1 February 1987	5·6	1 February 1988	4·0
Electricians and Building trade operatives	1 February 1987	4·0	1 September 1987	6·8
Chief officers and Chief executives	1 July 1986	5·5	1 September 1987	7·0

Manpower in the 12 months to March 1987 and March 1988 increased by 0·7 per cent. and 0·9 per cent. respectively.

The rate support grant settlements for 1986-87 and 1987-88 provided for local authority current expenditure of £22,253·5 million and £25,251 million respectively. In deciding the level of provision the Secretary of State took account of those factors which he is required to by statute. In addition, the first supplementary report for 1987-88 took account of the estimated cost in that year of the new rates for school teachers' pay provided for in the "Teacher's Pay and Conditions Document 1987".

Estuaries (Sewage)

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment why figures for the volume of raw human sewage allowed into British estuaries are not kept centrally; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: The information asked for is not held centrally, because to do so would serve no useful purpose.

The last surveys of discharges of foul sewage to estuaries and coastal waters were published in 1973, but they do not differentiate between the two types of receiving waters. Details of all discharges to rivers, estuaries and coastal waters are, however, available from water authorities' public registers. Since 1973 there have been major reductions in such discharges in most of the estuaries in the United Kingdom.

NRA (Sport and Recreation)

Mr. Denis Howell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment which members of the National Rivers Authority advisory committee have been appointed to safeguard the interests of sport and recreation; what are their qualifications; and which organisations were consulted before these appointments were made.

Mr. Moynihan: Members of the National Rivers Authority advisory committee have been appointed for the contribution they can make in the preparations needed for the establishment of the National Rivers Authority, not to represent particular interests. There was no consultation outside Government before the appointments were made. Until the National Rivers Authority is established, it remains the statutory duty of the water authorities to encourage the use of water and land associated with it for recreation.

Local Authorities (Finance)

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the total of debt charges charged to revenue account for local authorities in England and Wales for each year from 1980-81 to 1987-88; and what percentage this represents of gross revenue expenditure.

Mr. Ridley: The information for local authorities in England and Wales, is as follows:

Rate Fund Revenue Account; debt charges and gross revenue expenditure

	Debt charges £1	*Gross revenue expenditure* £ million	*Debt charges*[1] *Per cent.*
1980-81	2,134	25,215	8·5
1981-82	2,268	27,810	8·2
1982-83	2,162	30,197	7·2
1983-84	2,165	32,366	6·7
1984-85	2,443	34,286	7·1
1985-86	2,678	35,105	7·6
[2]1986-87	2,373	37,113	6·4

[1] As percentage of gross revenue expenditure.
[2] Provisional.

The information is not available for 1987-88.

Debt charges are also incurred on housing revenue account and in respect of trading services.

River Thames (Pollution)

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he is taking to monitor the effect of pollution and the greenhouse effect on water levels in the Thames.

Mr. Moynihan: The Thames water authority operates a network of eight tidal gauges to monitor the level of sea water in the Thames estuary. There is a chain of such gauges around the coast of the United Kingdom.

The Department has initiated a research programme into the greenhouse effect which will consider, amongst other things, the impact of any rise in sea level.

Lululla Arborea

Dr. Marek: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to his reply of 26 May, *Official Report*, column *310*, if he will give details of the consultations between representatives of the EEC member states concerning the proposal to include Lululla arborea in appendix II of the Berne convention; what objections were made to its inclusion and by which countries.

Mr. Moynihan: The Department does not hold details of the objections made by other member states.

Water Authorities Association

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to how much money has been expended by the Water Authorities Association on the services of merchant bankers Kleinwort Benson, in their capacity as advisors to the Water Authorities Association on water privatisation.

Mr. Moynihan: None.

Halton Moor Estate, Leeds

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) whether his Department will organise a ballot of tenants on Halton Moor estate, Leeds, as to whether they wish to become part of a housing action trust; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what weight he will give to the results of a ballot organised by tenants of Halton Moor estate, Leeds, as to whether they wish to become part of a housing action trust; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Roe: My Department has no plans to ballot tenants. However, final decisions on the areas to be designated as housing action trusts will be taken in the light of local views. My right hon. Friend wrote on 11 July to all residents in the Halton Moor estate who might be affected by the establishment of a housing action trust, and I met representatives of tenants groups in Leeds on Friday.

Imports and Exports (Sale Control)

Mr. Corbett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what measures are being taken to monitor compliance with article 6 of EEC regulation 3626/82 in the United Kingdom, and to enforce the provisions of this article.

Mr. Moynihan: The Department has issued advice on article 6 sale controls in its "Supplementary Notice to Importers and Exporters No. 6" and looks into any cases brought to its attention. Where appropriate the relevant enforcement agency will be advised.

Mr. Corbett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many alleged infractions of article 6 of EEC Regulations 3626/82 have been drawn to the attention of his Department; and what were the results of investigations of these cases.

Mr. Moynihan: This information is not readily available, as the Department has no central record of alleged infractions.

Staffordshire County Council

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will adjust the rate support grant to pay additional moneys to Staffordshire county council equal to the amount of repayments made to the Severn-Trent authority as a result of the Cakebread decision on sewage hereditaments.

Mr. Chope: We are considering the representations which have been made about the implications of the Court of Appeal's judgment in the Cakebread case. Rate support grant can, however, be paid only in accordance with the latest rate support grant report for each year. We shall be issuing proposals for supplementary reports for 1985-86 to 1988-89 and consulting on them later this year.

Block Grant

Mr. Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to his statement on 7 July, *Official Report*, columns 1199-1201, when he proposes to introduce legislation to modify the way in which block grant payments are to be calculated for the remaining years of the present rate support grant system.

Mr. Ridley: I plan to introduce a short Bill later this Session.

Homes Insulation Scheme

Mr. Forman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has to review the homes insulation scheme introduced on 1 February.

Mrs. Roe: An amendment to the homes insulation scheme has today been laid before Parliament which increases the maximum grant payable under the scheme. Householders in eligible dwellings in receipt of housing benefit, income support or family credit can thus qualify for grant towards the cost of loft insulation of 90 per cent. of the cost of works up to the new maximum amount of £144. The increase should enable those on lower incomes to continue to afford loft insulation and derive benefits in terms of energy savings or increased warmth. The amendment to the scheme, which includes a revised schedule of materials approved for grant purposes, applies to England, Scotland and Wales, and will come into effect on 15 August 1988.

Poisoned Bait

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give by number and species wild birds known to have been killed by the use of poisoned bait between 1 January 1979 and 30 June 1988.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 22 July 1988]:* This information is not available.

Badgers

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information his Department has on the number of badgers that are killed each year.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 22 July 1988]:* No records are kept of badger deaths. However, the Nature Conservancy Council estimates that several thousand are killed annually on the roads. This is the major cause of human-induced mortality of badgers.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he is satisfied with the operation of the Wildlife and Countryside (Amendment) Act 1985 concerning the protection of badgers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 22 July 1988]:* Yes. The amendment Act strengthened the protection of badgers by reversing the burden of proof upon a defendant, who will be presumed to have committed an offence unless he can show otherwise in cases of the alleged unlawful taking, injuring or killing a badger and in cases of alleged digging for a badger. This remedied a significant weakness in the Badgers Act 1973 and was an important step forward.

Litter

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what research his Department has undertaken on the on-the-spot-fines for litter dropping; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will introduce legislation to allow local authorities to levy on-the-spot fines for litter dropping; and if he will make a statement;

(3) what representations he has received concerning on-the-spot fines for litter dropping; and if he will make a statement;

(4) what powers local authorities have to impose on-the-spot fines for litter dropping; and if he will make a statement;

(5) what is his Department's policy of on-the-spot fines for litter dropping; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 22 July 1988]:* We have received a number of representations over the past 12 months about the desirability of on-the-spot fines, or, more accurately, fixed penalties for litter offences. Under the City of Westminster Act 1988, which came into force in March, the city council has powers to operate such fixed penalty system. The council has established a monitoring group, on which the Department is represented, to assess the effectiveness of the system, which we regard as a valuable experiment. If successful, we would wish to consider whether the system should be extended more widely.

Tyfoam

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received on the safety implications of the contents of Tyfoam, certificated as a method of repair for wall tie failure.

Mr. Trippier: No representations have been made to the Department on this matter.

Manchester-Salford-Trafford Scheme

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what details he has received of the Manchester-Salford-Trafford integrated development operation scheme; what is his policy on this scheme; if he

has sent the application to the European Community; if he will give details of the timetable for consideration of this scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: A revised application for an integrated development operation for Manchester-Salford-Trafford is currently being jointly considered by the Departments of Trade and Industry, Employment and this Department. Subject to Government approval of the application, it will shortly be forwarded to the United Kingdom permanent representative to the European Community, who will lodge it with the European Commission. Thereafter, the timetable for processing the application rests with the European Commission.

Environmental Projects

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he will take to ensure that an environmental statement is provided in respect of those projects listed in annex II of the European Community directive 85/337 on environmental assessment which are likely to have significant environmental effects; and what criteria will be applied in selecting projects which require such statements.

Mr. Trippier: The Town and Country Planning (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1988 (S.I. No. 1199) implement the EC directive for projects in England and Wales which require planning permission. DOE circular 15/88 (Welsh Office 23/88) gives advice to local planning authorities on the implementation of the regulations, including on those circumstances in which environmental assessment under annex II may be needed. Further instruments have been made and advice issued by Ministers concerned with other projects to which the directive applies.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will introduce measures to ensure that developments promoted under private legislation, including estuarine barrages, are subject to environmental assessment procedures; and if he will make it his policy that there be a requirement on the promoter to prepare an environmental statement.

Mr. Trippier: It is for Parliament to determine the procedures to be adopted for the approval of private legislation. I understand the Joint Committee on Private Bill Procedure is considering the question of environmental assessment. Where the Government themselves promote legislation to approve a project which would have required environmental assessment if the saving in article 1.5 of the EC directive did not apply, they will ensure that an environmental statement is prepared on the project.

Council House Sales

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for Scotland, Wales and each English region the number of council houses sold in the past five financial years and his estimate for 1988, together with the average valuation and the average price received.

Mr. Waldegrave: The readily available information on sales by local authorities, new town and the Scottish Special Housing Association, excluding block sales, is given in the table. Corresponding estimates are not available for 1988-89, but forecasts for sales by English local authorities were included in the public expenditure White Paper (Cmnd. 288-II) published in January.

Dwellings sold by Local Authorities: DOE Administrative Regions, Wales and Scotland 1983-84 to 1987-88

	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	[1]1987-88
(a) *Total number of dwellings sold*					
North	8,580	5,170	4,750	4,860	5,030
Yorkshire and Humberside	9,560	7,170	6,980	7,190	9,870
East Midlands	10,300	6,920	7,190	7,850	10,530
Eastern	15,800	14,330	12,400	13,320	15,200
Greater London	15,100	14,660	14,190	13,800	18,900
South East	18,140	15,610	12,980	14,000	15,420
South West	10,890	8,850	7,760	8,180	9,710
West Midlands	15,730	10,030	7,280	8,520	10,590
North West	17,940	8,640	8,790	8,420	9,600
Wales	7,420	5,310	4,980	5,830	5,750
Scotland[2]	13,010	11,670	10,450	10,950	14,010
(b) *Average value of dwellings sold: £'000*					
North	14·2	15·1	15·6	16·4	17·2
Yorkshire and Humberside	14·1	14·7	15·5	17·0	18·0
East Midlands	14·7	15·9	16·6	18·8	20·4
Eastern	21·9	24·4	26·9	31·5	37·8
Greater London	26·5	30·1	34·7	40·8	45·5
South East	23·8	26·3	29·5	33·5	39·4
South West	19·0	20·9	22·4	25·2	28·0
West Midlands	15·7	16·1	18·4	17·7	20·0
North West	12·3	15·5	15·8	16·9	18·3
Wales	..	15·4	16·9	17·8	18·9
Scotland[2]	16·7	18·3	19·4	20·8	21·6

	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	[1] 1987-88
(c) *Average selling price of dwellings sold: £'000*					
North	8·1	8·6	8·6	9·1	8·9
Yorkshire and Humberside	8·1	8·3	8·3	9·0	9·4
East Midlands	8·5	8·9	9·1	10·3	10·8
Eastern	12·6	13·6	14·4	17·0	19·5
Greater London	16·1	17·0	19·4	22·0	23·7
South East	13·7	14·6	15·7	18·0	20·4
South West	11·1	11·6	12·2	13·6	14·8
West Midlands	9·1	9·1	9·7	9·4	10·7
North West	7·1	8·9	8·4	9·0	9·8
Wales	..	8·5	8·7	9·3	9·6
Scotland[2]	9·3	9·9	10·0	10·6	10·1

[1] Provisional
[2] Scottish figures for sales to sitting tenants only
.. Not available.

CIVIL SERVICE

Administrative Trainees

72. **Mr. Wareing:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service if he is planning any change in the methods by which administration trainees are recruited.

Mr. Luce: The Government have no plans to change the basic principles of fair and open competition. Changes are made to procedures from time to time.

Civil Service College

73. **Mr. Cran:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service how many outside organisations use the facilities offered by the Civil Service college; and what was the financial contribution so gained over the last 12-month period for which records are available.

Mr. Luce: Twenty outside organisations used the college's facilities during the period 1 July 1987 to 30 June 1988 and the financial contribution gained was £125,000. The college earned a further £102,000 by letting its facilities to 11 Government Departments. I greatly welcome the use of college facilities by students from the private sector.

Terms and Conditions of Service

74. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service when he next proposes to meet the Civil Service trades unions to discuss terms and conditions of service.

Mr. Luce: I have informal meetings from time to time with representatives of the Civil Service trade unions.

Official Secrets Act 1911

75. **Mr. Rooker:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service if he will make a statement on the future role of the Civil Service discipline code in the light of the publication of the White Paper, Cm. 408, on the reform of Section 2 of the Official Secrets Act 1911.

Mr. Luce: As the White Paper on reform of section 2 of the Official Secrets Act 1911 made clear, the disciplinary code will continue to be applied against unauthorised disclosure of information.

Conduct and Discipline

77. **Mr. Harry Barnes:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service what steps are being taken to improve consultation on conduct and disciplinary issues with the Civil Service unions.

Mr. Luce: There are established procedures for discussing these matters with the Civil Service unions.

Civil Servants (Previous Employment)

78. **Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service how many civil servants have previously been employed as teachers or researchers in a full-time capacity in a higher education establishment.

Mr. Luce: This information is not held centrally and could be collected only at disproportionate cost.

Next Steps Initiative

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Minister for the Civil Service what progress is being made with the "next steps" initiative; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce: Following my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister's announcement on 18 February, the project manager and his team have been working on the implementation of this initiative.

The purpose of Next Steps is to improve management in the Civil Service. The main element is the establishment of individual executive agencies to carry out executive functions. Twelve initial candidates were listed in February and a further 17 candidates have since been announced, including the DHSS social security operations. In total these 29 activities[1] cover over 170,000 people.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport is today announcing that he is establishing the vehicle inspectorate within his Department as the first executive agency, with effect from 1 August 1988. We expect that the next will be the companies registration office, DHSS resettlement units, and the employment service. Work on the other candidates is progressing well and at the same time Departments are considering with the project manager the rest of their operations in line with the Government's acceptance of the recommendation that on the greatest extent practicable the executive functions of Goverment should be carried out by agencies.

Establishing agencies is only part of the task. The project manager has drawn up an action plan in conjunction with Departments aimed at: reorienting training and career management, so that staff are properly trained and experienced in the management of the delivery of services. At the same time, attention is being paid to the scope for giving greater personal responsibility to managers throughout the service, including the scope for increased financial flexibilities and more local responsibilities in pay and personnel matters.

I shall make a further report to the House before the end of this calendar year.

Business Statistics Office[1]
Civil Service College
Civil Service Occupational Health Service
Companies Registration Office
Defence non-nuclear research establishments
Department of Registers for Scotland
Driver and Vehicle Licensing Directorate
Driver Testing and Training
Employment Service
Export Services, DTI
Historic Buildings and Monuments Directorate
Historic Royal Palaces
Her Majesty's Stationery Office
Insolvency Service, DTI
Laboratory of Government Chemist
Meteorological Office
National Physical Laboratory
National Weights and Measures Laboratory
Passport Department
Patent Office
QEII Conference Centre
Radiocommunications Division, DTI
Regional Offices, DTI
Resettlement Units
Royal Parks
Social Security operations
Vehicle Component Approval Division, DTp
Vehicle Inspectorate
Warren Springs Laboratory

Departmental Advertising

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Minister for the Civil Service (1) what is the latest figures for estimated spending in 1988-89 by his Office on *(a)* television advertising, *(b)* radio advertising, *(c)* newspaper advertising and *(d)* other promotional material;

(2) what is the latest figure for the number of staff presently employed on press and public relations in his office;

(3) what is the latest figure for the estimated expenditure by his office on press and public relations during 1988-89.

Mr. Luce: I refer to the answers given on Thursday 21 July by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to identical questions tabled by the hon. Member.

THE ARTS

Northern England

49. **Mr. Holt:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what percentage of the Arts Council budget is spent in the north of England.

Mr. Luce: In 1987-88, 5·8 per cent. of the budget was spent in the area covered by Northern Arts.

Theatre Royal, Stratford, East

50. **Mr. Boateng:** To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will provide additional funds for the Theatre royal, Stratford, East.

Mr. Luce: I do not fund individual theatres direct. The level of funding is a matter for Greater London Arts.

Student Exchange

52. **Mr Key:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what information he has on exchanges of drama and production students between the United Kingdom and overseas countries; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce: No detailed information is available, but I welcome the fact that such exchanges will be facilitated by the International Foundation for Training in the Arts, launched earlier this month.

Arts Support (Economic Benefits)

53. **Mr. Jessel:** To ask the Minister for the Arts how far Government provision for support of the arts takes into account the benefits to the national economy.

Mr. Luce: I am glad to acknowledge the importance of the performing and visual arts, and of the museums, galleries and libraries, to the nation's quality of life and to the education and economic opportunities and the environment of people in this country. The arts are a significant and expanding sector of the economy, a valuable stimulus to tourism, and a source of export earnings for Britain. This is a source both of congratulation and of opportunity to the arts and heritage sectors.

Musical Instruments (Over-tuning)

54. **Mr. Summerson:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what information he has on the destruction of instruments by publicly funded orchestras as a result of over-tuning.

Mr. Luce: None.

Scottish Arts Council

55. **Mr. Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Minister for the Arts when he last met the chairman of the Scottish Arts Council; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Luce: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to his earlier question on 4 July, at c. 466.

East London

56. **Ms Abbott:** To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will pay an official visit to the Hackney empire to discuss funding of the Arts in East London.

59. **Mr. Sedgemore:** To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will make an official visit to Hackney Arts organisations to discuss funding for the Arts in East London.

Mr. Luce: I have no plans to do so. Funding of the Arts in East London is a matter for the Arts Council and the Greater London Arts Association.

Arts Council

57. **Mr. Butler:** To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will undertake a review of the structure of the Arts Council.

Mr. Luce: I have the structure and operations of the council, and of the other public bodies for which I am responsible, regularly in mind.

Midlands Art (Funding)

58. **Ms. Walley:** To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will pay an official visit to Stoke to discuss funding for the arts in the midlands.

Mr. Luce: I have no immediate plans to visit Stoke-on-Trent. Funding for the arts in the midlands is the responsibility of the Arts Council and the West Midlands and East Midlands Arts Associations.

New Businesses

60. **Mr. Andrew Mitchell:** To ask the Minister for the Arts to what extent those involved in the arts have benefited from Government schemes to encourage new businesses.

Mr. Luce: As at 11 April 1988, 8,646 people involved in the arts were supported through the enterprise allowance scheme, representing 9 per cent. of the total number of people on the scheme. The Small Firms Service provides business advice and guidance to artists in terms of local market research, sales strategy, export procedures and copyright, and training is available through the training for enterprise scheme.

Management Skills

61. **Mr. Patnick:** To ask the Minister for the Arts to what extent arts bodies are able to acquire management skills either from the Arts Council or from his Department.

Mr. Luce: One of the objectives of the Arts Council is to improve business efficiency and management skills in the bodies it supports. I have also earmarked sums for similar purposes in the grants to the national museums and galleries.

Modern Dance

62. **Mr. Haynes:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what resources are made available by his Department for the encouragement of modern dance.

Mr. Luce: The Arts Council direct funding for dance in 1988-89 is £12·71 million; the regional arts associations also fund dance. The allocation to modern dance is not available as a separate figure.

Community Theatres

63. **Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what funds were made available by his Department for community theatres for each year since 1983.

Mr. Luce: Funding of community theatres is, for the most part, the responsibility of regional arts associations. The information requested is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Museums

64. **Mr. Chapman:** To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will make a statement on the number, type and geographical spread of museums and Government financial support for them.

Mr. Luce: The report on the museums database project indicates that in 1985 there were 2,131 museums and galleries in the United Kingdom. Of these, 7 per cent. were directly funded by central Government, 41 per cent. were local authority museums, and the remaining 52 per cent. were operated by companies, charitable institutions, voluntary associations, private individuals, nationalised industries, educational institutions or other bodies.

The geographical spread was as follows:

	Per cent.
Yorks/Humberside	3·2
South West	11·2
South East	47·4
Wales	7·8
East Midlands	2·6
North	4·3
North West	6·0
Scotland	7·8
West Midlands	2·6
Northern Ireland	6·0

Central Government expenditure on museums and galleries (including support for non-national institutions) borne on the votes of the Office of Arts and Libraries was £95·5 million in 1985-86 and is expected to be some £153·6 million this year.

Library Services (Commercial Organisations)

65. **Mr. Couchman:** To ask the Minister for the Arts whether any libraries currently provide free information services to commercial organisations.

Mr. Luce: Most library authorities provide some form of free information service to commercial organisations in their area. The range and extent of information provided, however, vary greatly.

Museums and Galleries (Charges)

66. **Mrs. Clwyd:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what information he has about the number of national museums and art galleries operating admission charges.

Mr. Luce: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie (Mr. Worthington) on 26 May this year, at columns 259-60.

Tourism

67. **Mr. Robert G. Hughes:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what is his estimate of the contribution to inward tourism made by the arts in Great Britain.

Mr. Luce: I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to the hon. Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway) on 4 July 1988, at column 465.

Anglo-Chinese Cultural Exchange

68. **Mr. Fisher:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what encouragement is being given by his Department to further Anglo-Chinese cultural exchanges.

Mr. Luce: Mr. Wang Meng, the Chinese Minister for Culture, recently visited this country, and we had useful discussions. However, cultural exchanges with China are primarily a matter for my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary and the British Council, who have negotiated a new cultural exchange programme for 1988-90, which was signed in Peking in April of this year.

London Theatre Trust

69. **Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will make additional resources available to the London Theatre Trust.

Mr. Luce: The Theatres Trust derives its income from the rent for the Garrick and Lyric theatres, and is likely to receive a rent for the Lyceum theatre in due course. I have no plans to make additional resources available.

Public Lending Right Scheme

70. **Mr. Jack:** To ask the Minister for the Arts how many authors are now registered under the public lending right scheme; and what increased funding the Government have awarded the scheme in the last year.

Mr. Luce: New registrations have brought the number of authors registered with the public lending right scheme to over 16,200. I was pleased to be able to announce increased funding from 1988-89 bringing the fund to £3·5 million, an increase of 27 per cent.; and its highest level in real terms since the scheme was implemented.

EMPLOYMENT

Labour Statistics

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the number and proportion of people who have been out of work for over five years for each of the last 10 years.

Mr. Lee: Following is the available information. Claimants unemployed for over five years were not separately identified before April 1983. The table shows the number of unemployed claimants who have been unemployed for over five years in the United Kingdom expressed numerically and as a percentage of the total unemployed claimants for April of each year from 1983 to 1988.

Unemployed claimants in the United Kingdom unemployed over five years

April	*Number*	*Percentage of total claimants*
1983	66,842	2·1
1984	84,286	2·7
1985	136,259	4·2
1986	220,655	6·6
1987	272,047	8·8
1988	271,242	10·7

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the present rate of unemployment in the boroughs that make up inner London; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: The information requested is not available. Unemployment rates are not calculated for areas smaller than travel-to-work areas.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what are the latest total national unemployment figures; and how many of these people have been unemployed for more than five, six, seven, eight and nine years, respectively.

Mr. Lee *[holding answer 22 July 1988]:* Figures are not separately identified for all the durations requested. However the following is the available information. The table shows for 14 April 1988, the latest date for which analysis by duration is available, the number of unemployed claimants who had been unemployed for five years or more, together with the total number of unemployed claimants in the United Kingdom.

United Kingdom

	14 April 1988
Total number of unemployed claimants	2,535,989
Number of claimants unemployed for five years or more	271,242

Mr. Clay: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people were *(a)* unemployed and *(b)* unemployed for 52 weeks or more in April 1979 and April 1988 in (i) England, (ii) Scotland, (iii) Wales and (iv) Northern Ireland, broken down by sex.

Mr. Lee: Direct comparisons of unemployment by duration since 1979 are not possible because of changes in coverage of the count. Following is the available information which is also in the Library. Table A shows the number of male and female, unemployed registrants in April 1979 and unemployed claimants in April 1988, in each country. Table B shows corresponding figures according to the number of unemployed claimants and registrants who had been unemployed for one year or more.

Table A

Country	*Unemployed registrants April 1979*		*Unemployed claimants April 1988*	
	Male	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
England	739,806	280,194	1,360,569	607,994
Scotland	117,693	57,897	218,158	90,926
Wales	58,729	25,489	100,202	39,871
Northern Ireland	43,002	17,785	86,782	31,487

Table B

Country	*Registrants unemployed one year or more April 1979*		*Claimants unemployed one year or more April 1988*	
	Male	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
England	223,622	54,810	604,205	187,074
Scotland	35,213	10,365	95,910	27,964
Wales	18,047	4,738	41,225	10,830
Northern Ireland	16,654	3,262	50,841	11,157

Factory Inspectors

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what regions each factory inspector covers; and how many are in post.

Mr. Nicholls: The information is not available in the form requested.

Factory inspectors based in the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) area offices do not generally inspect by geographical region but work in industry groups and have a range of inspection responsibilities throughout the district covered by the area office. The following table shows the areas of the country covered by each of the 20 HSE area offices:

Area office		*Area covered*
01	South West	Avon, Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Gloucester, Scilly Isle
02	South	Berkshire, Hampshire, Wiltshire, Dorset, Isle of Wight
03	South East	East and West Sussex, Surrey, Kent
05/06	London North and South	London
07	East Anglia	Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk
08	Northern Home Counties	Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire
09	East Midlands	Leicestershire, Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire, Warwickshire
10	West Midlands	West Midlands
11	Wales	Wales
12	Marches	Staffordshire, Shropshire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire
13	North Midlands	Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire
14	South Yorkshire and Humberside	South Yorkshire, Humberside
15	West and North Yorkshire	West and North Yorkshire
16	Greater Manchester	Greater Manchester
17	Merseyside	Merseyside, Cheshire
18	North West	Lancashire, Cumbria
19	North East	Tyne and Wear, Cleveland, Northumberland, Durham
20	Scotland East	Borders, Lothian, Central Fife, Tayside, Grampian, Highland, Island Areas
21	Scotland West	Dumfries and Galloway, Strathclyde, Western Isles

On 1 July 1988, a total of 548 factory inspectors were in post in HSE's factory inspectorate and 48 were working elsewhere in HSE.

Collective Agreements

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will update the answer given to the hon. Member for Birkenhead on the numbers of men and women covered by collective agreements for each year since 1982, and the proportion of men and women workers represented by these numbers at 27 July, *Official Report*, columns *320-21*.

Mr. Lee: It is still the case that information is available on a regular basis only in respect of manual employees covered by national collective agreements and statutory wages orders. The information is readily available only for every second year and is as follows:

Estimated numbers covered

	Million
1983	7·8
1985	7·3
1987	6·6

Source: Time Rates of Wages and Hours of Work.

Some figures on the relative numbers of employees covered by various types of collective agreement—national, district, company and so on—or by no collective agreement, covering both manual and non-manual employees and distinguishing males and females, were obtained in the new earnings survey for 1985 and were published in part F (tables 187 to 194) of the report, a copy of which is in the Library.

YTS

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people in the London borough of Newham are available for the youth training scheme; and how many places there are in the borough.

Mr. Cope: Figures for the number of young people in Newham who are available for YTS are kept by the local authority careers service and are not available to the Department. However, based on entrants last year and taking into account extra entrants this September the Training Commission estimate that there will be some 320 entrants in 1988-89. There are currently 447 YTS places available in Newham.

Child Care

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what action he is taking to implement those recommendations within his area of responsibility of the European Commission's childcare network report: "Caring for Children-Services and Policies for Childcare and Equal Opportunities in the United Kingdom".

Mr. Nicholls: My right hon. Friend received this report at the end of June. It is an interesting document and we are considering it.

Employment Training

Mr. Clelland: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many pilot schemes for the employment training initiative are in operation excluding lead development projects.

Mr. Nicholls: None. However, a wide range of development activities have been set up covering the issues and themes which will be addressed in employment training.

Textile Industry

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* showing what information he has on the percentage change in the number of full-time equivalent workers in the textile industry, in each EEC member country since 1979.

Mr. Lee: Insufficient detail is available in the employment estimates for Community members to permit comparisons on a full-time equivalent basis. The available information relates to all employees and is as follows:

Employees in the textile industries
Percentage change between 1979 and 1986

	Per cent.
Belgium	−13·5
Italy	[1] −14·9
France	−23·7
Germany	−23·8
Spain	−30·0
Netherlands	−36·4
United Kingdom	−38·3
Ireland	−42·7

[1] Change up to 1985.
Source: Employment and Unemployment 1988 (Eurostat).

These percentages are based on statistics which have been harmonised to allow for methodological differences between countries, but, like all international comparisons of labour market statistics, they should be treated with caution as it is difficult to obtain data for different countries on a wholly consistent basis.

Training Schemes

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list all the agencies currently operating Manpower Services Commission schemes, and name any agency which has intimated that it will not be taking part in the new adult training scheme.

Mr. Nicholls: Details of organisations taking part in Training Commission schemes are not kept centrally and the cost of providing the list requested would be disproportionate.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what action will be taken against training managers and training agents who fail to meet the performance requirements of the Manpower Services Commission; whether details of such failures will be made public together with the reasons for such a failure; what criteria will be set for the expulsion of agents and managers from the scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: Those training agents and training managers who fail to satisfy the criteria for approved status in employment training will not be allowed to continue to operate in the programme. In all cases where the Training Commission rejects an application for approved status, clear reasons will be given to the organisation concerned, stating which criteria the organisation has failed to satisfy. The Training Commission reserves the right to withdraw approved status from any organisation which fails to meet the criteria.

The commission will keep a record of the number of contracts for employment training; the number of applications for approved status; the numbers of applications approved or rejected; and the number of organisations whose approved status is subsequently withdrawn.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether a full list of all training managers and training agents under the new adult training scheme will be made available together with total payments made to each manager or agent by the Manpower Services Commission; and if such figures will be published in the locality in which they operate.

Mr. Nicholls: A list of training managers and training agents in employment training will be drawn up for publication next year. The names of training managers and training agents operating in any Training Commission area will be available locally from the start of the programme in September. Details of payments made to particular organisations are commercially confidential and will not normally be available on an individual basis.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether the Manpower Services Commission review of approved training agents and approved training managers will include a report on trainers' adherence to the articles of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the Race Relations Act 1976.

Mr. Nicholls: Each training agent and training manager contracting with the Training Commission to deliver employment training is required to apply for approved status. There are nine criteria on which the Training Commission will need to be satisfied before approved status is awarded. One of those criteria relates to the operation of our equal opportunities policy and includes reporting on adherence to the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the Race Relations Act 1976.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how he established the balance as between the number of places for project-based training as against the number in the unified training programme.

Mr. Nicholls: Employment training is planned to provide a total of some 300,000 training places of which 194,000 will offer practical training on projects. This is broadly the same number of project places currently available for participants on the community programme.

Community Programme

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what action he is taking to protect the 12-month contracts of those employed on the community programme; if these contracts will be honoured at present levels of remuneration; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: All participants who joined the community programme before 1 March 1988 are entitled to 12 months on community programme wages and conditions. Those participants who started after 1 March 1988 are entitled to six months on community programme wages and conditions, and this was made clear to them when they entered the programme.

The community programme will be superseded by employment training in September. Participants will be able to complete their six or 12 months on community programme wages and conditions. However, they may choose at any time to become trainees and receive the weighted training allowance for the balance of their time on employment training.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment why supervisors and trainers within the present community programme are to lose their jobs with the introduction of the adult training scheme; and what level of job losses are expected from the introduction of the scheme in September.

Mr. Nicholls: The Training Commission funds the cost of managers and supervisors separately from other costs on the community programme. Under employment training the commission will pay a single fee to cover all the costs of training, including management and supervisory costs. Training managers will then use these fees as they judge will most efficiently provide appropriate support for trainees on the new programme.

It is expected that very many current community programme managers and supervisors will be offered employment by training managers who will contract with the Training Commission to provide training under employment training. In other cases, managers and supervisors may be offered employment by organisations subcontracting with training managers.

Restart Scheme

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people who have attended a Restart interview since July 1986 have been placed directly into employment.

Mr. Lee: Between July 1986 and May 1988, some 345,000 people interviewed under the Restart programme were referred to job vacancies. We do not know how many Restart clients end up in a job or other opportunity after a Restart interview since we do not follow up referral.

Adult Training

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will now take steps to reimburse trainees in the adult training programme all their travel-to-work expenses.

Mr. Nicholls: For participants in employment training, necessary travel costs over £5 per week will be met by the Training Commission, as was recommended by the commission in its report to the Government. This follows practice on other Training Commission programmes where training allowances are paid, and where trainees are expected to meet costs up to a certain amount. However, training managers and their sub-contractors in employment training will be able to meet the first £5 of trainees' costs without any effect on trainees' allowance, or tax and benefit position.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether all participants in the new adult training scheme will be regarded as employees for the purposes of health and safety regulations; if he will outline the responsibility of employers to employees for the provision of safety equipment and clothing whether designated as essential by the Health and Safety at Work etc, Act or necessary under the employers' own regulations for employment; if such safety equipment and clothing will be made available to trainees without cost to them; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State laid before Parliament on Friday 22 July regulations which give all participants on the new employment training scheme the same rights as employees for the purposes of health and safety legislation.

Protective clothing and equipment is specifically required to be provided for certain types of work, under health and safety regulations. Section 9 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 prohibits employers from charging employees in these circumstances. Employers also have general duties under the Act to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees. These duties may include providing safety equipment and clothing to employees free of charge depending on the particular circumstances of the work.

Mines and Quarries Inspectorate

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the total number of persons employed as inspectors by the Mines and Quarries Inspectorate and the average number of inspections made by each inspector per year.

Mr. Nicholls: On 1 July 1988, a total of 73 inspectors were employed in Her Majesty's mines and quarries inspectorate of the Health and Safety Executive. During 1987-88 the inspectorate made over 15,000 visits to premises. This figure includes preventive inspections, investigations of accidents and dangerous occurrences, follow-up visits, meetings with management and safety representatives, and general advisory and educational work; some visits combined more than one of these purposes. Consequently it would be misleading to refer to an average rate per inspector.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many mines and quarries are eligible for inspection by the Mines and Quarries Inspectorate; and how many inspections are expected to be carried out in the present year.

Mr. Nicholls: All mines and quarries are eligible for inspections under the Mines and Quarries Act 1954 by the Health and Safety Executive's mines and quarries inspectorate. At present, there are 123 British Coal mines, 197 licensed coal mines and 77 miscellaneous mines which produce a variety of other minerals. There are also approximately 3,000 quarries, including 194 opencast sites. It is planned to carry out 15,000 visits to these premises during the 1988-89 year.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the total number of inspections

made to mines and quarries within the United Kingdom by the Mines and Quarries Inspectorate for the last year for which figures are available.

Mr. Nicholls: During the year 1987-88, the Health and Safety Executive's mines and quarries inspectorate recorded 7,066 visits to mines, 4,438 visits to quarries and 745 visits to opencast coal sites. In addition, there were 72 visits to mines rescue stations and 199 to other premises. A further 2,442 visits were made to mines and quarries offices.

Agricultural Inspectorate

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the total number of establishments which require visits from the agricultural inspectorate; how many such visits were made in the last year for which figures are available; and how many inspections are expected to be made in the present year.

Mr. Nicholls: The Health and Safety Executive's agricultural inspectorate is the enforcing authority for 279,051 establishments. In the year ended 31 March 1988 a total of 33,408 visits were made to such premises, of which 1,865 were investigations of accidents or complaints. It is anticipated that 34,390 visits will be made in the current year of which 30,940 will be inspections.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many persons are employed as agricultural inspectors; and on average how many inspections they each make a year.

Mr. Nicholls: On 1 July 1988, a total of 148 inspectors were employed in Her Majesty's agricultural inspectorate of the Health and Safety Executive. During 1987-88, the inspectorate made over 39,000 visits to premises. This figure includes planned preventive inspections, follow-up visits, investigations of accidents and dangerous occurrences, meetings with management and safety representatives, and general advisory and educational work; some visits combined more than one of these purposes. Consequently, it would be misleading to refer to an average rate per inspector.

Factory Inspectorate

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the total number of establishments in the United Kingdom which are eligible for inspection by the factory inspectorate; how many such factory inspections took place in the last year for which figures are available; and how many inspections are expected to be made in the present year.

Mr. Nicholls: The information is not available in the form requested. On 31 March 1988 in Great Britain there were 401,923 fixed premises registered with the factory inspectorate.

Between 1 April 1987 and 31 March 1988, factory inspectors made 69,437 preventive inspection visits to fixed premises and it is anticipated that 70,000 preventive inspections will be made in the present year. It is not possible to identify separately visits to factories.

Figures for Northern Ireland are a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the total number of factory inspectors employed in the United Kingdom; and if he will give an average number of visits each individual factory inspector will make in a year.

Mr. Nicholls: On 1 July 1988, a total of 548 inspectors were employed in Her Majesty's factory inspectorate of the Health and Safety Executive. During 1987-88, the inspectorate made over 173,000 visits to premises. This figure includes planned preventive inspections, follow-up visits, investigations of accidents and dangerous occurrences, meetings with management and safety representatives, and general advisory and educational work; some visits combined more than one of these purposes. Consequently, it would be misleading to refer to an average rate per inspector.

The figures relate to Great Britain. Information for Northern Ireland is the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Tourism

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what assessment his Department has made of the likely impact on the tourist industry in East Anglia afforded by the opening of the Channel tunnel; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: None. However, the British Tourist Authority's Channel tunnel national tourism working party has produced a report, "The Channel Tunnel—An opportunity and a challenge for British Tourism", a summary of which has been sent to all Members of both Houses of Parliament. This report examines the potential for regions other than the south-east to benefit from the increase in tourists from the continent. A copy of the full report is available from the Library.

Industrial Accidents

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the number of deaths resulting from all industrial accidents in each of the past 10 years.

Mr. Nicholls: The available information is as follows:

Reported occupational injuries in Great Britain, resulting in death to

Year	*Employees only*	*Employees and self employed*	*Members of the public arising from work activity*
1977	524	—	—
[1]1978	—	622	—
1979	—	615	—
1980	—	579	—
[2]1981	—	[3]499	75
1982	—	517	84
1983	—	508	88
1984	—	496	101
1985	—	[3]473	[3]159
[7]1986	—	108	24
[6]1986-87	—	410	91

Notes:

[1] 1978-80 fatalities include some involving non-employees voluntarily reported.

[2] 1981-1985 and 1986 (Jan-March) fatalities to employees, the self-employed and the non-employed reported to the Health and Safety Executive or other appropriate enforcing authority under, and as defined in the Notification of Accidents and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (NADOR).

[3] Figures for 1981 and 1985 have been recently corrected and vary slightly from previously published figures.
[4] Year commencing 1 April 1986 when the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) came into force.
[5] Includes the 56 people killed in the Bradford Football Club disaster.
[6] Provisional.
[7] First quarter.

Oil Industry (North Sea)

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what action he proposes to take to prevent workers being blacklisted by the oil industry in the North sea; and what evidence is available to him on the extent of this practice.

Mr. Nicholls: I have no evidence of such blacklisting and no proposals for action. Employers are free to employ whoever they feel is best suited to the job, provided they do not discriminate unlawfully on grounds of race or sex.

Opencast Coal Mining (Medical Surveys)

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has received a copy of the medical surveys in Kent linking high levels of serious illness with dust from opencast coal mining; and if he will carry out similar surveys in other areas of England where there is opencast coal mining and other activities generating significant levels of dust.

Mr. Nicholls: I am not aware of any authoritative medical surveys on this issue or of proposals for any to be carried out.

Child Care

Mrs. Mahon: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment from what age, under the training for employment scheme, child care costs for sole parents up to £50 a week are available for children.

Mr. Lee: *[holding answer 22 July 1988]:* Help with the costs of necessary child care of up to £50 per week per child is available to lone parents (or guardians) who are eligible to enter employment training. The payments can be made in respect of children of all ages up to 16 where arrangements for their care have been made with a child minder, day nursery or creche registered with the local authority.

Mr. Hinchliffe To ask the Secretary of State for Employment, if he will provide a breakdown of annual long-term unemployment rates for the United Kingdom, showing the number out of work for six months and over, in the years 1978 to 1988.

Mr. Lee: Direct comparisons of unemployment by duration since 1978 are not possible because of changes in the coverage of the count. Following is the available information which is also in the library. Table *(a)* shows the percentage of unemployed registrants in the United Kingdom who had been unemployed six months or more for each year from 1979 to 1982. Table *(b)* shows corresponding figures according to the percentage of unemployed claimants from 1983 to 1987.

Table (a)
Percentage of unemployed registrants in the United Kingdom unemployed over six months

	Percentage of total registrants
1979	42·2
1980	35·1
1981	45·1
1982	54·6

Table (b)
Percentage of unemployed claimants in the United Kingdom unemployed over six months

	Percentage of total claimants
1983	56·0
1984	58·3
1985	59·1
1986	59·2
1987	60·0

Note: Figures based on the average for January, April, July and October of each year.

ENERGY

North Sea Oil and Gas Rigs (Safety)

12. **Mr. Jessel:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what representations he has received about the safety of North sea oil rigs.

Mr. Parkinson: I have received a number of representations about the safety of offshore installations. The Government continue to attach paramount importance to all safety matters.

14. **Mr. Prescott:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the trend in serious accidents and dangerous occurrences in the offshore oil and gas industry over the last five years; and if he has any plans to seek to improve the safety record of the industry.

Mr. Parkinson: The number of serious accidents and dangerous occurrences rose between 1983 and 1986, but fell between 1986 and 1987 to around 1984 levels. The upward trend between 1984 and 1986 partly reflects improved reporting procedures. The safety of offshore workers is of paramount importance and we are determined to continue to find ways to improve the industry's safety record.

29. **Mr. Rooker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how many unpublished reports of investigations into explosions and fires on North sea installations his Department holds.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The information is not available in the form requested. However, in broad terms the Department carries out over 200 inspections and between 25 and 30 accident investigations annually.

33. **Mr. Haynes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he has called for a safety report on all platforms operating in the British sector of the North sea.

Mr. Parkinson: All platforms operating in the British sector of the North sea are subject to regular and systematic safety assessments involving inspection by the appropriate certifying authority, the Department of Transport and my own Department.

38. **Mr. Knapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what access offshore oil and gas workers have to *(a)* trades unions and *(b)* the safety inspectorate.

Mr. Peter Morrison: Offshore oil and gas workers have full access to both trade unions and the safety inspectorate.

Under a memorandum of understanding between the unions and the United Kingdom Offshore Operators Association there is free access by union officials to offshore installations, where they can talk freely and confidentially to the work force.

The manager of an offshore installation is also under a duty to ensure that the telephone number of a representative of the safety inspectorate is posted in a conspicuous place on the installation so that people working on rigs can make direct contact with the inspectorate if they feel it necessary to do so.

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how many fires have been reported during each month in the current year on each of the North sea oil and gas rigs.

Mr. Peter Morrison: In total 16 fires on offshore installations in the United Kingdom continental shelf have been reported to my Department so far this year. The number of fires for each month is as follows:

1988	*Number*
January	3
April	1
May	5
June	2
July	5

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy, pursuant to his reply of 14 July, *Official Report*, column *367*, if he will publish such information as is available to him on the number of inspectors employed by certifying authorities on safety inspection work in the North sea in each year since 1965.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The certifying authorities estimate that in aggregate 250 man years are currently devoted to the survey of offshore installations. Comparable information for earlier years is not available.

Mr. Prescott: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how many full-time and part-time inspectors were employed by his Department in the offshore industry inspectorate; and how many vacancies there were for each year since 1979.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The number of full-time inspectors employed and the number of vacancies since 1980 is set out in the table.

Date	*Complement*	*Staff in post*	*Vacancies*
1980 (June)	28	25	3
1981 (July)	33	31	2
1982 (March)	35	32	3
1985 (October)	33	27	6
1987 (March)	44	36	8
1988 (July)	46	37	9

No part-time inspectors are employed. Figures are available only for the dates shown.

The number of staff in post has risen significantly since 1980 but has not fully kept pace with increases in complement. However, recruitment initiatives since the beginning of 1988 will substantially reduce the nine vacancies outstanding in the near future. Recruitment efforts will continue.

Mr. Prescott: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what evidence his Department has about the level of inspection, maintenance and repair work carried out on offshore installations for each year since 1979; and by how much it has increased or reduced over this period.

Mr. Peter Morrison: Operators are required under the Offshore Installations (Operational Safety, Health and Welfare) Regulations 1976 (SI 1976/1019) to maintain the safety of installations and their equipment and to establish a scheme providing for their regular examination, maintenance and testing. My inspectors are responsible for checking that the regulations are complied with. Details of the level of maintenance and repair work can be gathered only at disproportionate cost.

North Sea Oil and Gas

31. **Mr. Hannam:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he next plans to meet the United Kingdom Offshore Operators Association to discuss North sea oil developmemt.

Mr. Peter Morrison: My right hon. Friend and I meet the United Kingdom Offshore Operators Association from time to time to discuss matters of mutual interest.

North Sea Installations

Mr. Doran: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy for how many oil and gas installations in the United Kingdom sector of the North sea each inspector is responsible.

Mr. Peter Morrison: Inspectors are not allocated to particular installations. Each installation is subject to inspection by inspectors of different disciplines to ensure as wide a spread of expertise as possible.

Mr. Doran: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list those bodies and agencies which receive copies of the reports of his Department's inspections of oil and gas installations in the United Kingdom sector of the North sea.

Mr. Peter Morrison: Copies of my inspector's reports are not sent to outside agencies. Any lessons to be learnt are immediately communicated to the petroleum industry by means of safety notices. An inspector will ensure that any action required is carried out by the companies concerned.

Mr. Doran: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) to which body the certifying authorities for oil and gas installations in the United Kingdom sector of the North sea report; and what is the status of their reports;

(2) what powers the certifying authorities have to enforce adequate safety standards; and on what occasions these powers have been used and in respect of which oil and gas installations;

(3) what criteria his Department applies in its appointment of companies to act as certifying authorities for safety purposes of oil and gas installations in the United Kingdom sector of the North sea;

(4) to whom copies of the reports of the inspections by certifying authorities of oil and gas installations in the United Kingdom sector of the North sea are made available.

Mr. Peter Morrison: There are six approved independent certifying authorities appointed under the Offshore Installations (Construction and Survey) Regulations 1974 (SI.1974/289). These are:

Lloyd's Register of Shipping;
American Bureau of Shipping;
Bureau Veritas;
Det Norske Veritas;
Germanisher Lloyd; and
Offshore Certification Bureau.

The first five listed were appointed in 1974 and are internationally respected ship classification societies. The sixth, formerly known as Halcrow, Ewbank Partnership, was appointed in 1976 and comprised a group of internationally respected British consultants. Each certifying authority was appointed only after an in-depth study by specialists in my Department. These studies involved analysis of each authority's management, structure, staff and methodology in applying their experience as ship classification societies to offshore installations.

Whilst they are required to be independent, the authorities are subjected to continuous reassessment by my Department to ensure that their technical and managerial quality is maintained. These reassessments involve further detailed studies of the methodology applied by the authorities to ensure that they comply with the law; that the most up-to-date standards are being applied in certification procedures and that they are correctly interpreting design and construction guidance notes issued by my Department which document technology relevant to offshore installations which is not readily available already in published form.

Before issuing a certificate of fitness, the certifying authorities are required to examine plans, drawings, specifications, reports and other documents submitted by the owners of offshore installations. The certifying authorities must also carry out, or ensure that there has already been carried out, an independent assessment of the design and method of construction of each installation. They also carry out an initial major survey of each installation.

Only when satisfied that it is proper to do so can a certifying authority issue a certificate of fitness. This is valid for up to five years, after which a further major survey must be carried out before a subsequent certificate is issued. Annual surveys of installations are also required.

Certifying authorities and owners can agree that offshore installations should be subject to continuous assessment instead of subsequent major surveys. Under this procedure annual surveys continue to take place but additionally the installation is continuously surveyed and the need for a separate major survey every fifth year is therefore removed.

If a certifying authority considers that a particular installation is no longer fit for its intended purpose it is required to notify the owner and me so that I can take appropriate action including if necessary the withdrawal of a certificate of fitness. The certifying authorities may, as part of their powers, impose limitations on the location, operation and movement of offshore installations. They may also decline to issue a certificate of fitness.

While the certifying authorities are independent and liaise directly with offshore operators, the authorities are, under the terms and conditions of their appointment, required to send me an annual report of their activities together with any report that they have prepared or obtained in carrying out their duties which I may require. Certifying authorities are not required to copy these reports to any other organisations.

The Certifying authority for Piper Alpha was *Lloyd's Register of Shipping*.

Mr. Doran: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list the occasions when his Department has issued a safety notice to an operator of an oil and gas installation in the United Kingdom sector of the North sea requiring the operator to improve safety standards on an installation; and to which operators and in respect of which installation they were issued.

Mr. Peter Morrison: When an inspector of my safety directorate completes an inspection he records in the operator's logbook any matters he requires the owner or offshore installation manager to do or refrain from doing. If necessary, he also leaves a list of points for attention with the offshore installation manager, (which consists of points recorded in the logbook and minor points of detail), and sends a letter to company management at the shore base. Any safety recommendation which could be of general application is notified to all offshore operators. An inspector will ensure that companies perform the action required; time limits are specified by my inspectors when required.

Piper Alpha Disaster

13. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement about the outcome of interviews with relatives of deceased crew members of Piper Alpha about alleged gas leaks reported in the period before the explosion.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The technical investigation team has already begun to interview relatives of deceased crew members. The investigation team is anxious to hear from anyone who has any information about events surrounding the explosion.

35. **Mr. Martlew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement regarding progress in the inquiry taking place into the accident that took place on the Piper Alpha oil platform.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. and learned Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Campbell) on 14 July 1988, at columns 365-66. The public inquiry, under the chairmanship of the hon. Lord Cullen, will take place as soon as practicable.

40. **Mr. Wray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the results of the search for missing bodies of victims of the Piper Alpha disaster in the North sea.

Mr. Peter Morrison: Following the accident, Her Majesty's Coastguard conducted an intensive search and rescue operation until nightfall on 8 July. Sixty seven survivors were airlifted to safety. After 8 July Occidental assumed responsibility for search operations and it has informed me that 43 bodies have now been recovered. The

company is continuing to give the highest priority to recovering the remaining bodies, but the work has been made more difficult by the extent of the damage to the platform and the need not to put further lives at risk.

Mr. Prescott: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when his Department received the report of the 1984 explosion on the Piper Alpha installation; what are the reasons for not making the report publicly available; and whether any of its recommendations were made available to employers and employees in the North sea offshore industry.

Mr. Peter Morrison: My right hon. Friend has undertaken to give the 1984 report to the public inquiry. When my right hon. Friend met the offshore unions they asked for the report to be made public as early as possible. My right hon. Friend undertook to inform Lord Cullen of the unions' views, and has now done this. It is for Lord Cullen to decide whether or when to make evidence available but my right hon. Friend has indicated to him that he has no objection to the report being made public.

As is normal in these circumstances the 1984 report was not published. However my inspector was satisfied that following the accident, Occidental took the appropriate action.

Bradwell Hall Reactor

15. **Mr. Ray Powell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he has received further information on the restart date of Bradwell Hall reactor.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The Health and Safety Executive's nuclear installations inspectorate gave consent to the CEGB on 12 July 1988 to start up reactor 1 at Bradwell nuclear power station in Essex. Reactor start up commenced on 14 July. Electricity has been delivered to the grid from 15 July.

Toronto Conference (Atmosphere Pollution)

16. **Mr. Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if his Department sent representatives to the Toronto conference on "The Changing Atmosphere: Implications For Global Security; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: As I stated in a written reply to the hon. Member for Devon, North (Mr. Speller) on 20 July, the United Kingdom delegation to the Toronto conference on the changing atmosphere was led by the chief scientist of the Department of the Environment and included a representative from my Department.

China

18. **Mr. Baldry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what discussions he had during his visit to the People's Republic of China with the new Energy Minister and officials of the various corporations concerned with the energy industry about prospects for British industry in China

Mr. Parkinson: The Chinese energy sector has just been reorganised. I met the new Energy Minister and the presidents of each of the energy corporations. I was accompanied by a group of senior British industrialists who attended all these meetings. The Chinese expressed their great satisfaction with the contribution which United Kingdom companies are already making to the development of China's energy resources and they looked forward to expanding co-operation in future.

Hinkley Point C Inquiry

19. **Mr. Dunnachie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what information he has sent to the inspector of the Hinkley Point C inquiry regarding the guidelines for the inquiry.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The terms in which my right hon. Friend complied with the requirements of the inquiry rules to set out the matters which appeared to him to be relevant to his consideration of the CEGB's application for Hinkley Point C were reported in his answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Wells (Mr. Heathcoat-Amory) on 21 March 1988, at columns 21-22.

Electricity Privatisation

20. **Mr. Butler:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the progress of increased access to the national grid by private generators of electricity 1983.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Although the Energy Act 1983 allowed private generators common carrier access to the electricity supply industry's transmisson and distribution system, it has not gone far enough in encouraging competition. After privatisation all generators will have fair and equal access to the transmission and distribution system.

32. **Mr. Meale:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if, in the light of the National Consumer Council report about his privatisation plans for the electricity industry, he will make a statement on the likely prices of electricity.

34. **Mr. Hardy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what action he proposes to take in relation to prices and consumer protection, following the privatisation of the electricity supply industry.

Mr. Michael Spicer: In future, electricity prices and standards of service will reflect the benefits both of competition and of the regulation of any remaining monopolies.

36. **Mr. Wallace:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if there are any plans to set up a regulatory body in advance of the privatisation of the electricity supply industry.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave earlier today to my hon. Friend the Member for Erewash (Mr. Rost).

South-Western Supergrid

21. **Mr. Colvin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if, when he next meets the chairman of the Central Electricity Generating Board, he will raise with him the extent of the shortfall of electricity supply on the south-western supergrid in the event that no further power stations are commissioned between now and 1995; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Parkinson: I meet the chairman of the Central Electricity Generating Board on a regular basis to discuss a number of subjects. The Central Electricity Generating Board sees a need for new generating capacity in the south-west to ensure the existing security of supply.

Alternative Energy

22. **Mr. Thurnham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what recommendations for research into alternative energy sources he is currently considering; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Energy paper No. 55 "Renewable Energy in the United Kingdom: The Way Forward", which I announced in the House on 20 June, outlines our plans for the renewable energy development programme to the year 2000.

Brindex

23. **Mr. Salmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he last met the chairman of Brindex; and what issues were discussed.

Mr. Peter Morrison: My right hon. Friend met the chairman of Brindex on 17 May. They discussed a range of matters, including the role of independent exploration companies in the exploration and development of the United Kingdom's oil and gas reserves.

Private Sector Coal Mining

24. **Mr. Watts:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what recent representations he has received seeking the expansion of private sector coal mining.

Mr. Parkinson: The Government have received a number of representations seeking increases in the statutory limits on private sector mining operations, and are giving them careful consideration.

Nuclear Power Generation

25. **Mr. Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what proposals he has received for the building of additional nuclear-powered electricity generating plants; and if he will make a statement on the future of nuclear power generation.

Mr. Parkinson: The CEGB has applied for consent to build a PWR at Hinkley Point in Somerset. The public inquiry is expected to start on 4 October. I understand that the CEGB also intends to apply for consent for a PWR at Wylfa, on Anglesey.

There is a vital strategic need for the significant non-fossil fuel contribution that can be made by nuclear power generation.

Coal Reserves

26. **Mr. Livsey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when his Department last made an estimate of coal reserves in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Coal reserves in the United Kingdom are substantial. Responsibility for quantifying reserves in place lies with British Coal.

Electricity Supplies (Scottish Link)

27. **Mr. Home Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how advanced are the plans to strengthen the inter-connector link in Scotland to supply the electricity market elsewhere.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The electricity supply industry is considering the scope for strengthening the link. The Government welcome this, since use of the link should facilitate greater competition in the supply of electricity.

Electricity Supply Industry (Noxious Emissions)

28. **Mr. Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what steps his Department is currently taking to reduce carbon dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions by the electricity supply industry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Parkinson: Reductions in nitrogen oxides will follow from our agreement to the European Communities large combustion plant directive. No specific steps have been taken, or are planned, to limit emissions of carbon dioxide from power stations. However, the Government's commitment to continued diversity of fuel supply, including a sizeable non fossil fuel component, will help to limit such emissions.

Energy Market

30. **Mr. Knox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement about progress towards the completion of the energy market in the European Community in 1992.

Mr. Parkinson: My right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Department of Energy, described in his reply of 20 June 1988, at column 411 to the hon. Member for Bolton, West (Mr. Sackville) the inability of the Energy Council to agree conclusions at its meeting on 9 June on the Commission's paper on obstacles to the completion of the internal energy market. Officials of member states are now examining the Commission's inventory of obstacles to verify that it is complete and accurate.

The Commission intends to submit specific proposals to the Energy Council on transparency of energy prices, during the second half of 1988 and on energy infrastructures before the end of 1989. I understand that it also expects to submit proposals on the electricity market by the end of June next year. It will draw up by the end of next year a further report on developments in this field.

Bradwell Nuclear Power Station

37. **Mr. Alan W. Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what procedures the nuclear installations inspectorate have required from the Central Electricity Generating Board for checking the integrity of the welds in the coolant gas circuit and checking for fissures in the pressure vessel at Bradwell nuclear power station.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The Health and Safety Executive's nuclear installations inspectorate has required the CEGB to carry out an inspection of welds in the reactor 1 coolant gas circuit. This has been completed satisfactorily and a similar inspection programme for reactor 2 will be undertaken next year. The CEGB is also required to complete a programme of high resolution photography of certain areas of the reactor pressure vessels by the spring of 1989, which will add further confidence to the reactor pressure vessel safety case.

Fast Reactor Programme

39. **Mr. Maclennan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement about future British participation in the European collaborative fast reactor programme.

Mr. Parkinson: I refer the hon. Member to the statement I made in the House on 21 July 1988, at column 1288.

Pressurised Fluidised Bed Combustion Project, Grimethorpe

41. **Mr. Barron:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what discussions he has had with British Coal on the funding of the second phase of the pressurised fluidised bed combustion project at Grimethorpe.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My officials have been kept informed of British Coal's proposals through discussions under the aegis of the International Energy Agency, and within ACORD.

Coal Industry Dispute

42. **Mr. Skinner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will obtain from the chairman of British Coal an up-to-date report of the number of miners sacked during the 1984-85 coal strike who have now been reinstated.

Mr. Michael Spicer: No. The dismissal and re-employment of mineworkers is a matter for the management of the British Coal Corporation.

Deep-mined Coal

43. **Mr. Douglas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the production of deep-mined coal in Scotland and the amount expected to be burned in power stations in Scotland during the remainder of 1988.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Output forecasts are a matter for British Coal. The extent of Scottish power station coal burn is a commercial matter for the power station operators to determine.

Radioactive Waste

44. **Mr. Speller:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy where when the nuclear-powered generating stations at Berkeley and Bradwell are closed down, the highly radioactive content will be disposed of; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Spent fuel from the reactors will be removed and sent to Sellafield for reprocessing. It is expected that accumulated operational wastes and other active wastes arising from decommissioning will in due course be consigned to the deep disposal facility which Nirex has been asked to investigate.

Energy Efficiency

45. **Mr. Patnick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether he will provide further information to help managers and occupiers of commercial and public buildings to improve energy efficiency.

Mr. Peter Morrison: My Energy Efficiency Office is producing a series of booklets entitled "Energy Efficiency in Buildings". Each booklet helps managers and occupiers of a given type of building assess the scope for saving money through improved energy efficiency, and suggests an action plan. Booklets are now available on schools, catering establishments, shops, health care buildings, and further and higher education buildings. A further eight titles will be published shortly.

Petroleum Coke Fuel

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what steps he is taking to alert the public to the dangers of burning petroleum coke fuel; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The Government are considering what steps might be appropriate. I can confirm that all such coke manufactured in the United Kingdom is supplied solely to the metal refining industry.

Departmental Inspectors

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy, further to his reply of 14 July, *Official Report*, column 367, how many inspectors were employed by his Department in each year since 1965.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott) today.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Food Standards

Mr. Shersby: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what information he has concerning the views of the London Food Commission on standards of food production in Britain; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The Government's aim has always been that there should be a plentiful and varied supply of good quality, unadulterated, enjoyable food available to consumers at affordable prices. I do not see any case for a separate department to handle food issues. We already have a Minister for Food who combines those responsibilities with those for agriculture and for fisheries thus uniting the whole food chain from producer to consumer.

It is an offence under the food Acts to render any food injurious to health. Comprehensive regulations existing under the Acts provide for proper hygiene in the preparation, handling or selling of food. In addition a number of cases of food poisoning arise from lack of knowledge of appropriate handling procedures in domestic kitchens; the Government and others are in the process of developing publicity campaigns designed to provide advice in this area. Enforcement of food law is vigorously pursued by local authorities; each authority deploys its resources in this field to the extent and in the manner that best suits local circumstances. Ministers are also already required by the Acts to restrict as far as practicable the use in foods of substances of no nutritional value. We are however always prepared to examine ways of improving or simplifying the food laws when circumstances suggest it is necessary.

The food Acts require that Ministers consult with representatives of interested parties on draft regulations before these are made and laid before Parliament. Where those proposed regulations arise from advice we have received from our independent expert committees, that advice is published and public comment invited on it before any regulations are drafted. The published advice carries references to the key information the experts have considered in assembling the advice and we endeavour to ensure as far as practicable that the data which is the subject of those references is available for consultation by interested members of the public. There is distinct practical advantage in continuing the present practice of the working sessions of these committees being private, with committees free to take advice from whatever sources they consider appropriate.

The Government currently spend nearly £8 million per annum on research and monitoring of food safety and

quality. These resources are targeted at problem areas rather than being spread over areas where no difficulties are known to exist.

We are required under the Agriculture Act 1986 to seek to achieve a reasonable balance between agriculture and conservation and a range of measures have been introduced to encourage farmers to protect and enhance the environment. This is another good reason why it is sensible to link ministerial responsibilities for agriculture and food.

The harmonisation of food laws in the European Community (as part of the move to the single market by 1992) is to be done on the basis of the protection of public health, the maintenance of food safety, and the provision of adequate consumer information. Thus there will continue to be high standards of control whilst removing barriers to trade and avoiding undue burdens on business. On a world wide basis, the United Kingdom plays a prominent and active role in the development of the Codex Alimentarius (the FAO/WHO World Food standards programme) which is available to developing countries to form the basis of their own food law and consumer protection programmes.

Dairy Farmers

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will detail the assistance given to dairy farmers since 1 January; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The decision by the European Council in February to extend the operation of quotas until 1992 gives dairy farmers the assurances they need in order to be able to plan for the future. At the same time it was agreed that financial compensation for the suspension of quotas would be continued beyond 1989.

The Government secured changes in Community regulations to improve the operation of the adjustment to milk quotas to take account of changes in butterfat levels, and clarified the operation of the national rules relating to quota transfers. Changes in the conversion rate for the green pound will also lead to some increase in the support levels for dairy farmers from 1 January 1989.

ADAS continues to help farmers develop sound production and business strategies in times when output is limited by quotas and the Government are supporting a number of projects at research centres which are of relevance to dairy farmers. Dairy products are among those supported by Food from Britain and my Department is in the final stages of preparing, with the industry, a dairy product programme under EC regulation 355/77.

Direct support in the dairy sector represented over £90 per cow in 1987-88 and this together with the industry's own skill in adapting to milk production under quotas, has led to a steady rise in average dairy farm incomes over the past three years.

Green Pound

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what information he has as to the effect on *(a)* the beef sector, *(b)* the dairy sector, and *(c)* the sheep sector of revaluations of the green pound and interest rate changes since December 1987.

Mr. MacGregor: No green pound changes have come into effect since December 1987 in the sectors concerned. I regret that information is not available on the level of farmers' borrowings in the particular commodity sectors referred to or, therefore, on the effect of interest rate changes on the beef, dairy and sheep sectors. Much will depend on the level and sources of individual farmers' borrowings.

Farm Buildings

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what advice and assistance is given to farmers on improving the appearance of their farm and removing unsightly buildings and derelict equipment; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: Ministry technical staff will give specialist advice on the conservation aspects of estate management matters generally, including the appearance of farm buildings in the landscape. Grants are also available to eligible farmers for the provision, replacement, improvement or alteration of buildings for agricultural use or as part of a planned diversification into other forms of rural enterprise. Where such works involve the use of vernacular materials, to improve the appearance of the building, any extra costs will be eligible for grant aid.

Agricultural Development and Advisory Service

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether the efficiency scrutiny review of the Agricultural Development and Advisory Service has been completed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: No such review is being undertaken but as explained in the reply of 26 May to the hon. Member for South Shields (Dr. Clark) at column *261* a review of the first year's experience of the Agricultural Development and Advisory Service charging is currently being undertaken by senior officials.

Scottish Fishermen's Federation

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met representatives of the Scottish Fishermen's Federation; and which subjects were discussed.

Mr. MacGregor: I met representatives of the Scottish Fishermen's Federation on 8 July 1988, together with my right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Scottish Office, Lord Sanderson. We discussed a number of issues of importance to the United Kingdom fishing industry including the capacity of the fleet, the licensing system, rates of grant, the western mackerel fishery, North sea cod and mesh sizes.

European Community Agricultural Commissioner

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the EC Agriculture Commissioner; and what was discussed.

Mr. MacGregor: I last met the EC Commissioner for Agriculture at the Agriculture Council on 18 and 19 July. I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Beverley (Mr. Cran) on Wednesday 20 July, at columns *633-34*.

Torry Research Station

Mr. Doran: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last visited the Torry research station, Aberdeen; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Paisley, South (Mr. Buchan) on 7 July at column *745*.

Coast Protection

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what action is being considered by his Department for the coastal protection of Spurn Point; what assessment he has made of the consequences for Humberside and Lincolnshire in the event of the peninsula being swept away; whether he is considering a long-term strategy for the defence of Spurn Point; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: The Ministry has agreed to grant aid a study of this area, which is currently under consideration by Holderness borough council (the coastal protection authority for Spurn peninsula). Any assessment of the consequences of a breach, and any long-term strategy, would be dependent upon the outcome of this study.

White Fish

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food why he has not published white fish sectoral allocations for individual producer groups for the current year.

Mr. Gummer: Each producer organisation has been notified of its sectoral allocation for 1988. On the question of making this information more widely available, I refer the hon. Member to my reply to him of 12 July at column *136*.

Rhizomania

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what action has been taken following the recent discovery of rhizomonia virus in soil attached to imported nursery stock.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Discussion have taken place between my Department and the plant health authorities in the Netherlands, and agreement has been rached that exports of nursery stock from the Netherlands to the United Kindom should come only from rhizomania-free areas. Measures have also been agreed which will reduce to a minimum the possibility of contamination of the soil in those areas by rhizomania virus originating elsewhere. My Department and the Dutch authorities will remain in close touch with each other. I am grateful to the Government of the Netherlands for the understanding they have shown of Her Majesty's Government's concern over this matter.

Set-aside

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many set-aside applications have been received by his Department; and what is the acreage involved.

Mr. MacGregor: None as yet. Application forms have only just been made available, and applications are not being accepted until statutory instruments have completed their parliamentary processes.

Environment

Mr. Madden: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what discussions he is having with the National Farmers Union about the effect of agriculture on the environment.

Mr. Gummer: I and my officials are in regular contact with the National Farmers Union on this subject.

Afforestation

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will place in the Library a copy of the operating instructions under which the Forestry Commission will carry out its procedures in respect of new planting in the light of the Environmental Assessment (Afforestation) Regulations 1988.

Mr. MacGregor: The commission will shortly be publishing a leaflet on the procedures to be followed in respect of environmental assessment for afforestation projects. Copies of this leaflet will be placed in the Library of the House as soon as they are available.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if, pursuant to his answer of 19 July, he will set out the ways in which the procedures to be adopted for new planting by the Forestry Commission will differ from those laid down in the Environmental Assessment (Afforestation) Regulations 1988 in respect of new planting by the private sector.

Mr. MacGregor: The procedures to be followed by the Forestry Commission in respect of its own new planting proposals differ from those set out in the regulations only in respect of those requirements which are clearly inappropriate. For example, the commission would not seek a direction from Ministers against its own decision to carry out an environmental assessment in any case.

Farmers (Planning Permission)

Mr. Ken Hargreaves: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what guidance he intends to give to farmers who experience difficulties in obtaining planning permission.

Mr. MacGregor: I am aware of concern in the farming community about the difficulties of getting planning permission, especially now that we are encouraging more diversification on farms.

The Government have already made it clear that planning authorities should adjust their policies to the changes in the orientation of agriculture which are taking place as a result of reform of the common agricultural policy. However, farmers must also play their part by developing a proper understanding of the planning system and presenting their planning applications clearly and convincingly.

To help farmers to develop their expertise, I have decided with my right hon. Friends the Secretary of State for the Environment and the Secretary of State for Wales to produce a farmers' guide to the planning system. This will encourage farmers:

— to present their applications and plans effectively and with due regard for the character of their area;
— to think about the impact of any development on others and to try and anticipate the planning

authority's concerns,
— to emphasise the benefits, such as the number of jobs created; and
— to discuss their ideas with planning officers, local councillors and their neighbours at an early stage and be ready to show some flexibility.

I hope the guide will be available before the end of the year.

Statistical Divisions

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list for 1979, 1984 and the most recent year the numbers of staff by grade in the statistical divisions in his Department; and if he will differentiate between staff in the statistical posts and staff in administrative posts.

Mr. Donald Thompson *[holding answer 21 July 1988]:* The information requested is as follows:

	1 April 1979	*1 April 1984*	*1 April 1988*
Chief statistician	2	2	2
Statistician	8	8	10
Senior assistant statistician	6	2	6
Assistant statistician	2	2	3
Support staff	198½	131	114½

These figures are prepared on a different basis from those in a White Paper "Government Statistical Services" Cmnd. 8236 of 1981 which covered staff outside statistics divisions engaged in statistical work.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Civil Servants (Dismissals)

80. **Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many civil servants have been dismissed over the past five years.

Mr. Brooke: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt) on 13 July 1988, at column 200.

Civil Servants (Dispersal)

81. **Mr. Holt:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what are the percentages of civil servants working outside London in the Departments of *(a)* Education, *(b)* Health and Social Security, *(c)* Defence, *(d)* Home Affairs, *(e)* Transport and *(f)* others; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: The percentages of civil servants working outside London are:

Department	[1] *Percentage*
Education and Science	43
Health and Social Security	83
Defence	87
Home Office	74
Transport	85
Others	74

[1] The figures quoted are estimates relating to April 1988, based on returns made by Departments to the Treasury.

National Income

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will update the answer given to the hon. Member for Birkenhead detailing the share of national income going to different income groups of 4 November 1986, *Official Report*, columns *412-14*.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Information for 1985-86, derived from the survey of personal incomes for that year, is as follows:

Quantile group of tax units[1,2]	*Income before tax*		*Income after tax*	
	£ billion	*per cent.*[1]	*£ billion*	*per cent.*[1]
Top 1 per cent.	12·7	6·1	7·9	4·7
Top 2 per cent.	20·4	9·8	13·3	7·9
Top 3 per cent.	25·6	12·3	17·3	10·3
Top 4 per cent.	30·8	14·8	21·3	12·6
Top 5 per cent.	36·0	17·3	25·2	15·0

[1] As in the previous answer, quantile groups of tax units and percentage shares of income are determined by reference to the population of tax units for which the Inland Revenue has records. Some of these tax units will have no liability to income tax.
[2] Single people and married couples.

Income Tax

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the number and proportion of income tax payers in each of the following tax categories, the number and proportion claiming mortgage tax relief, the average value of relief per mortgagee, the total cost of the relief and the percentage of the total cost for each group *(a)* up to £5,000 per year; *(b)* £5,000 to £7,500 per year; *(c)* £7,500 to £10,000 per year; *(d)* £10,000 to £12,500 per year; *(e)* £12,500 to £15,000 per year; *(f)* £15,000 to £17,500 per year; *(g)* £17,500 to £20,000 per year; *(h)* £20,000 to £25,000 per year; *(i)* £25,000 to £30,000 per year; *(j)* £30,000 to £40,000 per year; *(k)* £40,000 to £50,000 per year and *(l)* over £50,000 per year.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Provisional estimates for 1988-89, based on projections of the 1985-86 survey of personal incomes and the 1985 family expenditure survey, are given in the table. The estimate of the cost of mortgage interest relief is based on the general level of mortgage interest rates in July 1988.

Number of tax units paying tax and number receiving mortgage interest relief by range of total income 1988-89

Range of total income	*Number of tax units[1] paying tax (thousands)*	*Percentage*	*Number of tax units[1] with mortgage relief[2] (thousands)*	*Percentage*	*Average value of relief per mortgagor (£)*	*Cost of relief (£ million)*	*Percentage*
Up to £5,000	2,550	12 per cent.	690	8	300	210	5
£5,001 to £7,500	3,690	18	470	5	360	170	4
£7,501 to £10,000	3,320	16	830	10	400	330	8
£10,001 to £12,500	2,890	14	1,210	14	450	550	13
£12,501 to £15,000	2,280	11	1,230	14	480	590	14
£15,001 to £17,500	1,620	8	1,020	12	490	510	12
£17,501 to £20,000	1,260	6	870	10	490	430	10
£20,001 to £25,000	1,590	7	1,110	13	510	570	13
£25,001 to £30,000	690	3	470	6	630	300	7
£30,001 to £40,000	600	3	440	5	780	340	8
£40,001 to £50,000	180	1	120	1	900	110	3
Over £50,000	230	1	140	2	1,020	140	3
Total	20,900	100	8,600	100	490	4,250	100

[1] Single persons and married couples
[2] Including about ¼ million non-taxpaying tax units

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the rates of income tax for each year from 1979.

Mr. Norman Lamont *(holding answer 21 July 1988]:* The information is in the following table:

Rates of Income Tax 1978-79 to 1988-89

Period	*Per cent.*
Reduced rate	
1978-79 to 1979-80	25
Basic rate	
1978-79	33
1979-80 to 1985-86	30
1986-87	29
1987-88	27
1988-89	25
Higher rate	
1978-79	40, 45, 50, 55, 60, 65, 70, 75, 83
1979-80 to 1987-88	40, 45, 50, 55, 60
1988-89	40
Investment income surcharge	
1978-79	10, 15
1979-80 to 1983-84	15

Mortgage Fraud

Mr. Heddle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps the Inland Revenue takes to identify the incidence of mortgage fraud through the operation of mortgage interest relief at source—MIRAS.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The Inland Revenue carries out regular checks on borrowers' mortgage interest relief, and on the lenders to ensure that they are operating the MIRAS arrangements correctly. These compliance procedures are kept under regular review.

Ethnic Monitoring

Mr. Janner: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will now carry out a monitoring exercise in accordance with the code of the Commission for Racial Equality, to ascertain how many and what percentage of people from ethnic minorities are employed in each grade in the Treasury; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: I refer the hon. and learned Member to the reply I gave him on 29 June, at columns 255-58.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what are the results of the ethnic monitoring of recruitment for the AO and AA grades in London; and whether he will place a copy of such results in the Library;

(2) if he will identify those results of the ethnic monitoring of recruitment for the AO and AA grades in London in July 1987 which suggest that the number of appointments offered to ethnic minorities is broadly in proportion to the number of eligible candidates applying from each ethnic group;

(3) how many appointments were offered to members of ethnic minorities as revealed by the survey of ethnic monitoring of recruitment for the AO and AA grades in London in July 1987; and how many such offers were accepted;

(4) how many eligible candidates from each ethnic group applied for recruitment into the AO and AA grades in London in July 1987, according to the ethnic monitoring exercise then carried out by his Department.

Mr. Brooke: The information sought is given in the table. It covers a six-month period beginning 1 July 1987.

	AOs			AAs		
	White	Black	Asian	White	Black	Asian
Total number of eligible applicants	47	14	17	107	42	43
Number offered appointment	6	2	2	27	9	9
Number appointed	6	2	—	13	6	3

Mr. Janner: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in what quasi-governmental bodies or other organisations under his aegis he has authority to request or require the carrying out of ethnic monitoring exercises in accordance with the code of the Commission for Racial Equality; and what ethnic monitoring and equal opportunities exercises have been carried out by each such Department.

Mr. Brooke: Non-departmental public bodies and other bodies sponsored by the Chancellor's departments are responsible for making their own arrangements for the recruitment and personnel management of the staff they employ. Bodies are encouraged to be equal opportunities employers, and to pursue practices in the codes of the Commission for Racial Equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission. No central records are held on ethnic monitoring and equal opportunities exercises carried out by these bodies.

Gross Domestic Product

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the gross domestic product per head in *(a)* the United Kingdom, *(b)* England, *(c)* Wales and *(d)* Scotland.

Mr. Major: I refer the hon. Member to the November 1987 issue of *Economic Trends*. The table on page 86 shows the latest estimates of regional gross domestic product per head in current prices and at factor costs. The provisional estimates for 1986 are *(a)* United Kingdom excluding the continental shelf region, £5,597; *(b)* England, £5,741; *(c)* Wales, £4,795; *(d)* Scotland, £5,234. Revised estimates for 1977-86 and provisional estimates for 1987 will be published in the November 1988 issue of *Economic Trends*.

Exchange Rates

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give the monthly figures for *(a)* United Kingdom interest rates and *(b)* the exchange rate for (i) sterling/deutschmark and (ii) sterling/ecu, together with the variation from the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system central rate of the pound sterling for each month over the last two years.

Mr. Lilley: I refer the hon. Member to tables 13.1 and 13.11 of "Financial Statistics" published monthly by the Central Statistical Office and the United Kingdom table of "International Financial Statistics" published monthly by the International Monetary Fund.

Overseas Debt

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* showing for each developing country, for the latest year for which figures are available, the proportion of export earnings constituted by debt service charges.

Mr. Lilley: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 7 June, at column 527. Similar information for 1987 is not yet available.

Income Bonds

Mr. Gale: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects to increase the interest rates paid on income bonds in line with interest rates in the private sector.

Mr. Lilley: The rate of interest on income bonds, like all national savings rates, is kept under review in the light of the Government's borrowing needs, as well as the trend in interest rates in the economy generally.

Industrial Dredging

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if, pursuant to his answer of 19 July, he will take steps to make available copies of the licences and guidelines issued to each industrial dredging operation by the Crown Estates Commission.

Mr. Lawson: The Crown Estate Commissioners regard dredging licences as commercial documents and as such confidential. I regret therefore that this information cannot be made available.

Taxation

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will state the total receipts from *(a)* value added tax, and *(b)* tax raised in Sunderland for each years from 1979 to 1988.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 21 July 1988]:* The information is not available.

Privatisation

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table in cash terms showing for each of the years 1979-80 to 1988-89 for each of the organisations which has been included in at least one year in the equivalent of table 4.1 of Cm. 288, those asset sales not included in Table 1.4's line for privatisation proceeds together with appropriate totals; whether these proceeds have directly accrued to the Exchequer or have remained in the relevant businesses; and, where these have been set, if he will publish the target proceeds from such asset sales which have been set in the appropriate investment and financing review.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 18 July 1988]:* Actual or forecast receipts from asset sales included in the nationalised industries' internal resources figures shown in table 4.5 of Cm. 288 for 1979-80 to 1988-89 are shown in the table. The total amount in the 1988-89 plans is £303 million.

Proceeds from the sale of assets are a source of internally generated funds for nationalised industries and

do not directly accrue to the Exchequer although they do reduce the industries' need for external finance. Expected asset sale receipts are always taken into account when setting an industry's external financing limits in the investment and financing review, but formal disposal targets are not set.

	1979-80 £ million	1980-81 £ million	1981-82 £ million	1982-83 £ million	1983-84 £ million	1984-85 £ million	1985-86 £ million	1986-87 £ million	1987-88 £ million	1988-89 £ million
British Coal	28	21	24	22	24	22	28	64	61	45
Electricity (England and Wales)	16	10	17	21	23	27	30	23	40	—
North of Scotland and Hydro-Electric Board	—	—	1	1	1	5	1	1	3	—
South of Scotland Electricity Board	—	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	3	—
British Gas Corporation	8	7	7	7	13	95	24	20	—	—
British Steel Corporation	21	59	66	68	19	98	24	29	65	—
British Telecom	77	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Post Office (Posts Businesses)	19	9	7	3	6	7	62	21	24	27
Girobank	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—
British Airways Board	11	15	15	77	11	31	23	4	—	—
British Airports Authority	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	2	—	—
British Railways Board	31	48	34	99	99	160	85	95	187	213
British Transport Docks Board	1	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
British Waterways Board	—	—	—	—	—	2	2	1	6	4
National Freight Company Ltd.	10	17	18	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
National Bus Company	4	11	6	6	7	8	11	13	46	—
Scottish Transport Group	1	1	—	—	1	1	1	1	2	2
British National Oil Corporation	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
British Aerospace	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
British Shipbuilders	3	2	2	2	13	5	3	4	3	—
Civil Aviation Authority	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	2	1
Water (England and Wales)	10	13	16	11	13	21	25	27	26	—
Enterprise Oil	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
London Regional Transport	—	—	—	—	—	—	16	24	73	50

Notes:
(1) Figures individually rounded to nearest £1 million. 1987-88 figures are provisional.
(2) Where industries have been privatised, the figures given relate to the period up to privatisation.
(3) 1988-89 figures relate to industries' present estimates; due to impending privatisation figures are not shown separately for Electricity (E & W), the Scottish Electricity Boards, British Steel Corporation, Girobank and Water (E & W).

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list in the *Official Report* those nationalised industries and public corporations with entries appearing in table 4.1 of Cm. 288 for which privatisation proposals have been announced, citing appropriate references to ministerial statements and placing copies in the Library.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 18 July 1988]:* The following is a list of those nationalised industries and public corporations with entries appearing in table 4.1 of Cm. 288 for which privatisation proposals have been announced, citing appropriate references to ministerial statements.

British Steel Corporation 3 December 1987. (*OR*, col. 1107).
Electricity (England and Wales) 25 February 1988 (*OR*, col. 454).
Girobank 7 June 1988 (*OR*, col. 713).
North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board and South of Scotland Electricity Board 2 March 1988 (*OR*, col. 975).
Scottish Transport Group 27 January 1988 (*OR*, col. 311).
Water (England and Wales) 5 February 1986 (*OR*, col. 287).
Crown Agents 23 February 1984 (*OR*, col. 991).
Crown Suppliers 3 February 1988 (*OR*, col. 983).
General Practice Finance Corporation November 1987 announced in White Paper Cm. 249 (1987)

The Government have also commissioned a feasibility study into privatising *British Technology Group* 13 April 1988 (*OR*, col. 163).

The Government have also announced privatisation proposals for the following subsidiaries of nationalised industries and public corporations.

British Rail: BREL 24 November 1987 (*OR*, col. 141).
British Shipbuilders: Govan yard and other facilities 18 April 1988 (*OR*, col. 554).

Political Parties

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which of the political parties are currently treated by the Inland Revenue as qualifying political parties for the purposes of section 24 of the Inheritance Tax Act 1984.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[pursuant to his reply*, 21 April 1988]: For the purposes of clarification I should add that the Liberal party and the Social Democratic party, before

and after the establishment of the Social and Liberal Democratic party, also currently qualify for the purposes of section 24 of the Inheritance Tax Act 1984.

SCOTLAND

NHS Medical Staff (Pay)

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give, for each health board, their additional allocation to fund the nurses' pay award.

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) of 5 July, *Official Report*, column *522*, how much money each health board is being allocated specifically to meet the full cost of the pay awards to doctors, nurses and other professional staff.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The sum of £92 million is being made available in Scotland to finance the full additional costs of all review body pay awards, including those to nurses. £6 million is required to meet costs in the family practitioner service and a total of £2·567 million has been allocated to the common services agency, state hospital and the National Board for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting for Scotland. £83·433 million has been added to the hospital and community health service allocations of health boards as follows:

Health board	*£ thousands*
Argyll and Clyde	5,981
Ayrshire and Arran	4,500
Borders	1,309
Dumfries and Galloway	2,159
Fife	4,206
Forth Valley	3,942
Grampian	7,700
Greater Glasgow	21,595
Highland	3,148
Lanarkshire	6,924
Lothian	13,340
Orkney	237
Shetland	291
Tayside	7,668
Western Isles	433
Total	83,433

Surplus NHS Property

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he has any plans to change the current arrangements governing the sale of surplus National Health Service property; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The Scottish Home and Health Department is in the course of reviewing the present procedures for the sale of surplus health service property in Scotland. The intention is to streamline the current procedures, which date largely from 1984, building upon our experience since then and upon the increased expertise of health boards, while ensuring that the disposal of surplus property continues to be made on the most favourable terms available.

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has recently received from the general managers of the Scottish health boards concerning the financial arrangements for the proceeds of sales of surplus National Health Service properties; and what response he has made.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The present arrangements envisage that the full amount of the proceeds is ploughed back into health service capital investment. As a result of representations from health board general managers and others, I am reviewing the limit on the amount of the proceeds of a single sale which may at present be retained by the particular health board responsible for the property. A health board selling property which realises more than the normal limit of £250,000 (which was set in April 1986) may, at the discretion of the Scottish Home and Health Department, retain a greater sum, as an alternative to its distribution to health boards more generally, in the light of their capital expenditure plans.

Child Care

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what action he is taking to implement the recommendations within his area of responsibility of the European Commission's childcare network report "Caring for Children—Services and Policies for Childcare and Equal Opportunities in the United Kingdom".

Mr. Michael Forsyth: My right hon. and learned Friend received a copy of this detailed and wide-ranging report only recently. We are considering the report's recommendations with the other Government Departments concerned.

Penal Establishments

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last met the governor of each Scottish penal establishment; and what matters were discussed in each case.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My right hon. and learned Friend last met the governors in charge of all Scottish penal establishments on 25 January 1988. He delivered an address setting out his policies on penal issues and the future of the Scottish Prison Service. This formed the basis for subsequent questions and discussion.

Immigration

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish a table in the *Official Report*, showing for each Scottish penal establishment, the number of prisoners held under immigration legislation together with their average length of stay at the latest date for which figures are available.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The number of prisoners held in Scottish penal establishments under immigration legislation on 5 July 1988 is given in the table.

Prison	*Number of prisoners*
Barlinnie	4
Edinburgh	1
Perth	1
Inverness	1
Total	7

Five of the above prisoners are no longer detained. They were held on average for 37·2 days. The other two prisoners have been held since 25 and 27 June 1988 respectively.

Disabled People (Legislation)

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last met with representatives of COSLA to discuss the implementation of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: My officials have had two meetings with representatives of the convention to discuss the implications of sections of the Act which have already been implemented: the second was on 31 August 1987 and was concerned with section 13 which was brought into operation on 1 February 1988.

Prisons (Special Provisions)

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what arrangements are in force in Scottish prisons to provide *(a)* special diets, *(b)* religious worship facilities, *(c)* appropriate cultural facilities and *(d)* interpreter services, for ethnic minority prisoners or prisoners with special religious needs.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: An inmate's right to a wholesome and varied diet, and to adequate arrangements for religious observation, is protected by the Prison (Scotland) Rules 1952, which also encourage the provision of appropriate education and social facilities. Locally, governors will, where practicable, make every effort to meet reasonable requests from ethnic minority inmates for special facilities including translation.

I have recently asked Her Majesty's chief inspector of Prisons whether there are any general improvements which ought to be made to the arrangements for accommodating the small number of inmates from ethnic minorities.

Muthill Old Church

Sir Nicholas Fairbairn: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when work by the Scottish Development Department on the fabric of Muthill old church was begun; when it will end; and what is the estimated cost.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Repair work on the tower of Muthill old church began in August 1985, but due to unexpected structural problems will not be completed until March 1989. The total cost is expected to be £42,500.

Home Helps

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Monklands, West from the Secretary of State for Social Services on 13 May, *Official Report*, columns *273-74*, if he will supply similar information on the level of home help provision in Scotland by local authority area.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information requested is as follows:

Home help provision in Scotland number of home helps[1] per 1,000 total population

As at the first Monday in October	*Borders*	*Central*	*Dumfries and Galloway*	*Fife*	*Grampian*	*Highland*	*Lothian*	*Strathclyde*	*Tayside*	*Orkney*	*Shetland*	*Western Isles*	*Scotland*
1979	1·19	1·70	2·20	1·68	1·17	1·01	2·28	2·07	1·30	3·27	1·81	4·63	1·88
1980	1·10	1·65	2·19	1·49	1·18	1·09	2·37	1·93	1·52	3·10	1·81	4·47	1·83
1981	1·10	1·56	2·23	1·48	1·15	1·20	1·88	1·92	1·38	3·34	1·94	4·25	1·74
1982	1·10	1·55	2·24	1·78	1·19	1·30	2·20	1·95	1·38	3·18	2·11	4·50	1·82
1983	1·10	1·60	2·00	1·79	1·33	1·52	2·02	1·96	1·46	3·43	2·17	5·23	1·83
1984	1·10	1·62	2·39	2·00	1·45	1·59	1·97	1·96	1·59	3·26	2·23	4·90	1·87
1985	1·06	1·66	2·01	1·96	1·47	1·58	1·99	2·09	1·60	3·62	2·05	5·14	1·93
1986	1·08	1·70	1·83	2·59	1·43	1·26	2·01	2·17	1·61	3·53	1·95	5·11	1·99
1987	1·09	1·74	1·66	2·38	1·52	1·20	2·19	2·19	1·62	3·31	2·27	5·02	2·02

[1] Expressed in Whole-time Equivalents

Buses

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the number of *(a)* prosecutions and *(b)* convictions of bus operators in respect of offences arising from, or in connection with, operation of buses in each year since 1980.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Comprehensive information is not available centrally. The following information is given in the annual report of the traffic commissioner on summonses and convictions since 1980:

	Summonses	*Convictions*
1980-81	395	67
1981-82	127	52
1982-83	121	110
1983-84	201	103
1984-85	358	57
1985-86	103	75
1986-87	43	59

Stagecoach Limited

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the number of convictions of Stagecoach Limited of Perth arising from and in connection with their operation of buses, indicating the nature of the conviction in each case.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Details about individual companies are not available centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Manufacturing Industry

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his estimate, by employee, of the proportion of Scottish manufacturing industry controlled *(a)* by overseas headquartered companies and *(b)* by companies headquartered outside Scotland.

Mr. Lang: The proportion of Scottish manufacturing industry controlled by overseas-owned companies in 1987 is estimated to be 18 per cent. (by employment).

Comparable information on the proportion of Scottish manufacturing industry controlled by companies with headquarters outside Scotland, is not available.

Regional Aid

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish a table showing expenditure on regional preferential assistance to industry in Scotland for each year from 1976-77 to 1987-88, at constant 1987-88 prices.

Mr. Lang: Gross expenditure on regional preferential assistance in Scotland for each year since 1976-77 at constant 1987-88 prices is given in the table.

Expenditure on regional preferential assistance to industry in Scotland
Fiscal year (at constant 1987-88 prices)

£ million

	1976-77	*1977-78*	*1978-79*	*1979-80*	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*1987-88*
Local Employment Act												
Grants	1·8	0·2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Scottish Development Agency Act												
Land and factory building	24·6	42·3	57·1	66·4	70·1	78·7	58·4	52·4	26·8	25·8	21·2	20·1
Loans to small tourist enterprises	—	—	0·2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Industrial Development												
Regional Selective Assistance	30·7	43·2	30·5	31·3	33·0	26·4	25·3	29·6	36·5	52·2	37·2	37·6
Regional Development Grants	280·0	238·6	220·2	123·3	167·8	192·3	361·5	171·8	125·7	116·7	178·8	78·0
Highlands and Islands Development Board												
Grants	6·5	7·0	8·4	8·1	9·5	9·4	10·9	14·3	13·8	13·8	14·3	11·8
Land and factory building	n/a	1·8	4·1	6·8	7·3	6·5	8·7	6·5	12·5	5·3	3·2	4·6
Other Assistance												
Investment Grants	1·6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Tourism (Development of Tourism Act 1969 Section 4)	1·8	2·3	2·7	2·8	2·8	2·7	—	—	—	—	—	—
Regional Employment Premium	203·9	3·4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Small Firms Employment Subsidy	—	1·6	3·1	13·0	3·0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total gross expenditure	550·9	340·4	326·3	251·7	293·4	316·1	464·8	274·7	215·3	213·9	254·6	152·1

Notes:
1. From 1982-83, expenditure outside Assisted Areas, on land and factory building under the Scottish Development Agency Act has been excluded. The 1987-88 figure for land and factory building is provisional.
2. RSA is provided under the Industrial Development Act 1982 and its predecessors.
3. HIDB loans and equity are classed as non-preferential as these are deemed to be similar to non-preferential assistance outside the HIDB area.
4. HIDB expenditure on land and factory building prior to 1977-78 is not separately identifiable.
5. Assistance under the Development of Tourism Act 1969, section 4 was extended to non-assisted areas in August 1982 and is therefore no longer regarded as part of RPA.
6. Small Firms Employment Subsidy was ended in March 1980. The 1979-80 total for Small Firms Employment Subsidy excludes estimated non-regionally preferential payments.
7. Totals may not equal the sum of constituent parts due to rounding.

Trunk Roads

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the progress of his Department's review of trunk roads south of Edinburgh.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The consulting engineers undertaking this study are continuing to gather information on traffic and routes to enable them to carry out an evaluation of route options, and are on target to complete their report by 31 December 1988.

Sheriff Courts

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list *(a)* the number of cases disposed of and *(b)* the number of custodial sentences imposed, by each sheriff court in Scotland, for each of the past five years.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The information requested is given in the table.

Cases disposed of and custodial sentences given in each Sheriff court, 1983-1987

Sheriff court	*1983*		*1984*		*1985*		*1986*		*1987*	
	Called to trial	*Custodial sentence*	*Called to trial*	*Custodial sentence*	*Called to trial*	*Custodial sentence*	*Called to trial*	*Custodial sentence*	*Called to trial*	*Custodial sentence*
Aberdeen	8,247	745	6,226	619	5,590	575	5,473	500	4,679	468
Airdrie	3,821	387	2,802	465	2,981	453	3,502	474	3,040	478
Alloa	1,251	169	820	151	1,083	126	1,001	156	1,106	102
Arbroath	1,709	82	1,189	83	1,132	102	1,114	65	1,120	84
Ayr	3,433	475	3,231	408	3,354	362	3,559	326	3,368	372

Sheriff court	1983 Called to trial	1983 Custodial sentence	1984 Called to trial	1984 Custodial sentence	1985 Called to trial	1985 Custodial sentence	1986 Called to trial	1986 Custodial sentence	1987 Called to trial	1987 Custodial sentence
Banff	739	67	503	27	367	39	434	30	413	32
Campbeltown	482	26	496	37	493	44	512	64	478	40
Cupar	1,101	56	994	54	972	55	918	68	951	34
Dingwall	941	27	611	22	552	36	650	37	654	40
Dornoch	391	12	359	15	291	14	277	8	207	3
Dumbarton	4,123	421	3,424	489	3,495	501	3,204	436	2,582	296
Dumfries	5,980	177	5,038	218	5,103	162	5,734	250	4,765	202
Dundee	6,088	596	4,731	684	4,786	727	4,951	694	5,457	642
Dunfermline	3,884	296	2,529	231	2,979	344	2,901	265	2,821	296
Dunoon	993	39	854	42	923	85	912	72	811	34
Duns	518	15	190	7	228	9	167	7	183	0
Edinburgh	21,361	678	13,317	906	11,985	1,039	11,892	1,081	11,924	898
Elgin	1,772	162	1,141	103	1,179	134	1,246	109	1,266	104
Falkirk	4,461	285	2,683	241	2,779	213	3,192	303	2,863	346
Forfar	1,496	64	1,010	64	1,091	68	1,004	40	986	48
Fort William	435	40	467	42	469	45	445	27	513	48
Glasgow	16,552	2,360	16,073	2,760	16,219	2,978	11,309	2,307	10,491	1,997
Greenock	2,974	355	2,147	394	2,141	418	2,149	488	1,993	535
Haddington	1,555	84	1,279	103	1,133	108	1,291	83	957	63
Hamilton	7,602	695	5,577	648	6,044	756	5,739	821	5,634	611
Inverness	2,407	95	2,143	119	2,157	146	1,978	131	1,921	119
Jedburgh	717	45	459	54	486	85	419	59	551	39
Kilmarnock	6,746	956	5,265	955	5,182	1,216	5,458	1,283	4,964	1,049
Kirkcaldy	3,984	301	3,351	238	3,186	256	3,182	341	3,813	295
Kirkcudbright	336	12	254	13	342	20	360	30	397	26
Kirkwall	414	9	475	9	541	15	582	9	562	9
Lanark	1,401	72	869	65	1,015	113	991	121	1,035	116
Lerwick	581	11	468	11	500	20	438	7	596	8
Linlithgow	4,532	314	2,564	288	2,771	365	3,024	227	3,195	224
Lochmaddy	163	1	158	0	130	4	222	5	156	4
Oban	408	50	353	27	344	46	336	32	370	47
Paisley	6,026	613	5,016	519	5,996	508	6,040	573	5,573	606
Peebles	506	4	386	37	357	14	372	14	174	13
Perth	5,469	200	3,208	227	3,622	282	3,422	267	3,449	256
Peterhead	806	91	708	97	887	94	691	61	699	64
Portree	194	5	151	2	180	8	193	2	155	11
Rothesay	246	30	294	57	326	38	230	37	261	33
Selkirk	916	47	567	57	418	40	423	39	398	39
Stirling	3,305	199	2,154	173	2,533	152	3,119	185	3,214	224
Stonehaven	1,638	22	901	56	932	34	896	25	843	27
Stornoway	375	12	421	9	366	8	364	6	388	8
Stranraer	1,258	72	1,093	99	1,099	68	986	96	1,037	97
Tain	806	25	539	14	572	24	477	14	459	24
Wick	569	38	521	30	580	52	654	27	585	28
Court unknown	9	1	3	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
TOTAL	145,721	11,538	110,012	11,970	111,892	13,001	108,434	12,302	104,057	11,139

Interim Liberation Appeals

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the number of interim liberation appeals which have been *(a)* successful and *(b)* unsuccessful, by sheriff court in Scotland, for each of the past five years.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I regret that the information requested cannot be obtained except at disproportionate cost.

Local Authorities (Housing)

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the provision he proposes to make in respect of the financial consequences for local housing authorities of transfers of housing stock to housing associations or co-operatives on the basis of valuations which are less than the outstanding debt attached to the property concerned.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Local authority borrowing for the purpose of capital investment in housing stock is not secured against the individual properties subject to, or resulting from, that investment. Debt redemption arising from transfers of housing stock would reduce the overall outstanding capital debt on the housing revenue account of the authority concerned. A reduction in overall outstanding capital debt would lead to a reduction in loans charges falling on the housing revenue account. Where such reductions in loans charges were insufficient to cover the assumed net loss in income arising from reduced rental income and reduced management and maintenance expenditure, the authority would receive increased housing support grant. In the case of those authorities which do not at present qualify for housing support grant, the effect might be to bring such authorities back into qualification.

Geese

Mr. Morley: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what licensing arrangements are being made, with respect to Greenland white-fronted geese and barnacle geese, for the winter of 1988-89.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: No decisions have as yet been taken as to licensing arrangements for shooting geese on Islay during the winter of 1988-89.

Mr. Morley: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) whether, in respect of each licence granted to shoot barnacle geese on the island of Islay, he will provide estimates of yield loss and subsequent financial loss to the respective licensees as a result of damage caused by barnacle geese; and what estimates he made of the loss which would be incurred if no killing took place;

(2) whether, in respect of each licence granted to shoot Greenland white-fronted geese on the island of Islay, he will provide estimates of yield loss and subsequent financial loss to the respective licensees as a result of damage caused by Greenland white-fronted geese; and what estimates he made of the loss which would occur if no killing took place.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: No specific estimates were made of yield loss or subsequent financial loss against each of the licences issued. Nor were such estimates made against the losses which would have occurred if no killing had taken place. In the judgment of my professional staff uncontrolled grazing by both barnacle and white-fronted geese in significant numbers causes serious damage to improved grassland and crops, with consequent financial loss to the farmers involved. The licences were issued in accordance with the provisions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to prevent such damage.

Mr. Morley: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he will be supporting the use of a Manpower Services Commission goose-scaring team on Islay for the 1988-89 winter; and what other arrangements he will be supporting for that winter.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: No support will be available from the Manpower Services Commission for goose scaring on Islay for the 1988-89 winter. Alternative arrangements are under consideration, but no decisions have as yet been taken.

Mr. Morley: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if, pursuant to his reply of 21 June, *Official Report*, column *512*, he will list those areas on Islay that meet the criteria for classification as special protection areas under article 4 of EC directive 79/409 but which have not yet been designated; if he will indicate the number of Greenland white-fronted geese regularly using each area; what consultations have been held with landowners and occupiers concerning the designation of those international sites; when he intends to designate them as specially protected areas; and if such areas are notified as sites of special scientific interest.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Areas which are considered by the Nature Conservancy Council to meet the selection criteria for special protection areas under article 4 of the EC directive 79/409 were listed by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment in a parliamentary answer on 11 May 1987. Of the eight sites identified on Islay, four—Laggan, Bridgend Flats, Loch Gruinart and Eilean na Muice Duibhe—were classified as SPAs by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland on 14 July 1988. Two sites—Glac na Criche and Feur Lochain—have been notified as sites of special scientific interest, but have not yet been classified as SPAs. The council has consulted owners and occupiers over the proposed SPA status of these sites and have recommended them for consideration by my right hon. and learned Friend, who will announce his decision in due course.

The Rinns of Islay has also been notified as an SSSI and owners and occupiers have been advised of the council's view that the site will qualify as an SPA in due course. The required consultations are still to be completed.

The Oa has been identified by the council as meeting the selection criteria for designation as an SPA, but further survey work is required to define the boundary of the area that is of special interest. Consequently, the council is not yet in a position to propose the area as an SSSI.

The NCC estimates that the Oa and the Rinns are regularly used annually by about 1,000 and about 1,800 Greenland white-fronted geese respectively. These are average figures for the years 1983-88 and relate to birds which both feed and roost within these areas. The figures for the Rinns include the areas of Glac na Criche and Feur Lochain SSSIs. These are roosting areas used annually by between 700 and 800 birds.

Rating Reform

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will meet the principal of Glasgow university to discuss the effect of the poll tax on Scottish students.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend has at present no plans to do so.

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will ask the Scottish agricultural wages board to take full account of the effects of the abolition of domestic rates and the introduction of the poll tax on employees living in tied housing in determining wage levels from 1 April 1989.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I understand that the board—which is an autonomous body not subject to ministerial direction—already has under consideration the possible implications for the remuneration of agricultural workers of the introduction of the community charge.

Poisoned Bait

Mr. Morley: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Glandford and Scunthorpe of 15 July, *Official Report*, columns *396-99*, what regulations govern the use of poisoned bait to control wildlife pests; and how he defines the meaning of the term wildlife pests.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The term wildlife pest is taken to mean species of wildlife which do damage to livestock and crops and which are not protected under the provisions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. The use of poisonous chemicals for the purposes of controlling wildlife pests is governed by the Protection of Animals (Scotland) Act 1912, the Animals (Cruel Poisons) Act 1962, the Poisons Act 1972, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Food and Environmental Protection Act 1985.

Nursery Education

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what proportion of the gross national product has been spent in nursery education in Scotland for each year since 1974;

(2) what was the total expenditure in nursery education in *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* Strathclyde, *(c)* Greater Glasgow and *(d)* Glasgow, Provan for each year since 1974, in 1988 moneys.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Expenditure in Scotland and in Strathclyde region was as follows:

Total current expenditure on nursery schools and classes (1988 prices)

	(a) Scotland £ million	*(b) Strathclyde £ million*
1976-77	28·662	17·462
1977-78	28·490	16·517
1978-79	25·736	12·855
1979-80	23·026	13·220
1980-81	24·320	13·668
1981-82	25·076	14·231
1982-83	28·633	14·522
1983-84	28·055	14·866
1984-85	28·685	14·590
1985-86	29·048	15·172
1986-87	29·856	15·563
[1]1987-88	29·170	14·356

[1] Provisional.

Note: The percentage which column *(a)* represents of estimated Scottish GDP at factor cost is 0·1 for each year. Expenditure figures for *(a)* Scotland and Strathclyde region in 1974-75 and 1975-76 and *(b)* Greater Glasgow and Glasgow, Provan, are not available.

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the number of Scottish under-fives who received nursery education for each year since 1974.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Information on pupils under five attending education authority nursery schools in September of each year is as follows:

	Number
1975	22,240
1976	25,610
1977	29,300
1978	31,230
1979	31,620
1980	32,340
1981	33,050
1982	34,490
1983	36,460
1984	37,680
1985	not available
1986	not available
1987	38,980

Information for 1974 is not readily available.

Peterhead Prison (Siege)

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the statutory authority for the deployment of forces in the breaking up of the gaol siege at Peterhead prison on 3 October 1987.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I refer the hon. Member to the reply which I gave on 30 June, at column *319*, to a question from the hon. Member of Clydebank and Milngavie (Mr. Worthington).

Opencast Mining

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will carry out surveys on the link between serious illness and dust in areas of Scotland where there is opencast coal mining or other activities generating significant levels of dust.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I am not aware of any authoritative medical survey on this subject and there are no proposals for one to be carried out.

Islands Agriculture Programme

Mr. Morley: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his assessment of the likely effect on wildlife habitats and the environment of the measures to be introduced under the agricultural development programme for the Scottish islands.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The land improvement measures under the agricultural development programme for Scottish islands will apply to inbye land only and will therefore have minimal effect on wildlife habitats and the environment. The programme allows for payments for the protection of sites of particular importance for the environment and was drawn up in consultation with the Nature Conservancy Council and the Countryside Commission for Scotland.

Houses in Multiple Occupation

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he intends to conduct a consultation exercise on powers relating to houses in multiple occupation in Scotland.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The Scottish Development Department has published today a consultation paper on problems relating to houses in multiple occupation in Scotland. The paper is being sent to local authorities and other interested organisations in Scotland. I have also arranged for copies to be placed in the Library. The paper identifies the need to protect both the occupiers of HMOs themselves and the right to a peaceful environment of those living nearby. It also seeks views on a wide range of issues, including the possibility of establishing a licensing system for HMOs. The Government look forward to receiving comments on the proposals in the paper. This should allow the Government to tackle in a considered way the serious problems caused by HMOs in certain parts of Scotland.

Forestry

Mr. Jopling: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will estimate the percentage self-sufficiency which the United Kingdom enjoys in hard wood timber of a quality which can be grown domestically; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 20 May 1988]:* The best estimate is in the region of 55-60 per cent.

Conservation

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland which organisations have been or will be consulted by the Forestry Commission in producing the

new conservation guidelines referred to in page 7 of the new Forestry Commission booklet "Woodland Grant Scheme."

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 27 May 1988]:* The Forestry Commission is consulting the Nature Conservancy Council, Timber Growers UK, the Countryside Commission and the Countryside Commission for Scotland in the preparation of these guidelines.

Crafts

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received on the role of the Scottish Development Agency in promoting crafts in Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 18 July 1988]:* In the last two years 16 representations have been received on the funding and organisation of support for Scottish crafts. The Scottish Development Agency, which is responsible for several aspects of such support, is currently considering future arrangements and will be seeking ministerial approval for any changes in structure in due course. All those involved in the provision of support for Scottish crafts are aware of the importance of providing a viable long-term operating structure and are working towards that end.

Student Awards

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give *(a)* the total number of mandatory student awards made by his Department in each academic year since 1979 and *(b)* the total value of those awards in (i) cash terms and (ii) real terms in 1988 prices.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 22 July 1988]:* The value of students' maintenance allowances and tuition fees paid under the students allowances scheme and the postgraduate students allowances scheme, in cash terms, and in real terms on a constant 1987-88 base (1988-89 figures are not yet available) was as follows:

Academic year	*Number of students*	*Value of awards (Maintenance etc plus tuition etc fees)*	
		Actual £ million	*At 1987-88 prices £ million*
1979-80	53,600	86·0	142·9
1980-81	55,583	106·8	154·1
1981-82	57,542	120·6	160·5
1982-83	57,863	99·1	124·1
1983-84	58,301	101·0	121·3
1984-85	59,931	99·4	113·9
1985-86	58,384	99·5	108·4
1986-87	[1]58,595	[1]103·1	108·4
1987-88	[1]60,900	[1]107·8	107·8

[1] Provisional.

Notes: (1) In session 1982-83 the rate of tuition fees was reduced.
(2) 1987-88 price equivalents are based on the average GDP deflator for the first quarter of each year (mid-academic session).

Water Charge

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what proportion of the community water charge will be payable by *(a)* students, *(b)* student nurses, *(c)* families on income support and *(d)* senior citizens on retirement pensions; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 22 July 1988]:* Persons undertaking a full-time course of education, as defined in the Personal Community Charge (Students) (Scotland) Regulations 1988, will be liable to pay a prescribed percentage (set in those regulations as 20 per cent.) of the personal community charge and the personal community water charge. The Government are now considering, in the light of amendments made to the Local Government Finance Bill, whether student nurses should receive a similar concession.

All other people liable to pay the personal community charge will be eligible for income related rebates or benefits, in the case of income support recipients amounting to 80 per cent. of their personal community charge liability. Community water charges will not come within the community charge rebate or benefit system. However, under the reformed social security system introduced on 1 April 1988 the minimum contribution towards rates payments, and the overall amount made available through supplementary benefit towards water charges, are taken into account in setting income support levels. Similar principles will apply from April 1989 in respect of the community charge system.

Primary Health Care

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) if he will make a further statement on how he plans to fund the changes in primary care in Scotland outlined in the White Paper "Promoting Good Health";

(2) if he will make a further statement on his plans to impose charges for eye examination and dental checks in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 22 July 1988]:* The discussions on the Health and Medicines Bill in another place have produced no new arguments in relation to our proposals on charging for sight tests and dental examinations. We remain of the view that it is right that those who can afford to should contribute towards the cost of these examinations. Our proposals rightly exempt those whose circumstances are such that they cannot afford to pay. We do not accept that those who are not exempt will be deterred from seeking treatment. These proposals were part of a package which will make a significant contribution to the improvement of primary health care in Scotland.

Minor Operations

Mr. Maclennan: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what are the estimated comparative costs of a minor operative procedure performed by *(a)* a general practitioner and *(b)* a hospital registrar.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 22 July 1988]:* Information is not collected centrally on which to base an estimate of these costs.

Hernia Repairs and Hip Replacements

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the number of hernia repairs and hip

replacement operations performed in each area, in each year since 1974 to the latest date for which figures are available.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 22 July 1988]*: The information requested is as follows:

Number of in-patients discharged in each health board in each year from 1974 to 1986 where the principle operation was hernioplasty (inguinal and femoral)

Health board	*1974*	*1975*	*1976*	*1977*	*1978*	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Argyll and Clyde	[1]496	474	530	467	389	406	415	482	292	449	428	351	460
Ayr and Arran	[1]392	376	421	401	431	474	502	478	471	553	484	507	528
Borders	[1]111	108	145	130	138	126	120	162	141	152	146	149	149
Dumfries and Galloway	[1]192	183	217	249	218	191	215	224	157	226	244	182	226
Fife	[1]414	391	420	374	323	417	375	428	208	376	413	429	431
Forth Valley	[1]347	332	353	344	380	351	347	336	285	434	386	441	349
Grampian	[1]750	707	689	750	678	629	695	677	515	775	748	746	762
Greater Glasgow	[1]1,915	1,824	1,855	1,916	1,752	1,813	1,860	1,645	931	1,802	1,731	1,671	1,688
Highland	[1]281	267	289	290	261	306	315	294	272	306	317	284	313
Lanarkshire	[1]399	377	483	528	436	534	515	515	365	620	619	674	587
Lothian	[1]1,303	1,241	1,254	1,295	1,089	1,175	1,110	1,127	857	1,285	1,156	1,121	1,079
Orkney	[1]30	31	35	36	21	38	27	29	29	23	28	22	28
Shetland	[1]22	23	17	24	15	27	35	45	37	39	31	28	31
Tayside	[1]704	669	689	765	704	701	651	591	562	833	762	783	744
Western Isles	[1]30	30	20	30	38	36	30	34	45	48	37	34	40
Scotland	7,386	7,033	7,417	7,599	6,873	7,244	7,212	7,067	5,167	7,921	7,530	7,422	7,415

[1] Estimated.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Act of Settlement 1688 (Ceremony)

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Lord President of the Council what was the cost of the ceremony commemorating the Act of Settlement 1688; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wakeham: Most of the costs of the ceremony on 20 July, when Addresses were presented to Her Majesty The Queen to mark the tercentenary of the revolutions of 1688-89 and of the Bill of Rights and Claim of Right, will be borne initially by the Property Services Agency. Final figures for the cost are not yet available, but provision has been included in class XX, vote 20 and class XX A, vote 1, of the Estimates for 1988-89 for the Houses of Parliament to repay approximately £40,000 to PSA for these services; this will be shared equally between the two Houses.

Facilities (Hire)

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Lord President of the Council whether the House of Commons Terrace is available for hire to outside organisations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wakeham: No. Only Members and Officers of the House may sponsor functions in the Terrace Pavilion.

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will list the charges made for the hire of private dining rooms in the Palace at Westminster.

Mr. Wakeham: Minimum hire charges for private dining rooms are levied only when the total cost of food provided is less than the advance deposit required.

The relevant deposits are set out in the information booklet "Banqueting Department" available from the Refreshment Department.

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Lord President of the Council whether any charge is made to commercial organisations for displays in the Upper Waiting Hall; what rules govern advertising; who gives permission for displays; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wakeham: No charge is made for the exhibitions in the Upper Waiting Hall, which can only be mounted by a right hon. or hon. Member.

The rules governing the arrangements for these exhibitions are set out in the Serjeant At Arms' Department information leaflet "Exhibitions in the Upper Waiting Hall," which clearly states that exhibitions should not contain items of advertising or commercial interest nor material explicitly intended to further the aims of any political party or group. In accordance with the procedures approved by the Services Committee, an hon. Member wishing to book an exhibition space should submit his application to the relevant Government Department and also the Chairman of the A and A Sub-Committee for approval.

Ten-minute Bills

Mr. Amess: To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will move to refer to the Select Committee on Procedure the matter of the practice governing the giving of notice by Members of motions for leave to bring in Bills under Standing Order No. 19; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wakeham: This is a matter which is already within the terms of reference of the Procedure Committee. I am sure that it will have noted the representations made by my hon. Friend and other hon. Members.

TRANSPORT

West London (Schemes)

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what assumption has been made in the west London assessment study about the proposed traffic capacity of the west London corridor;

(2) what are the limits to the increase or decrease in traffic that are considered practical for testing in the west London assessment study; what level of relief in traffic levels is being sought; and what assumptions are being made about future car ownership.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The study consultants have made an initial assessment of the impact of each option on existing traffic movement patterns. Growth and capacity assumptions and forecasting techniques will be addressed in the detailed assessment and testing of the options in the rest of stage 2.

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proposals he has to compensate *(a)* local authorities, *(b)* housing associations and *(c)* owner-occupiers if the western environmental improvement route is constructed.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The usual statutory compensation provisions would apply. Copies of booklets giving details of these provisions have been placed in the Library.

Driving Licence (Welsh Language)

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will give consideration to the issue of a driving licence in the Welsh language.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The DVLC issues a bilingual driving licence to drivers with addresses in Wales. Licences are used throughout the United Kingdom and it is not practicable for them to be wholly in Welsh.

London Underground (Fire Safety)

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will place in the Library copies of the reports of London Fire Brigade inspections of London Underground deep underground stations carried out so far in the current year.

Mr. David Mitchell: No. Reports of such fire inspections are produced by London Underground's chief fire inspector who accompanies the London fire brigade for the information of and use by London Underground Limited. The hon. Member should apply to London Regional Transport for the information he requires.

Bus Lanes (Westminster)

Mr. Marlow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will establish an inquiry into the continuing need for those bus lanes instituted by the former greater London Council in the vicinity of the Palace of Westminster on roads for which he is now responsible.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: No. The City of Westminster became responsible for this road on 1 April 1986. It commissioned studies into the effect of the then experimental bus lanes. It concluded that they were beneficial. After due consultation it decided that the bus lanes should be made permanent. It applied to the Secretary of State for approval under paragraph 5 of schedule 5 to the Local Government Act 1985 because the route is a designated road. The Secretary of State considered that there was no adverse effect on the movement of traffic on the designated road network and approved the proposal.

Taxi and Car Hire Trades (Consulation Document)

Mr. Bendall: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will consider increasing the time limit allowed for submissions on the consultation document on the taxi and car hire trades.

Mr. David Mitchell: I have written in reply to my hon. Friend's letter on this subject giving an extension to the end of September.

Nuclear Waste

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on arrangements for monitoring the transport of nuclear waste material from Torness power station, and for regulating the frequency of consignments and the route to be taken.

Mr. David Mitchell: Spent nuclear fuel will be moved from Torness power station to Sellafield in strict accordance with national and international regulations which require the design of the flask to be able to withstand severe accident conditions without radiation risk. The Department is responsible for ensuring compliance with the regulations, but this does not involve controls over the routeing or frequency of consignments because safety is provided by the strength of the container.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Supplementary Benefits (Cleveland)

82. **Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the cost of supplementary benefit single payments for each of his Department's local offices in the county of Cleveland in May 1985, May 1986 and May 1988; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) on 21 July. The additional figures requested for the month of May 1988 are given in the table. The local offices shown are those situated in Cleveland but office and county boundaries are not conterminous. The figures shown are provisional and subject to amendment.

Single payment expenditure in May 1988

Office	£
Eston	6,115
Hartlepool	12,994
Middlesbrough	32,478
Redcar	6,420
Stockton	47,278

Coronary Bypass Operations

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the number of people waiting for coronary artery bypass operations in each regional health authority in June.

Mr. Newton: Waiting list information is not collected centrally by type of operation.

Pay Awards

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make it his policy to bring pay awards forward to before the beginning of the financial year to enable regional health authorities and district health authorities to plan future annual budgets; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: We recognise the desirability of early settlements in the interests both of the staff concerned and

of bringing greater certainty into the health authority planning process. For doctors, dentists, nursing staff, midwives, health visitors and the professions allied to medicine, we expect this to be greatly assisted by the change from 1989 in the timetable for review body reports, which my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has asked the review bodies to submit some three months earlier than hitherto. This change should also help in achieving earlier settlements for those groups whose pay and conditions of service are negotiated in the Whitley councils. The conduct of those negotiations is a matter for the respective management sides and the speed with which they can be concluded also depends on the response of the staff sides to the offers which are made.

Voluntary Organisations (Funding)

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will list the voluntary organisations who were previously receiving section 64 grants and whose applications for funding for general purposes in 1988-89 were rejected, stating in each case the number of years for which the organisation had been funded; and if he will give the reasons for the rejection in each case;

(2) what are the reasons for the decline in the total of grants made under section 64 procedure from £14,443, 694 in 1987-88 to £7,211,705 in 1988-89; and if there have been any changes in the criteria applied.

Mr. Portillo: I refer the right hon. Member to my reply to him on 27 June at columns *124-29*. The figure of £7,211,705 refers to grants awarded as at 22 June 1988. The total amount available for the 1988-89 financial year is £14,243,000. There have been no changes in the criteria for awarding grants.

Funding applications are received and decisions on grants are made at varying times during the year. Full details of applications rejected for grant aid in 1988-89 will not therefore be available until after the end of the financial year.

Postgraduate Hospitals (Beds)

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the absolute and percentage change, since reorganisation, in the number of beds in each of the postgraduate hospitals, stating, in each case, whether the hospital is now a special health authority or a member of a district health authority.

Mrs. Currie: The information requested is given in the table.

Average daily number of available beds in the London post-graduate hospitals

Name of hospital	*Address*	*1982*	*1986*	*Change*	
				Number	*per cent.*
Hospital for Sick Children[1]	London WC1	307·5	294·6	−12·9	−4·2
Hospital for Sick Children[4]	Tadworth, Surrey	64·7	0·0	−64·7	−100·0
Queen Elizabeth Hospital for Children[1]		122·2	107·6	−14·6	−11·9
The National Hospital for Nervous Diseases[1]	London WC1	199·5	193·8	−5·7	−2·9
Maida Vale Hospital for Nervous Diseases[1]	London W9	81·9	72·1	−9·8	−12·0
The National Hospital for Nervous Diseases[1]	London W2	24·3	27·0	2·7	11·1
Chalfont Centre for Epilepsy	Chalfont St. Peter, Bucks.	50·0	45·0	−5·0	−10·0
The Royal National Throat Nose and Ear Hospital[2]	London WC1	109·3	54·3	−55·0	−50·3
The Royal National Throat Nose and Ear Hospital[2]	London W1				
Moorfields Eye Hospital[1]	London EC1	207·8	151·7	−56·1	−27·0
Bethlem Royal and Maudsley Hospital[1]	London SE5	500·8	511·3	10·5	2·1
St. John's Hospital for Diseases of the Skin[2]	London WC2	54·1	52·9	−1·2	−2·2
Brompton Hospital[1]	London SW3	250·3	227·2	−23·1	−9·2
Brompton Hospital[3]	Frialey, Surrey	105·8	0·0	−105·8	−100·0
London Chest Hospital[1]	London E2	127·3	120·6	−6·7	−5·3
National Heart Hospital[1]	London W1	72·2	75·4	3·2	4·4
Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital[2]	London W1	85·4	35·8	−49·6	−58·1
Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital[2]	Stanmore, Middlesex	245·1	202·7	−42·4	−17·3
St. Peter's Hospital[2]	London WC2	37·5	34·5	−3·0	−8·0
St. Paul's Hospital[2]	London WC2	36·7	31·5	−5·2	−14·2
St. Phillip's Hospital[2]	London WC2	15·6	10·8	−4·8	−30·8
The Shaftesbury Hospital[2]	London WC2	36·4	27·1	−9·3	−25·5
The Royal Marsden Hospital[1]	London SW3	185·6	193·4	7·8	4·2
The Royal Marsden Hospital[1]	Sutton, Surrey	154·6	160·8	6·2	4·0
Queen Charlotte's Maternity Hospital[1]	London W6	165·1	150·8	−14·3	−8·7
Chelsea Hospital for Women[1]	London SW3	81·9	66·7	−15·2	−18·6
Queen Charlotte's Hospital Convalescent Home[3]	St. Leonards on Sea, Sussex	42·0	0·0	−42·0	−100·0
Hammersmith Hospital[1]	London W12	547·1	555·1	8·0	1·5
Acton Hospital[1]	London W3	55·3	72·0	16·7	30·2
Eastmans Dental Hospital[1]	London WC1	0·0	0·0	0·0	0·0

[1] Now a special health authority.
[2] Now administered by district health authorities.
[3] Hospital closed.
[4] Ceased to be a National Health Service hospital.

Social Services Staff (Assaults)

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps he will take to collect information centrally on assaults on social services staff in the course of their duties.

Mr. Newton: The "Guidelines and Recommendations to Employers on Violence against Employees" published last year by the Association of Directors of Social Services recommended authorities to arrange for the recording and monitoring of incidents concerning the staff of social services departments. We have no plans for the national collation of such information.

Long-term Institutional Care

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Monklands, West of 7 June, *Official Report*, column *564*, if he intends to collect data centrally on the outcome of patients discharged from institutional care.

Mrs. Currie: The central collection of statistics on the outcome of patients discharged from institutional care will be reviewed with the proposals of the Government to the Griffiths report, "Community Care: Agenda for Action".

Disabled People (Legislation)

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Monklands, West of Tuesday 7 June, *Official Report*, column *573*, whether he has yet arranged a meeting with local authority associations on the implementation of the Disabled Persons (Services, Representation and Consultation) Act 1986; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: Officials met representatives of the local authority associations on 4 July to discuss the implementation of the remaining sections of the Act. We hope to implement section 11 soon. Of the other sections, representatives of the local authorities share our view that priority should be given to implementing section 7, and we have already started detailed work on this. The next priority is to implement sections 1, 2, and 3. The financial implications of each section must, of course, be agreed before implementation.

Attendance Allowance

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many applications for attendance allowance were *(a)* made and *(b)* granted in the last year for which figures are available;

(2) how many applications for attendance were disallowed, not including those granted after appeal, in the last year for which figures are available;

(3) how many claims for attendance allowance were disallowed following an initial medical report, by the attendance allowance board, but were granted attendance allowance after appeal, for the last year for which figures are available.

Mr. Scott: The information requested is in the table.

Attendance Allowance 1987

	Number
Claims Received	319,667
Claims Successful at initial stage	208,693
Claims Unsuccessful at initial stage	91,888
Claims Successful on review[1]	44,104

[1] Claims successful on review include:
(i) claims made before 1987.
(ii) claims where the allowance is awarded for the first time.
(iii) claims where the allowance awarded is increased from lower to higher rate.
(iv) claims where the allowance is awarded for a longer period.

Development Programme

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how he intends to monitor district health authorities' progress in implementing his Department's 2 per cent. development programme; and what action he will take to ensure that each district health authority achieves the 2 per cent. target.

Mr. Newton: No such target has been set. The provision and development of district health authority services are monitored by regions as part of a cyclical planning and review process. The Department similarly approves regional health authority plans and reviews performance annually, against the background of the broad policy aims set out in the annual planning guidelines. A copy of the latest guidelines, for 1989-90 and 1990-91 (circular HC (88) 43) is in the Library.

NHS (Cost Improvements)

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the financial value of non-cash releasing cost improvements made in the National Health Service identified by the Department in response to the Social Services Committee; what proportion of the underfunding of the Health Service identified by the Social Services Committee these non-cash releasing cost improvements constitute; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: The Government's formal response to the Committee's first two reports on the resourcing of the National Health Service was published on 22 June (Cm. 405).

The latest available information on movements in unit costs relates to 1986-87. Making no allowance for efficiency gains between 1986-87 and 1987-88 other than those attributable to cash releasing cost improvements, it can be shown that if unit costs had remained at their 1983-84 levels (apart from the effect of inflation) it would have cost nearly £900 million more to maintain 1987-88 service levels than was actually the case. About two thirds of this figure was attributable to cash releasing cost improvements.

However any estimate of efficiency gains other than cash-releasing cost improvements will necessarily be a less precise and certain figure than that for cash-releasing cost improvements, for which the savings are specifically monitored.

Health Authorities (Cuts and Closures)

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what action he takes to collect information on cuts and closures in individual health authorities.

Mrs. Currie: Information on health authorities' plans to change the way in which services are delivered, which may involve closures, is received through formal and informal contacts with health authorities. Major changes are outlined in short term programmes. Closures which are opposed by the community health council come to Ministers for decisions. Details of hospitals and facilities approved for permanent closure following public consultation are routinely collected centrally. Returns of hospital activity, which is the final indicator of the level of services being provided for patients, are received quarterly.

National Insurance Contributions (Refunds)

Mr. Latham: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many cases are known to his Department

currently, or in the last year for which records are available, where a person has been unable to claim back excess payments of class 2 contributions, as in the case of Mr. W., a constituent of the hon. Member for Rutland and Melton, whose name is given in the letter of 7 June from Lord Skelmersdale to the hon. Member, reference PO(6) 2487/9; and whether he will seek powers to be able to make ex gratia refunds in similar cases in future.

Mr. Portillo: The Department does not separately identify this type of case in its records.

As my noble Friend explained in his letter, information on the small earnings exception is made avalable at the outset to those applying to pay national insurance contributions on a self-employed basis. I do not therefore consider that there are grounds for seeking powers to make refunds of contributions in cases where the opportunity to apply for small earnings exception is taken up later than it might have been.

Social Fund

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what arrangements are presently in operation for public access to expenditure information on the social fund.

Mr. Portillo: Details of individual local office expenditure on the social fund are placed in the Library at monthly intervals. Copies of this information are held at the Department's libraries where they may be viewed by appointment. Two copies are deposited with the British Library, one of which may be borrowed by other libraries for inquirers; the other copy can be consulted at the British Library. Microfiche copies may be purchased from Messrs. Chadwyck-Healey of Cambridge. In addition we expect local office managers to respond to reasonable requests to provide expenditure information as at the end of the preceding month.

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will publish in the *Official Report* the social fund expenditure of each local office in Great Britain for loans and grants, respectively, and the same figures expressed as percentages of monthly profiles, for each month from April to June 1988, on the same basis as the information for Northern Ireland offices given by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on 13 July in his answer to the hon. Member for Redcar (Ms. Mowlam), *Official Report*, columns *249-52*.

Mr. Portillo: Details of social fund expenditure to the end of June are in the Library. Information relating to expenditure as a percentage of monthly profile for over 450 local offices in Great Britain could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. C. H. Thomas

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will establish an internal inquiry into why Mr. C. H. Thomas, of West Cross, Swansea, who received confirmation on 29 February (Reference TX 3866481) that he satisfies the condition for the lower rate of attendance allowance, has not received payment.

Mr. Scott: Mr. Thomas' claim was finally decided on 5 May and payment was made on 11 July. I regret that processing of the claim took much longer than is usual and I am writing to the hon. Member.

Peel Report

Mrs. Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether the recommendations of the Peel report on the use of foetuses and foetal material have been enacted.

Mr. Newton: The code of practice recommended in the Peel report on the use of foetuses and foetal material for research has been commended to health authorities. In the private sector, places approved to carry out abortions may supply foetal material for research only in accordance with this code and with the specific approval of the Secretary of State. In view of the continued advance in medical techniques since the Peel report was published, my right hon. Friend has recently set up a committee to review its recommendations.

Social Services (London)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* showing what information he has as to social services department budgets for 1987-88 and for 1988-89, for each local authority in London.

Mr. Newton: The table shows the latest available information on London local authorities social services department budgets for 1988-89 and the equivalent figure for 1987-88.

	1987-88 £ *million*	*1988-89* £ *million*
City of London	1·785	1·940
Camden	39·146	33·596
Greenwich	29·177	29·577
Hackney	41·866	42·884
Hammersmith and Fulham	25·545	27·176
Islington	40·788	39·977
Kensington and Chelsea	19·304	22·373
Lambeth	43·843	49·499
Lewisham	40·187	42·098
Southwark	37·483	43·271
Tower Hamlets	22·793	24·046
Wandsworth	36·426	40·862
Westminster	31·029	33·625
Barking and Dagenham	11·192	11·973
Barnet	19·718	21·118
Bexley	11·833	13·040
Brent	36·204	N/A
Bromley	15·411	16·929
Croydon	22·234	24·883
Ealing	25·049	28·391
Enfield	17·384	21·003
Haringey	32·709	N/A
Harrow	11·955	13·793
Havering	14·316	15·538
Hillingdon	19·651	23·008
Hounslow	18·057	20·299
Kingston upon Thames	9·748	10·753
Merton	13·030	14·323
Newham	22·777	26·136
Redbridge	13·943	16·013
Richmond upon Thames	10·224	11·266
Sutton	9·916	11·456
Waltham Forest	26·817	27·703

Source: LA Return of Expenditure and Rates returns 1987 and 1988.

Dispensing Doctors

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the proportion of all National Health

Service prescriptions written by dispensing doctors; and what proportion of all National Health Service doctors' lists the patients on dispensing doctors' lists represent.

Mr. Newton: In 1986 a total of 6 per cent. of National Health Service prescriptions in England were written and dispensed by dispensing doctors for patients on their dispensing lists. In the same year 6 per cent. of all National Health Service patients in England were patients on dispensing doctors' lists for whom those doctors can dispense.

Community Care

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what further representations he has received regarding the Griffiths report on community care; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: We have received 121 representations from interested individuals and organisations and will take account of them in framing our own proposals.

Chiropody

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if, pursuant to his answer of 22 April, *Official Report*, column *596*, on the future of the chiropody service and profession, he is now able to make a further statement.

Mrs. Currie: There are a number of issues which need to be resolved and discussions on these are likely to take some time. We recognise the importance of foot care for large numbers of people, particularly the elderly, and our efforts are directed towards a better and more accessible service in future.

NHS (Private Facilities)

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the full gross annual cost to the National Health Service of administering the use of private beds and private facilities within the National Health Service for the latest available year.

Mrs. Currie: Charges for the use of private facilities within the National Health Service are calculated so as to recover the full gross cost of those facilities. In 1986-87, the latest year for which information is available, the full gross cost of providing private beds and facilities is reflected by the amount of total income for that year, which was £61 million. A list of the charges in force in 1986-87 is contained in circular HC(86)6, a copy of which is in the Library.

Ward Sisters

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what advice his Department gives to local managers whose ward sisters meet seven of the 11 criteria for a grading of 'I' but do not qualify for the grading because they manage one ward only.

Mr. Newton: The guidance which the Department has issued makes clear that posts must meet the grading definitions as a whole.

Clinical Regrading

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether the money available to health authorities for clinical regrading is intended to cover the funded establishment.

Mr. Newton: The additional money we have provided is to meet the cost of all review body pay awards. Our estimate of the total cost was based on the number of staff in post at 31 March 1988 and took account of both directly employed and agency staff.

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many representations he has received from district health authorities regarding clarification of the guidance his Department has issued on clinical grading of nurses.

Mr. Newton: We have received a number of formal and informal representations as a result of which we issued supplementary guidance to health authorities earlier this month.

National Health Service (Regional Funding)

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement *(a)* on the way in which money is allocated between different National Health Service regions at present and *(b)* on the way in which money would be allocated between different regions under the formula being considered by the National Health Service Management Board giving details of gains and losses.

Mr. Newton: There are two stages to the resource allocation process. The resource allocation working party formula is used to determine each region's target "fair share" of the available resources; Ministers then decide on the pace at which regions' annual allocations are to be adjusted to bring them into line with these targets.

The existing resource allocation working party formula measures the relative needs of each region by taking account of population (and the relative use made of health services by people of different age groups and sexes); morbidity as indicated by standardised mortality ratios; patient flows between regions; and higher staff costs in London and the south-east. A separate adjustment is made to account for the extra service costs associated with medical teaching.

The National Health Service management board's review of the resource allocation working party formula examined each component of the formula and made recommendations aimed at improving its measurement of relative need. Full details of the recommendations, and of the effects they would have on regions' funding targets, are contained in the final report on the review, which was published on 19 July. A copy is in the Library. Decisions on annual allocations were outside the remit of the review, and the report recommends only that the effects of any changes should be carefully phased, to avoid major disruption to health authorities' existing plans. It is not therefore possible to estimate what would be the effects of the review recommendations on regions' annual allocations.

As my right hon. Friend announced in his reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Brentwood and Ongar (Mr.

McCrindle) on 19 July at column 559, the Government will consider this report in the wider context of the National Health Service review.

Christies Hospital, Manchester

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what response he has given to the request by the North Western regional health authority for an extra allocation of £200,000 to fund Christies hospital in Manchester.

Mr. Newton: I hope to respond to the regional health authority's approach shortly.

Immigrants (Pensions)

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services, whether arrangements have been made with the Governments of (i) India, (ii) Bangladesh and (iii) Pakistan for pensions to be updated for immigrants from those countries who return upon retirement to their countries of origin.

Mr. Portillo: No such arrangements have been made.

Perfusionists

Mr. Nellist: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services why the management side of the professional and technical staffs B of Whitley council have not so far conceded the regrading of perfusionists; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: I understand that the grading of this particular group of staff has not been raised in the Whitley council.

Tranquillisers

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations he has had for financial assistance to be granted to the Council for Involuntary Tranquilliser Addiction on Merseyside; what his response has been; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: Section 64 grants are essentially for organisations providing a national resource, rather than for direct client services. The latter are generally best provided and funded locally. The Council for Involuntary Tranquilliser Addiction submitted an application for funding on 30 June. The Department is considering this application along with other candidates for grants, and we shall let the council have a decision as soon as possible.

North Staffordshire Health Authority

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how much money was *(a)* expected to be allocated to North Staffordshire district health authority under the resources allocation working party formula and *(b)* was actually allocated, in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

Mr. Newton: Allocations to individual district health authorities are a matter for regional health authorities. For information on North Staffordshire's allocations the hon. Member may wish to write to the chairman of the West Midlands regional health authority.

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what assessment he has made of the effect on *(a)* the budget of and *(b)* the services provided by North Staffordshire district health authority were the review of the resources allocation working party formula final report to be implemented.

Mr. Newton: The review's remit was confined to the national resource allocation working party formula.

Social Fund

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether a hospital patient whose invalidity benefit on discharge from hospital will be 20p per week above the level of income support can be awarded a social fund grant to enable discharge to take place.

Mr. Portillo: Community care grants are available only to people in receipt of income support at the date of application or who, up to within six weeks of discharge from institutional or residential care will, in the opinion of the social fund officer, be likely to receive income support on discharge.

Higher Pensioner Premium

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what would be the cost of extending entitlement to the higher pensioner premium to those people aged 60 to 79 years who would have been entitled to it if the income support scheme had commenced before they were 60 years; and how many people would benefit from this change.

Mr. Scott: Information on which to base such estimates is not available for the whole of the period concerned.

Income Support Disability Premium

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will extend entitlement to the income support disability premium to claimants who have, for 28 weeks, been treated as incapable of work for the purpose of exemption from the requirement to be available for employment and who do not qualify for the premium on other grounds.

Mr. Scott: We have no plans to do so.

Doctors (Disciplinary Proceedings)

Mr. Sedgemore: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many doctors are currently suspended pending disciplinary hearings under *(a)* HM (61) 112 procedures, *(b)* 5HM/49/1968 procedures, *(c)* HC (82) 13 procedures and *(d)* section 40 of the Whitley council; and if he will break down these figures by sex, ethnic origin, country of qualification, regions in England and Wales;

(2) how many doctors were suspended in each region in each year from 1979 to the present day;

(3) what is the average time taken to deal with disciplinary cases under *(a)* HM (61) 112 procedures, *(b)* HC (82) 13 procedures, *(c)* 5HM/49/1968 procedures and *(d)* section 40 of the Whitley council; and if he will give detail of regional variations;

(4) for how long doctors currently suspended have been suspended; and in how many of the cases there is a date set for the inquiry;

(5) what was the outcome of suspensions after the inquiry and how many doctors were dismissed, reprimanded or resigned in total and in each region for the last year for which figures are available;

(6) how many dismissed doctors went to industrial tribunals in the last year for which figures are available; and what was the outcome as regards dismissal and reinstatement;

(7) what is the estimated average annual cost to the health services of suspending doctors, taking into account salaries, legal costs, employing locums, negligence claims against authorities and doctors awarded costs for wrongful dismissal;

(8) how many doctors are currently suspended for reasons of *(a)* mental health, *(b)* physical health, *(c)* misconduct, *(d)* incompetence and *(e)* fraud, where there are disciplinary procedures pending under: (i) HM (61) 112, (ii) HC (82) 13, (iii) SHM/49/1968 and (iv) section 40 of the Whitley council.

Mr. Newton: This information is not collected centrally. We understand however that there are relatively few cases at one time.

Mr. Sedgemore: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many dismissed doctors appealed under section 190 of the red book in the last year for which figures are available; what was the outcome of the appeals; and if he will break these figures down by sex and ethnic origin.

Mr. Newton: The number of doctors who appeal under paragraph 190 of the hospital medical and dental staff terms and conditions of service varies considerably from year to year. In 1986 there were four appeals: in two dismissal was confirmed and the other two the Secretary of State determined that he did not have jurisdiction. In 1987 a total of 11 appeals were made: in one case jurisdiction was declined, four others were withdrawn or settled locally, and the remaining six are still in progress. I regret that the information available centrally does not enable me to give the other breakdown.

Health Authorities (Disciplinary Procedures)

Mr. Sedgemore: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how his Department, regional health authorities or district health authorities monitor suspensions and disciplinary procedures.

Mr. Newton: The monitoring of suspensions and disciplinary procedures is the responsibility of the relevant health authority. Because of concern about the operation of disciplinary procedures for doctors, the then Secretary of State set up a joint working party with the profession last year to review hospital and Community doctors' and dentists' disciplinary procedures. The working party is expected to report this summer.

Supplementary Benefit

Mr. Clay: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish a table showing the value of supplementary benefit for a couple with two children, aged six and eight years as a percentage of average net earnings for all men and all manual men for each year since 1978 to April 1987.

Mr. Portillo: The information is in the table.

It should be noted that these figures take no account of other benefits available to either families receiving supplementary benefit or families who are in full time work. In particular, the value of housing benefit and of child benefit is excluded.

Supplementary benefit rate expressed as a percentage of average net weekly earnings

Uprating dates	*All adult males Married couple with two children per cent.*	*All male manuals Married couple with two children per cent.*
November 1978[1]	51·1	55·1
November 1979	50·5	54·8
November 1980	50·3	56·3
November 1981	50·8	57·6
November 1982	52·6	59·9
November 1983	50·9	58·2
November 1984	48·9	56·1
November 1985	48·1	55·4
July 1986	45·7	53·1
April 1987	43·0	50·7

[1] 1978—Child benefit not included, but child tax allowance is included.

Note: Net average earnings are the estimates of average gross weekly earnings less tax and national insurance contributions at the non-contracted out rate.

Coventry Family Practitioner Committee

Mr. John Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will publish his reply to the letters from the Association of National Health Service Officers dated 10 June and 20 April 1988;

(2) what information he has as to breaches of the Data Protection Act by a lay menber of the Coventry family practitioner committee; what action he proposes to take; and if he will make a statement;

(3) what representations he has received from the Association of National Health Service Officers concerning threats allegedly made against a senior officer, and threats of redundancies made to a trade union official pursuing a grievance; what action he proposes to take; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: Officials replied to the association on 20 July 1988. Publication of the correspondence is a matter for the association.

Mr. John Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will establish an internal inquiry into the allegations of misconduct by the Coventry family practitioner committee made by the hon. Member for Coventry, North-East on 10 June, *Official Report*, columns *1151-53*.

Mrs. Currie: I wrote to the hon. Member about this matter on 5 July. I understand he has accepted an invitation to discuss with the FPC chairman the matters he raised during the debate and will be meeting her today.

Unemployment and Redundancy

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will publish in the *Official Report*, a table showing for 1987-88 and his forecast for 1988-89 of *(a)* the total cost of benefits paid to unemployed people and *(b)* the total expenditure from the redundancy fund.

Mr. Portillo: The information requested is set out in the "Government's Expenditure Plans 1988-89 to 1990-91",

volume II, a copy of which is in the Library. The figures for *(a)* are in table 15.8 on page 267, and for *(b)* in table 7.26 on page 115.

NHS Staff

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will give figures showing a total number of staff employed in each regional health authority as a total and an estimate of the costs incurred by each regional health authority, broken down into *(a)* staff salaries and *(b)* other costs; and if he will give a national total for both *(a)* and *(b)*.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 6 May 1988]:* Such information as is available is shown in the table.

Region	*NHS Directly employed staff in post*[1] *Whole-time equivalent*	*Salaries and wages expenditure*[2] *£000*	*All other expenditure* *£000*	*Total revenue and capital expenditure* *£000*
Northern	53,510	497,185	220,167	717,352
Yorkshire	59,570	556,112	261,978	818,090
Trent	74,310	679,499	312,467	991,966
East Anglian	30,490	288,879	133,073	421,952
North-West Thames	54,810	556,905	287,419	844,324
North-East Thames	69,060	704,648	347,356	1,052,004
South-East Thames	61,860	620,021	313,585	933,606
South-West Thames	48,510	502,226	202,017	704,243
Wessex	43,520	410,178	209,973	620,151
Oxford	33,210	322,302	145,046	467,348
South-Western	52,370	485,733	232,696	718,429
West Midlands	84,230	784,783	380,210	1,164,993
Mersey	42,870	404,346	186,917	591,263
North-Western	74,080	698,112	289,913	988,025
All regions	782,400	7,510,929	3,522,817	11,033,746
Special Health Authorities[3]	10,990	128,798	90,913	219,711
Total	793,390	7,639,727	3,613,730	11,253,457

Sources: Annual census of NHS medical and non medical manpower—as at 30 September 1986. 1986-87 annual accounts submitted to the Department by regional and district health authorities in England and the special health authorities for the London postgraduate teaching hospitals.

Notes:

[1] Includes permanent paid, honorary and locum medical and dental staff; agency nursing and midwifery staff. (The figure for the South West Thames region includes London Ambulance Service staff—2,850 whole time equivalents).

[2] Excludes expenditure on categories of non-NHS staff outside the scope of the annual census of NHS medical and non-medical manpower. Such costs (totalling some £81,757,000) are however included in the figures for "all other" and "total revenue and capital expenditure".

[3] Special health authorities for the London post-graduate teaching hospitals.

AIDS

Mr. Rost: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) whether, in relation to the possible involvement of immunisation procedures in the aetiology of AIDS, there has been any effort to identify SV40 genomes in people with AIDS;

(2) what assessment he has made, in relation to the possible involvement of immunisation procedures in the aetiology of AIDS, as to whether polio vaccine used in the United Kingdom in the late 1950s or early 1960s was in part contaminated with simian virus 40; and what effects SV 40 is considered to have in its recipients.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 7 July 1988]:* I am advised that some of the polio vaccine used in the United Kingdom at that time contained simian virus 40. However, I am also advised that there is no evidence of adverse effects on recipients. In particular, two large studies conducted in the United States have shown no evidence of adverse effects on people who were given polio vaccine containing simian virus 40 in the late 1950s or early 1960s.

Mr. Rost: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what is the percentage of people with AIDS who are antibody-positive to HIV;

(2) what is the percentage of people with AIDS in whom HIV can be isolated.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 7 July 1988]:* Virtually all people with AIDS in the United Kingdom are HIV antibody positive. Techniques for isolating the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) itself are still experimental and rates of isolation from people with AIDS vary from laboratory to laboratory. Some laboratories claim to have isolated the virus in more than 80 per cent. of patients with AIDS.

Mr. Rost: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what is the percentage of people with AIDS in whom Epstein-Barr virus or antibodies to it can be isolated;

(2) what is the percentage of people with AIDS in whom cytomegalo virus or antibodies to it can be isolated;

(3) what is the percentage of people with AIDS in whom hepatitis B virus or antibodies to it can be isolated;

(4) what is the percentage of people with AIDS in whom herpes simplex virus or antibodies to it can be isolated;

(5) what is the percentage of people with AIDS in whom Epstein-Barr, cytomegalo, or herpes simplex-viral agents has been identified where no evidence of HIV has been found.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 7 July 1988]:* This information is not available. Tests for these viruses and for antibodies to the viruses are not routinely performed.

Mr. Rost: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many individuals who have been identified as HIV positive have subsequently been found not to be so.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 7 July 1988]:* I understand that in a very few cases, particularly in the early days of testing, individuals were identified as being HIV antibody positive but were subsequently found not to be so when improved assay systems were available.

Mr. Rost: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what attempts have been made by his Department to investigate claims, or support research, of the health-enhancing benefits of nutritional support, non-toxic herbal anti-viral treatment and lipid therapy for AIDS/ARC patients;

(2) whether, in relation to the alternative treatment of people with AIDS/ARC, there has been any trial of the formulation known as AL 721 (active lecithin);

(3) what attempts have been made by his Department to investigate the holistic approaches to AIDS; and what specific therapies, trials and research have been supported.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 7 July 1988]:* We are not aware of any research being funded in these areas. I am advised that in individual cases of ARC and AIDS there may be a need for specific nutritional supplementation, but for the generality of cases there is no evidence that anything other than a good balanced diet is required. For reasons of commercial confidentiality, I am unable to comment on whether any manufacturer has applied for a product licence or clinical trial certificate for lecithin or any other potential treatment for AIDS.

Mr. Rost: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what consideration his Department has given to suggestions that some of the symptoms of AIDS could be the result of tertiary or quarternary neurosyphilis, and to the possibility that AIDS is unrecognised, untreated and mistakenly identified syphilis.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 7 July 1988]:* I am advised that there is no evidence to support this view although some patients with AIDS may also be infected with syphilis and the clinical manifestations of syphilis may be, in some cases, modified by immunodeficiency associated with HIV infection.

Mr. Rost: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what evidence is available to him on any correlation between protein patterns in Waldenstrom's macroglobulinaemia, multiple myeloma and other immune and supposedly genetic disorders, and protein patterns in people with AIDS and ARC, and the association between these and those created by SV40 and PARA visuses in experimental studies.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 7 July 1988]:* We are aware of no such evidence.

District Nurses

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list, for each district health authority in England, the number of people nursed by the district nursing service per 1,000 of the population.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 14 July 1988]:* The information for 1986 is given in the table.

It should be noted that part of the variation in the figures is due to differences in demand due for example to the proportion of elderly people in the population. (Around half of patients seen by district nurses are aged 65 or over). Also some health authorities use district nurses to provide a service in health centres and on GPs' premises, which of course produces a markedly higher contact rate than is possible if the same staff are used primarily for home visiting.

Number of persons treated by district nurses during 1986

	Number of persons treated by district nurses Per 1,000 population
England	73
1. Northern	116
1. Hartlepool	131
2. North Tees	93
3. South Tees	181
4. East Cumbria	33
5. South Cumbria	80
6. West Cumbria	206
7. Darlington	104
8. Durham	72
9. North West Durham	83
10. South West Durham	98
11. Northumberland	163
12. Gateshead	46
13. Newcastle	63
14. North Tyneside	197
15. South Tyneside	36
16. Sunderland	195
2. Yorkshire	62
1. Hull	53
2. East Yorkshire	69
3. Grimsby	46
4. Scunthorpe	63
5. Northallerton	21
6. York	53
7. Scarborough	51
8. Harrogate	61
9. Bradford	90
10. Airedale	122
11. Calderdale	68
12. Huddersfield	58
13. Dewsbury	51
14. Leeds Western	27
15. Leeds Eastern	45
16. Wakefield	76
17. Pontefract	108
3. Trent	83
1. North Derbyshire	100
2. South Derbyshire	70
3. Leicestershire	76
4. North Lincolnshire	92
5. South Lincolnshire	83
6. Bassetlaw	61
7. Central Nottinghamshire	148
8. Nottingham	97
9. Barnsley	74
10. Doncaster	98
11. Rotherham	59
12. Sheffield	55
4. East Anglia	80
1. Cambridge	90
2. Peterborough	160
3. West Suffolk	102
4. East Suffolk	46
5. Norwich	67
6. Great Yarmouth	35
7. West Norfolk and Wisbech	39
8. Huntingdon	130
5. North West Thames	47
1. North Bedfordshire	51
2. South Bedfordshire	56
3. North Hertfordshire	59

	Number of persons treated by district nurses Per 1,000 population
4. East Hertfordshire	29
5. North West Hertfordshire	24
6. South West Hertfordshire	42
7. Barnet	58
8. Harrow	61
9. Hillingdon	30
10. Hounslow and Spelthorne	127
11. Ealing	30
12. Brent	33
13. Paddington	26
14. Riverside	24
6. North East Thames	44
1. Basildon and Thurrock	60
2. Mid Essex	46
3. North East Essex	39
4. West Essex	44
5. Southend	52
6. Barking, Havering and Brentwood	26
7. Hampstead	38
8. Bloomsbury	79
9. Islington	26
10. City and Hackney	69
11. Newham	12
12. Tower Hamlets	51
13. Enfield	37
14. Haringey	25
15. Redbridge	63
16. Waltham Forest	51
7. South East Thames	74
1. Brighton	84
2. Eastbourne	148
3. Hastings	104
4. South East Kent	83
5. Canterbury and Thanet	45
6. Dartford and Gravesham	68
7. Maidstone	59
8. Medway	99
9. Tunbridge Wells	46
10. Bexley	91
11. Greenwich	41
12. Bromley	49
13. West Lambeth	17
14. Camberwell N.	110
15. Lewisham and Southwark	53
8. South West Thames	78
1. North West Surrey	34
2. West Surrey and North East Hants	61
3. South West Surrey	60
4. Mid Surrey	51
5. East Surrey	197
6. Chichester	123
7. Mid Downs	51
8. Worthing	160
9. Croydon	129
10. Kingston and Esher	53
11. Richmond, Roehampton and Twickenham	25
12. Wandsworth	21
13. Sutton and Merton	48
9. Wessex	55
1. East Dorset	42
2. West Dorset	27
3. Portsmouth	30
4. S. W. Hants & Southampton	69
5. Winchester	70
6. Basingstoke	51
7. Salisbury	68
8. Swindon	59
9. West Wilts and Bath	80
10. Isle of Wight	69
10. Oxford	125
1. East Berkshire	85
2. West Berkshire	110
3. Aylesbury	243
4. Wycombe	69
5. Milton Keynes	132
6. Kettering	215
7. Northampton	213
8. Oxford	59
11. Southwestern	52
1. Bristol and Weston	42
2. Ffenchay	25
3. Southmead	37
4. Cornwall & Isle of Scilly	41
5. Exeter	42
6. North Devon	35
7. Plymouth	51
8. Torbay	65
9. Cheltenham	40
10. Gloucester	65
11. Somerset	95
12. West Midlands	55
1. Bromsgrove and Redditch	37
2. Herefordshire	61
3. Kidderminster	141
4. Worcester	44
5. Shropshire	47
6. Mid Staffordshire	24
7. North Staffordshire	36
8. South East Staffordshire	34
9. Rugby	35
10. North Warwickshire	43
11. South Warwickshire	32
12. Birmingham Central	51
13. Birmingham East	80
14. Birmingham North	116
15. Birmingham South	57
16. Birmingham West	103
17. Coventry	39
18. Dudley	40
19. Sandwell	72
20. Solihull	53
21. Walsall	106
22. Wolverhampton	40
13. Mersey	75
1. Chester	60
2. Crewe	74
3. Halton	99
4. Macclesfield	116
5. Warrington	131
6. Liverpool	73
7. St. Helens and Knowsley	57
8. Southport and Formby	91
9. South Sefton	39
10. Wirral	58
14. Northwestern	100
1. Lancaster	103
2. Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde	111
3. Preston	118
4. Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley	295
5. Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale	154
6. West Lancashire	129
7. Chorley and South Ribble	69
8. Bolton	69
9. Bury	187
10. Manchester North	46
11. Manchester Central	37
12. Manchester South	52
13. Oldham	70
14. Rochdale	82
15. Salford	83
16. Stockport	69

	Number of persons treated by district nurses Per 1,000 population
17. Tameside and Glossop	56
18. Trafford	61
19. Wigan	76

Source: DHSS form LHS 27/3
OPCS

Benefits

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish figures showing, for each class A national insurance benefit and for each means-tested social security benefit, the numbers and proportions of claimants who are *(a)* women and *(b)* lone parents, giving the most recent figures.

Mr. Portillo *[holding answer 18 July 1988]:* The figures, in so far as they are available, are as follows:

Benefit	Date	Recipients who are women		Recipients who are lone parents	
		Number	Percentage of all recipients	Number	Percentage of all recipients
Retirement Pension	September 1987	6,352,000	65·3	n/a	n/a
Widows' Benefits	September 1987	367,000	100	54,000	14·7
Maternity Allowance	March 1987	332,000	100	n/a	n/a
Invalidity Benefit	April 1987	214,000	22·1	n/a	n/a
Sickness Benefit	April 1987	26,000	23·6	n/a	n/a
Unemployment Benefit	November 1987	250,000	37·0	n/a	n/a
Supplementary Benefit	May 1987	2,537,000	51·8	664,000	13·6
Family Income Supplement	April 1987	91,000	41	92,000	42
Housing Benefit	Autumn 1985	n/a	n/a	[1]630,000	[1]8·8

n/a—not available.
[1] subject to revision.

Perinatal Mortality

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish the perinatal mortality rate for each year since 1968 by region.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 22 July 1988]:* The information is shown in the tables. Health authority areas were changed in 1974: the data prior to 1974 are not threefore directly comparable with those for 1974 onwards.

Perinatal mortality rates by hospital regions in England and Wales 1968-1973

Hospital region	Year					
	1978	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973
England and Wales	25	23	23	22	22	21
Newcastle	25	25	24	23	23	22
Leeds	26	25	25	22	24	23
Sheffield	25	24	24	23	23	21
East Anglian	21	20	21	20	19	17
North West Metropolitan	24	21	22	20	19	19
North East Metropolitan	24	22	22	22	21	20
South East Metropolitan	23	21	21	20	19	20
South West Metropolitan	23	21	22	20	20	19
Wessex	23	21	21	21	19	21
Oxford	21	19	20	20	18	17
South Western	22	21	21	20	20	19
Welsh	28	27	25	24	22	21
Birmingham	25	24	26	24	24	24
Manchester	28	27	27	25	25	23
Liverpool	28	27	27	26	24	25

Perinatal mortality rates[1] by Regional Health Authorities in England and Wales 1974-1987

Regional Health Authority	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	[2]1987
England and Wales	20·4	19·3	17·7	17·0	15·5	14·7	13·3	11·8	11·3	10·4	10·1	9·8	9·6	8·9
England	20·3	19·3	17·6	16·9	15·4	14·6	13·4	11·7	11·2	10·3	10·0	9·8	9·5	8·9
Northern	22·5	19·9	19·1	19·1	17·6	16·4	15·0	13·2	11·8	10·8	11·0	9·8	10·1	8·5
Yorkshire	22·2	21·6	18·4	18·1	16·3	16·6	14·9	13·9	12·5	11·8	11·6	10·6	10·3	9·5
Trent	21·0	18·6	19·2	16·7	15·3	14·6	13·0	11·2	11·2	10·7	9·8	9·5	10·2	9·3
East Anglian	16·6	15·8	13·9	13·0	13·3	13·0	11·3	10·2	10·4	9·3	8·9	9·8	7·7	7·9
North West Thames	17·5	18·4	16·9	14·8	14·1	13·2	11·0	10·7	9·7	8·6	9·0	9·1	8·6	8·6
North East Thames	19·2	18·0	16·6	16·1	15·1	13·5	13·8	11·0	11·6	9·9	9·7	9·3	9·6	9·4
South East Thames	19·5	19·2	17·4	16·8	15·0	14·1	12·9	12·0	10·0	10·2	10·5	9·5	8·5	8·5
South West Thames	18·1	18·0	14·8	14·6	13·5	13·3	10·8	10·9	10·6	9·4	8·6	9·3	8·2	7·5
Wessex	17·8	17·1	15·1	15·5	13·2	12·8	11·7	9·7	10·0	9·4	8·6	9·2	8·8	8·9
Oxford	15·7	15·6	13·8	15·0	13·4	11·6	12·6	9·4	9·9	8·9	8·7	8·5	8·9	8·0
South Western	19·0	16·9	16·1	16·2	15·1	13·3	12·6	11·5	9·1	9·4	9·3	9·1	9·5	7·5
West Midlands	22·5	21·8	21·1	19·4	17·2	16·8	15·1	12·9	13·8	12·3	12·3	11·7	11·0	9·9
Mersey	23·6	22·1	19·5	18·8	15·2	15·6	13·7	12·4	10·9	9·3	9·0	10·2	9·2	9·0
North Western	23·1	21·9	18·7	18·5	18·1	15·9	15·3	12·5	12·5	11·3	10·3	9·9	10·4	9·6
Wales	21·2	19·7	19·0	17·9	16·8	15·6	12·8	14·1	11·1	11·3	10·5	10·2	10·3	9·2

Note: Perinatal mortality = stillbirths + deaths 0-6 days.
[1] Rate per 1,000 total births.
[2] Provisional.

TRANSPORT

Crash Barriers

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has any plans to measure the effectiveness of the current design of crash barriers on Britain's roads; and whether he has any plans to improve that design.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The effectiveness of existing safety fence designs has been measured in research and monitoring actual performance for over 20 years.

New designs of safety fences have been developed. The case for their deployment is now being assessed.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will make a statement on the effectiveness of central reservation crash barriers on Britain's dual carriageways;

(2) what recent steps his Department has taken to improve the effectiveness of crash barriers on roads.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Existing safety fencing is designed to contain a 1·5 tonne vehicle travelling at 70 mph striking the fence at an angle of 20 degrees, and to redirect it safely. Extensive research and long experience have consistently shown that it performs at least as well as, and sometimes better than, this.

Inspection and maintenance regimes are in force during the installation and throughout the useful life of each safety fence. They will shortly be supplemented with mandatory quality assurance standards for contractors engaged in supplying and erecting fences. Such measures ensure that fences perform, and continue to perform, as effectively as they are designed to do.

The Department has developed a range of higher containment safety fences. We are currently looking at the costs and benefits of deploying them. The Department continues to keep all aspects of safety fence performance under close scrutiny. We will introduce further improvements whenever they can be justified.

Whatever their effectiveness, safety fences are not a substitute for safe driving.

Felixstowe Dock (Deposit of Material)

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if, in respect of the application he has received, from the Felixstowe Dock and Railway Company, for consents under section 7 of the Felixstowe Dock and Railway Act 1988, he will state (i) the date of the application, (ii) its nature, and (iii) whether it was accompanied by appropriate information as required under article 5 of European Community Directive 85/337 on environmental assessment.

Mr. David Mitchell: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State received the company's application for consent to the first stage of reclamation for the extension of the port on 3 June 1988. This gave particulars about the matters set out in section 7(2) of the Act. He gave his consent on 12 July. The directive on environmental assessment does not apply to projects which have been specifically approved by Parliament.

Management in Government

Mr. Fry: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress he has made towards the implementation in his Department of the recommendations in the efficiency unit's report entitled "Improving Management in Government: The Next Steps"; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Channon: I am establishing the vehicle inspectorate as an executive agency with effect from 1 August. Copies of the policy and resources framework document, setting out the inspectorate's aims, objectives and responsibilities, have been laid in the libraries in this House and in the other place.

I am appointing Mr. Ron Oliver, a qualified mechanical engineer, who is the present head of the vehicle inspectorate, to be its first chief executive. I am delegating clear responsibility for day-to-day management of the inspectorate to him and his management team. Under the policy and resources framework, local management will have enhanced responsibilities in the areas of finance, contracts and personnel management and more scope to develop new business initiatives. It intends to introduce performance incentives and other necessary changes designed to encourage staff to increase efficiency to make more productive use of public assets and thereby improve services to the public. I expect that the scope of local management freedom and responsibilities will grow over time and I shall be ready to consider modifications to this policy and resources framework to reflect and encourage that process. In particular, we shall be reviewing the inspectorate's financial regime, in order to find ways of mirroring as closely as possible the financial disciplines of a private sector business.

Publication of the framework document itself represents an enhancement of accountability to Parliament and the inspectorate will in future publish an annual business plan, as well as its annual report and accounts. In order to ensure that letters to hon. Members are dealt with as quickly and effectively as possible, I have asked hon. Members to write direct to the chief executive in the first instance on questions which concern the inspectorate's handling of constituency cases concerning operational matters. I and my hon. Friend the Minister for Roads and Traffic will continue to deal with questions of policy or with any cases where hon. Members are dissatisfied with the inspectorate's reply.

The inspectorate is already working to specific unit cost targets agreed with the Treasury for 1988-89. I have now set the chief executive a further target to improve the cost efficiency of the inspectorate's main activities by 3·7 per cent. over the two-year period from 1 April 1989 to 31 March 1991. These savings will come both from specific efficiency measures and from the development of new initiatives and performance incentives within the executive agency framework.

I am pleased that the vehicle inspectorate is the first executive agency to be established, and I wish the chief executive and his staff every success in achieving their objectives and targets.

My Department continues to work towards establishing the driver and vehicle licensing directorate as an executive agency. In addition, I have commissioned a feasibility study of establishing the transport and road research laboratory as an executive agency and have asked my Department to develop executive agency proposals for the driver testing and training organisation (which conducts driving tests) and the vehicle and component approvals division (which carries out type approval tests).

West London (Schemes)

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport Lwhich houses would need to be demolished under each of the different schemes described in the Husband report on the west London environmental improvement route; and how many blight notices *(a)* have been accepted and *(b)* are under consideration.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: At this early stage I cannot add to the estimates set out in Husband's report.

To date 11 blight notices have been accepted and a further one is under consideration.

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if any of the options proposed in stage 2 of the west London assessment study will be subject to the European Economic Community directive on environmental impact assessment.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The European Community's directive on environmental impact assessment applies to the assessment of the environmental effects of those public and private projects which are likely to have significant effects on the environment. Any projects which are taken forward for more detailed consideration from stage 2 of the west London assessment study and which are likely to have significant effects on the environment will be subject to the directive. The assessment of options within stage 2 of the study will include consideration of their environmental effects.

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which houses along the proposed western environmental improvement route are affected by the safeguarding line.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The scope of a safeguarding line is defined by the Town and Country Planning General Development Order 1977. Planning applications relating to properties within 67 m of the safeguarded line must be referred to the Secretary of State for direction. Only a small proportion of these properties is likely to be affected by the proposals for WEIR.

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the latest timetable for the western environmental improvement route from timing of studies to completion of proposed project; what public consultations are proposed and at what points; and what public information exercises are envisaged.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The study into a western environmental improvement route started in 1984. The project is unlikely to be completed before the late 1990s. We hope to hold public consultations around the end of the year. I shall make an announcement nearer the time. We shall also be consulting widely on the west London assessment study next year.

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if a public inquiry will be held should his Department decide to build the western environmental improvement route.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The statutory highway procedures include provision for public inquiries to be held if there are unresolved objections.

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the implications of the re-routing proposals in the west London assessment study for the local provision of public bus services; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: It has been made clear that the preliminary set of options, including those with bus service improvements, will be assessed in detail by the consultants during the rest of stage 2. Their conclusions will be considered when stage 2 has been completed.

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what are the options being considered in the west London assessment study as part of the western environmental improvement route.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: All the preliminary options examined in the west London assessment study are described in the working paper produced by Sir William Halcrow and Partners. Copies have been placed in the Library.

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proportion of the western environmental improvement route is being considered for a tunnel; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Most of the proposed route is in cutting. The consultants have been asked to explore the practicablity, costs and benefits of covering sections of the route.

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many residents of the Kensington constituency, selected by whom, are responsible for the comments in the public consultation document (Husband's study; technical note 1, App. 1B, group discussions with residents, vol. 1B, Holland Park/north Kensington); if there are plans for further consultations; what plans there are for ensuring that the public receives further information; how many copies of the full Husband's report have been printed; and who received these copies.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The appendix referred to was not produced by Husband and Co. It is one of the technical appendices produced by Sir William Halcrow and Partners as part of their report on problems in stage 1 of the west London assessment study. Full details of the coverage of public consultation and the methodology adopted are set out in technical note 1, copies of which have been sent to borough councis and placed in the main libraries in the study area.

Husband and Co. published in September 1987 a report on the appraisal of options for the proposed western environmental improvement route, of which 200 copies were printed. Copies were distributed as follows:

Local public libraries in the area
Local authorities in the area
Members of Parliament in the area
House of Commons and House of Lords Libraries
Executive authorities such as BR and LUL Ltd
Select Committee on Transport
London Research Library
Consultants for the West London Assessment study.

About 60 copies have been sold to individuals or groups interested in the scheme.

Additionally, 1,500 copies of a summary were produced and have been distributed to individuals and groups interested in the scheme.

I have said there will be further consultation with the public about the scheme.

Disabled People

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he intends to take to improve transport services for disabled persons.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The Department of Transport has a firm and continuing commitment to a programme of research, technical and policy development, education and information dissemination to improve transport services for people with disabilities. In all these areas we work in close association with the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee.

New Roads (Housing Proximities)

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what figure his Department uses as the minimum desirable distance between houses and a new major road; and what guidance or regulations have been issued on this subject.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: In planning roads the distance from houses is determined on the basis of careful assessment of all the relevant safety and environmental factors.

In practice, people object if a road comes within half a mile and apply for permission to build up to the highway boundary.

Channel Tunnel

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what studies his Department has carried out into likely road usage in Suffolk and Norfolk after the opening of the Channel tunnel; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The effects on road usage in Suffolk and Norfolk after the opening of the Channel tunnel are not likely to be significant.

London (Traffic Congestion)

Mr. French: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received from motoring organisations about ways of reducing traffic congestion in London; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: None recently. We work to reduce traffic congestion in London by progressing the trunk road programme, supporting the boroughs with their transport policies and programmes, promoting better traffic management, encouraging better parking controls and working with BR and LRT to improve the quality of their services.

Mr. French: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will commission a study into the provision of underground tunnels in London to reduce traffic congestion.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I have no plans to commission a special study. In addition to the measures already in hand to reduce traffic congestion in London, consultants for the London assessment studies are developing a range of options for relieving problems in the four study areas. Some of these options could include proposals for tunnels to relieve traffic congestion.

East London River Crossing

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received about the incorporation of a Docklands light railway extension to Thamesmead into the proposed east London river crossing scheme; and if he is considering such a proposal.

Mr. Channon: Such proposals were put forward during and after the public inquiries into the east London river crossing scheme. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment and I are considering all these proposals. We hope to announce our decisions very shortly.

M1 Traffic Flows

Mr. Marlow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the current average hourly flow at junction 12 of the M1 in both directions; and what estimate he has of these flows immediately subsequent to the completion of the M40.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The latest information available, for 1987, shows an average hourly two-way flow immediately north of junction 12 of 4,040 vehicles.

After completion of the M40 extension, expected in 1992, it is estimated that the hourly flow will be in the range 3,730 to 3,910 vehicles. This represents a reduction of between 540 and 630 vehicles per hour.

A6 Disley Bypass

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport under what circumstances he will *(a)* publish or *(b)* make available to Derbyshire county council the reports by the landscape advisory committee and the report of the consulting engineers on the A6 Disley bypass.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: In accordance with the policy set out in the "Report on the Review of Highway Inquiry Procedures 1978" (Cmnd. 7133), the Department will make the reports available for inspection by objectors to any orders published under the Highways Acts.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on his recent meeting with Derbyshire county council to discuss the A6 Disley bypass.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: It explained its reservations about the "brown route"—in particular its opinion of effects on the landscape; the severance problems and the difficulties for Swizzells Matlow in New Mills; and the likely high cost of the scheme due to unusual geological features in the area. I explained the environmental reasons for putting forward the brown route. I undertook to consider all the county council's comments and suggestions for alternatives before making decisions on whether a scheme should be added to the roads programme and on choice of route. I explained that if the scheme were added to the programme the standard procedure would be for all objections and representations to be aired before an independent inspector, who would make recommendations to my right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Transport and for the Environment.

P and O Ferries

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will make a statement of the condition of the P andO ferry European Clearway;

(2) if he will make a statement on the recent fire on board the ferry European Clearway.

Mr. David Mitchell: One of my Department's marine surveyors is investigating the circumstances surrounding the fire on the European Clearway and he will be completing his report as soon as possible.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will arrange for an independent inquiry into operational safety aboard P and O cross-Channel ferries.

Mr. David Mitchell: No. My marine surveyors are monitoring safety standards on all cross-Channel ferries.

North Sea Oil and Gas (Safety)

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many safety inspectors were employed by his Department on the inspection of North sea oil and gas installations and related equipment in each year since 1965.

Mr. David Mitchell: The figures are not available in the form requested. However, since 1976 an average of around 12 to 15 surveyor years per annum have been devoted to the survey of fire-fighting equipment and life-saving appliances on those installations.

M4 (Traffic)

Dr. Glyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the increased traffic on the M4 as a result of the authorisation to use Heathrow for charter flights.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State does not expect road traffic volumes to be significantly affected. The concession allowing the use of Heathrow airport by whole plane charter services is designed to apply only in exceptional circumstances, where holidaymakers would otherwise face unacceptable delay. The concession will end on 30 September. This relaxation in our air traffic distribution policy for the London airports will offer a useful measure of flexibility in dealing with the difficult travel circumstances such as we have seen over recent weekends.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 26 July 1988

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Recruitment Monitoring

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he expects the monitoring exercise on recruitment begun in July 1987 to be completed; and whether he will then place a copy of the result in the Library.

Mrs. Rumbold: The recruitment monitoring exercise which began in July 1987 is part of a central initiative co-ordinated by the OMCS. The figures for the initial stage of the exercise from July to December 1987 were submitted to the OMCS earlier this year; the next batch of figures should be compiled by the end of this year.

The results for the Civil Service as a whole will be collated by OMCS; it will therefore be for the Minister for the Civil Service to decide in what form the results are published.

Ethnic Monitoring

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science in what quasi-governmental bodies or other organisations under his aegis he has authority to request or require the carrying out of ethnic monitoring exercises in accordance with the code of the Commission for Racial Equality; and what ethnic monitoring and equal opportunities exercises have been carried out by each such department.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend does not prescribe the day-to-day personnel management policy of the non-departmental public bodies sponsored by the Department. Nevertheless, he would expect them to bear in mind the code of practice for the elimination of racial discrimination and the promotion of equality of opportunity in employment as recommended by the Commission for Racial Equality.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) how many of those who responded to his recent ethnic origin survey and stated that they were in grades 1 to 7 were in grades 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7, respectively;

(2) how many of those who responded to his recent ethnic origin survey were senior executive officers and higher executive officers, respectively.

Mrs. Rumbold: The survey was conducted on the undertaking that anonymity would be preserved. Any further breakdown from that given to the hon. and learned Member on 23 June could identify individuals and I am unable therefore to provide the information requested.

Equal Opportunities

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many of the equal opportunities officers appointed for his Department are *(a)* women, *(b)* from ethnic minorities, or *(c)* both.

Mrs. Rumbold: There are two equal opportunities officers for the Department; one is male, one is female, neither is from ethnic minorities.

Schoolchildren (Qualifications)

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list the percentages of the total post-primary school population in England and Wales who have attained passes in qualifications such as City and Guilds and B Tec certificates in each of the years 1985, 1986 and 1987.

Mrs. Rumbold: The information is not available. Information for Wales is the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list the percentages of the total post-primary school population, in England and Wales who have attained passes at each grade level, including upgraded status, in CSE and GCE O and A-level in each of the years 1985, 1986 and 1987.

Mrs. Rumbold: Information in the form requested is not available. Information for Wales is the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Members' Correspondence

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the average length of time taken by his Department to respond to right hon. and hon. Members' correspondence during the summer recess.

Mrs. Rumbold: Information is not available for the period of the summer recess alone. However, during the period July to October 1987 the Department received over 5,000 letters which required a ministerial reply. Much the greater part of these were from right hon. and hon. Members. The average time taken for replies was 25 days.

Schools (Inspections)

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) whether Her Majesty's Inspectorate reports on the quality of teachers in schools which it inspects;

(2) how many schools in the Gedling constituency have been inspected by Her Majesty's inspectors in the last two years and have been the subject of a written report;

(3) how many schools per year Her Majesty's Inspectorate inspects; and on how many of these a written report is produced;

(4) how many years at present rates of progress it will take for Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools to produce a written report on all British schools.

Mrs. Rumbold: Her Majesty's Inspectorate always issued reports after formal inspections, and since 1983 those reports have been published. In addition, many other informal visits to schools are made by Her Majesty's

Inspectorate in the course of its day-to-day work which do not result in published reports. Arising from inspections of schools begun in 1986 and 1987, a total of 187 and 144 reports have been published to date respectively. These exclude the reports of surveys involving more than one school, a number of which have also been published. In each of these years Her Majesty's Inspectorate visited some 5,000 schools.

Given that there are over 23,000 schools in England, not including special schools and units, and that there are only about 350 schools Her Majesty's inspectors, the inspectorate does not set out to inspect and produce a report on every school on a regular basis. However, on average each primary school in England is visited informally every six years, and each secondary school every two years.

The selection of schools for formal inspection is determined by the need to retain on a simple basis a national overview, and for Her Majesty's Inspectorate to report in a timely and useful fashion on specific matters of national interest such as the GCSE or the TVEI.

No schools have been formally inspected in the Gedling constituency within the last two years. Reports were, however, issued on Gedling comprehensive school in January 1986 and on Arno Vale junior school in July 1985, and informal visits have been made to three primary and two secondary schools in the last year.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate reports include judgments about the general quality of teaching observed in schools, but not about individual teachers.

Nursery Education

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) what is the number of under-fives who received nursery education in the whole of the United Kingdom for each year since 1974;

(2) what information he has as to the proportion of education expenditure dedicated to nursery education in percentages in *(a)* Belgium, *(b)* Canada, *(c)* Denmark, *(d)* France, *(e)* the Federal Republic of Germany, *(f)* the Netherlands, *(g)* Portugal, *(h)* Spain, *(i)* the United Kingdom and *(j)* Sweden;

(3) what information he has on the per capita expenditure on nursery education for each year since 1974, in *(a)* Belgium, *(b)* Canada, *(c)* Denmark, *(d)* France, *(e)* the Federal Republic of Germany, *(f)* the Netherlands, *(g)* Portugal, *(h)* Spain, *(i)* the United Kingdom and *(j)* Sweden.

Mrs. Rumbold *[holding answer 25 July 1988]:* The forms of pre-compulsory provision vary between and within countries, as does practice in the age and times of year at which children are admitted to compulsory education. For the United Kingdom this is five years of age, whereas for other countries it is six or even seven. For the United Kingdom, available data for pupils aged under five in education are as follows:

The numbers of children aged under 5[1] benefiting from pre-compulsory education—United Kingdom

	1975-76	*1984-85*	*1985-86[2]*	*1986-87[3]*
Total pupils[4] (thousands)	576·0	676·4	670·7	680·7
Participation rate[5] per cent.	34·5	46·4	46·7	47·6

Source: Education Statistics for the United Kingdom, 1988 Edition Table 16.
[1] Ages at 31 December.
[2] Includes 1984-85 data for Scotland.
[3] Includes 1987-88 data for Scotland.
[4] Part-time pupils counted as one.
[5] As a percentage of all children aged 3 or 4.

For maintained schools in England, pupils aged under five can be provided by the three types of schooling as follows:

The numbers of children aged under 5 benefiting from pre-compulsory education—England

Thousands

	1975-76	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*
Pupils[1] in nursery schools and nursery classes in primary schools	157·6	266·9	272·5	276·2
Other pupils aged under 5 in infant classes in primary schools	282·4	245·6	236·1	240·6
All pupils	440·0	512·6	508·6	516·8
Participation rate[2] per cent.	32·0	43·2	43·3	43·8

Source: Statistical bulletin 4/88, Table 2.
[1] Part-time pupils counted as one.
[2] As a percentage of all children aged 3 or 4.

Data for intermediate years are published in previous editions of education statistics for the United Kingdom; for England, "Statistics of Education—Schools"; their associated statistical bulletins (latest 1/88, 6/88 respectively); and 4/84. These publications are available in the House of Commons Library.

The information in the tables excludes day-care nurseries and playgroups which are registered with local health authorities.

Information on per capita expenditure on pre-compulsory education is not available. The percentages of public expenditure allocated to pre-compulsory education in the overseas countries mentioned are as follows:

Public[1] sector current expenditure on pre-compulsory education as a percentage of all current public expenditure

Country[2]	*Year*	*Age at which compulsory schooling starts*	*Percentage pre-school level*	*Percentage not distributed by level*
France[3]	1982	6	8·4	5·5
Germany, Federal Republic of	1984	6	3·5	4·3
Netherlands	1984	6	5·2	7·1
Portugal	1983	6	0·1	4·5
Spain	1979	6	3·5	2·6
United Kingdom	1984	5	2·6	9·0
Sweden	1984	7	0·1	7·9

Source: UNESCO Statistical Yearbook.

[1] It should be noted that in some countries the division between public and private sectors can be blurred, as some Governments may subsidise private arrangements.

[2] Expenditure on pre-school education is not separately identified for Belgium, Canada and Denmark.

[3] Metropolitan France.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Japanese War Criminals

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Attorney-General if the Lord Chancellor will make it his policy to release all hitherto unreleased material at the Public Record Office relating to the Soviet trial of suspected Japanese war criminals at Khabarovsk on charges arising from bacteriological warfare and illegal medical experiments on human beings.

The Attorney-General: The full reports from the British embassy in Moscow on the Soviet trial at Khabarovsk in December 1949 are among Foreign Office records which have already been released to the Public Record Office, Kew, where they are available for inspection.

Hon. Member for Edinburgh, Leith (Prosecution)

Mr. Ron Brown: To ask the Attorney-General what was the cost to public funds associated with the action by the Director of Public Prosecutions in taking over and subsequently discontinuing the private prosecution brought recently against the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Leith at Telford Crown court.

The Solicitor-General: The action taken by the Director of Public Prosecutions added less than £10 to the normal departmental running costs of the Crown Prosecution Service.

House Sales

Mr. Michael: To ask the Attorney-General what consideration he has given to introducing to England and Wales, in whole or in part, the Scottish system of house sales; what consultations he has had on this possibility; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: The advantages and disadvantages of using Scottish house purchase procedures in England and Wales were recently considered fully by the conveyancing standing committee at the Law Commission. Such procedures are available for use in England and Wales without the need for amending legislation. The committee has produced an explanatory guide for conveyancers and their clients showing how such procedures may be used.

Mr. Michael: To ask the Attorney-General what proposals he has to end the practice known as gazumping; and whether he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: I refer the hon. Member to the reply which I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Staffordshire (Mr. Heddle) on 30 June, at column *295*.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Manufacturing

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what was the annual increase or decrease in *(a)* world trade in manufacturing, and *(b)* the British share of world trade in manufacturing, for each year since 1979.

Mr. Alan Clark: Information based on the exports of the main manufacturing countries is in the table:

Exports of manufactures—volume (main manufacturing countries)

	Changes on previous year	
	MMC Exports	*United Kingdom Share*
	percentage	*percentage*
1979	5·3	−5·7
1980	4·8	−3·6
1981	2·7	−8·4
1982	−2·6	4·5
1983	2·6	−2·9
1984	9·8	−0·4
1985	4·8	1·3
1986	1·4	1·4
1987	4·4	3·7

Sources: United Kingdom—Department of Trade and Industry; Others—OECD; UN.

Soviet Union

Sir Dudley Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what new opportunities of trade with the Soviet Union have arisen since the announcement of the new policies of Mr. Gorbachev; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: The economic reforms announced by Mr. Gorbachev are bringing fundamental changes to the management of Soviet foreign trade. Responsibility has been decentralised and a number of industrial ministries and state enterprises have been granted foreign trade rights, providing opportunities for stronger links between foreign suppliers and end users. Higher priority has been given to imports of equipment which will modernise and increase the efficiency of Soviet industry, assist import

substitution and increase Soviet exports. Joint ventures and technical co-operation agreements are now actively encouraged. Banking reforms are creating opportunities for more flexible financing arrangements. None the less, the Soviet Union remains short of hard currency, and companies should be prepared to be flexible in their negotiations.

Aerosols

Mr. McCartney: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on progress in drawing up a code of practice on reducing chlorofluorocarbons and halon emissions from new aerosols' sources in order to fulfil recommendations of the ozone group of scientists.

Mr. Atkins: As my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment announced on 14 June, at columns *137-38*, the Government will be studying the second report of the stratospheric ozone review group as soon as it is available. We have taken very careful note of the executive summary, but will examine the points raised in their fullest context.

House of Fraser (Holdings) plc

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he now expects the inspectors appointed to investigate the affairs of House of Fraser (Holdings) plc to report.

Mr. Maude *[pursuant to his reply, 25 May 1988, c. 179.]:* The report of the inspectors appointed to investigate the affairs of House of Fraser Holdings plc was received on Saturday 23 July and is being studied.

PRIME MINISTER

Shetton on Dunsmore

Q108. **Mr. Pawsey:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has any plans to visit Shetton on Dunsmore, near Rugby.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

Canada

Q131. **Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Prime Minister when she next expects to pay an official visit to Canada.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

National Health Service

Q170. **Mr. Harry Ewing:** To ask the Prime Minister if, following her visit to Aberdeen on Friday 8 July, she will indicate what role she envisages for the National Health Service in situations when there has been a major disaster.

The Prime Minister: In the United Kingdom the response to most peacetime emergencies, whether natural or man-made, is based on the principle that those best placed to decide what needs to be done and then to manage the remedial action are people at the site of the emergency who know both the problems and the resources available. Consequently, for the immediate response there is heavy reliance on contingency plans made by local emergency services, health and local authorities, public utilities and the operators of industrial and other sites.

The health services' special role is to get injured people to the nearest hospital offering the particular services they need as quickly as possible. Guidance on major incident planning, which is constantly reviewed, has been issued to the health services by the Department of Health and Social Security and the territorial Departments. This guidance stresses the need for the plans of health authorities to be as flexible as possible, since no two major accidents are identical. Nor can it be foreseen how any particular situation may develop. It also advises that plans should be reviewed regularly with the other emergency services in the light of local discussions and circumstances.

Mine Clearance (Gulf of Suez)

Mr. Mates: To ask the Prime Minister whether an award is to be made to members of the armed forces and civilians who were engaged in mine clearance in the Gulf of Suez in 1984.

The Prime Minister: In recognition of outstanding service, and with special regard to the hardships and dangers which accompanied duty there, for both service men and Merchant Navy personnel, Her Majesty the Queen has graciously approved the award of the General Service Medal 1962 with "Mine Clearance—Gulf of Suez" clasp. A Command Paper (Cm. 436) is being laid before the House today.

Advisory Committee on Business Appointments

Sir Peter Blaker: To ask the Prime Minister if she will make an announcement about the chairmanship of the advisory committee on business appointments.

The Prime Minister: My right hon. and noble Friend the Lord Carlisle of Bucklow, QC, has accepted my invitation to succeed the right hon. and noble Lord Diamond as chairman of the advisory committee on business appointments with effect from November 1988. I wish to express the Government's appreciation of Lord Diamond's service as chairman of this committee under successive Governments since its inception in 1975.

Efficiency Unit

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Prime Minister what topics have been covered in the efficiency unit's scrutiny programme in the last financial year.

The Prime Minister: The 1987-88 programme of scrutinies carried out in association with Sir Robin Ibbs and the efficiency unit included:

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Enforcement of Milk and Dairy Regulations

Her Majesty's Customs and Excise
The London Problem

Ministry of Defence
Arrangements for financing the British Forces in Germany
Non-nuclear Research Establishments as an agency

Department of Employment
Enterprise Allowance Scheme

Department of the Environment
Planning enforcement appeals

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

FCO/DS administration and support services
Local budgets

Department of Health and Social Security
Social Security Regional Organisation

Inland Revenue
Procedures in the Enforcement Office
Scheme for the sub-contractors in the construction industry

Department of Health and Social Services (Northern Ireland)
Social security fraud

Scottish Office
Historic buildings and monuments

Department of Transport
Management of property purchased for road schemes
Local roads capital expenditure

Welsh Office
Cash releasing cost improvement programme in the NHS in Wales

Several of these are continuing. Further topics for scrutinies are being discussed with Departments.

Other scrutinies are being conducted alongside the central programme according to scrutiny disciplines and with guidance from the efficiency unit. These are:

Department of Health and Social Security
Printing and publications (postponed from 1986-87)

Metropolitan Police
Traffic wardens
Staff suggestions
Special Constabulary

Engagements

Mr. Cran: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 26 July.

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 26 July.

Mr. Stern: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 26 July.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 26 July.

The Prime Minister: This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today, including one with Mr. Paul Obeng, chairman of the committee of secretaries of Ghana.

Religious Discrimination

Mr. Wray: To ask the Prime Minister what information she has as to which European countries by law prevent (i) Roman Catholic citizens and (ii) citizens of any other Christian denomination from holding *(a)* the position of Head of State, *(b)* the position of Head of Government and *(c)* other high public functions.

The Prime Minister *[holding answer 14 July 1988]:* Outside the United Kingdom, in Denmark, Sweden and Norway Roman Catholics are prevented from becoming Head of State because of the constitutional requirement that the monarch must profess the Protestant faith. The Holy See is of course a special case. There are no European countries in which Roman Catholic citizens or citizens of any other Christian denomination are prevented by law from occupying the position of Head of Government or other high public functions. This is also the formal position in the Communist countries of Eastern Europe, but in practice nearly all senior posts are held by Communist party members. This effectively precludes from high office those who openly profess a religious belief.

TRANSPORT

Traffic Flow (Greater London)

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will place in the Library any map in his possession which shows *(a)* the maximum daily or hourly flow of vehicles on the major roads in Greater London and *(b)* the locations of current congestion and the periods over which it generally takes place.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: No maps showing maximum flows are available. I refer the hon. Member to the Department's "Statistics Bulletin" (87)37, which shows average daily flows for trunk roads.

This publication also includes charts showing average speeds on the strategic network. More recent information on the central area is given in "Statistics Bulletin" (87)41. I also refer the hon. Member to the stage 1 reports of the four London assessment studies.

I am placing in the Library maps showing locations of congestion identified by the Metropolitan police in 1987 on an adjoining trunk road for morning, evening and inter-peak periods.

Ministerial Duties (Rail Travel)

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many times in the last six months in the course of his ministerial duties he has travelled by rail; and what has been the cost to public funds of delay or diversion interrupting his ministerial duties on such journeys.

Mr. Channon: Since the beginning of this year I have made 11 journeys by rail in the course of my ministerial duties. None suffered delays or diversions involving public expenditure.

London Underground

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has as to the average time taken by London Underground to replace an escalator.

Mr. Channon: This is a management matter for the board of London Underground Limited.

Members' Correspondence

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the average length of time taken by his Department to respond to correspondence from right hon. and hon. Members during the summer recess.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: A recent review of ministerial correspondence in the Department of Transport (September 1987) showed that 86 per cent. of such letters are replied to with an average response time of 15 working days. Ministerial colleagues and I aim to deal with all inquiries in three weeks. Some complex questions do inevitably take longer.

It takes the same length of time for the Department of Transport to respond to right hon. and hon. Members' correspondence during the summer recess as in Session time.

Road Traffic Law

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress the Government have made in considering the recommendations of the North report on road traffic law.

Mr. Channon: The Government have taken an initial look at all the report's 137 recommendations and have sought comments from all the main interested organisations. We need to take account of the considered views of others and do more detailed work before reaching final decisions.

We have been able to form a view in principle on much of the report.

We recognise the importance of taking forward further work urgently, given the vital role of road traffic law in efforts to reduce the continuing high level of road casualties.

The Existing Structure

We accept the conclusion of the review that the present reckless driving offences do not operate satisfactorily in England and Wales and are interpreted differently in Scotland. Change is required.

There are a number of options. We will want to consider the views of others before deciding whether to adopt the detailed approach recommended by the review.

We support the review's emphasis on a proportionate response to offences, marking out serious criminal behaviour and recognising the nature of more minor offences.

In particular we support the full use of alternatives to prosecution—for example, the greater use of roadside warnings—and have sought opinions on the detailed recommendations.

Drinking and Driving

Society takes an increasingly serious view of the driver who drinks and drives.

We accept the review's basic conclusion that a way must in particular be found to ensure that convictions can be secured and that appropriate penalties are available to the courts for people who drink and drive with tragic consequences.

We are considering whether the review's detailed recommendation for a new offence of causing death when over the legal limit for alcohol is the best means of securing this aim. Other recommendations also have a bearing on this major problem.

We agree that insurance policies against disqualification are undesirable. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry is discussing with the insurance industry how the offering of such policies might best be brought to an end.

The practicability of the review's proposal that licensing authorities should take account of evidence of licensees persistently serving alcohol to customers committing drink-driving offences needs further study.

The Government will continue to support the constructive and successful initiatives we have seen recently by brewers and licensees, promoting non-alcoholic and low-alcoholic drinks.

The Bail Acts may be used to impose conditions on an accused which appear necessary to secure that an offence is not committed while on bail. If the court perceives a real risk of an offence being committed whilst an accused is on bail, it could impose conditions which precluded driving.

We have sought further views on the review's proposals to encourage the use of the Bail Acts in this way for some drink-drive offenders.

Disqualification

We agree with the conclusion that disqualification from driving is a proper response to irresponsible behaviour on the roads, including drink-related driving offences.

The review stresses the importance of improving the effectiveness of disqualification as a penalty. On the possibility of using more short periods of disqualification, we have asked for views and are investigating the administrative changes needed if disqualifications of two months or less were imposed more widely.

Failure to Stop After an Accident

Convictions for the offences of failure to stop after or report an accident have become more common in recent years.

There are grounds for believing that this increase may be linked to attempts to avoid prosecution for drinking and driving. We are considering the review's proposal that this offence should be imprisonable.

We intend, as quickly as possible under regulations, and as part of a number of penalty points changes, to increase the level of penalty points for the offence to a new, higher range of eight to 10.

Penalty Points

We accept the review's conclusion that a major restructuring of the penalty points system is not necessary.

We accept in principle the recommendations for court discretion to impose more points in serious cases of speeding.

We accept in principle the suggestion that a period of disqualification should no longer remove all previously imposed penalty points from the offender's licence.

We have decided that the points for the offence of driving without insurance should be six to eight instead of the present four to eight. For careless driving the range should change from two to five to three to nine. These are changes which will be made now.

Retesting and Retraining

We accept the principle in the report that retesting of driving offenders should be more widely used. We will want to consider further the suggested criteria for retesting; the type of test which would be suitable; and the implications for the driver testing organisation.

We accept that retraining of motoring offenders is an option that ought to be properly investigated to test its effectiveness in reducing reoffending. The time scale for such an experiment is long.

We are exploring the practicalities of undertaking some useful experimental schemes in advance of the legislation which will be needed.

Condition of Vehicles, Driving Licensing

We accept in principle the recommendations relating to restructuring offences on the condition and use of vehicles and to widening powers to prohibit the movement of dangerous vehicles. These should simplify the law and improve enforcement.

The proposals to clamp dangerous vehicles, and to use clamping in certain other circumstances, will need further careful consideration in the context of policy on vehicle clamping more generally. We agree that the driver licensing offences need to be restructured to simplify them and to reflect the relative seriousness of the different offences. The details will be addressed in further work.

Availability of Information

The review suggests that the Government should investigate ways of providing police officers on patrol with faster access to existing information about drivers and their vehicles. We support this aim.

Detailed work, some of which depends on the introduction of more advanced information technology, will be undertaken as part of the development and implementation of the second stage police national computer.

We shall need to satisfy ourselves that the resultant benefits will justify additional costs.

We have sought detailed views on the proposal that there should be a charge for checking a driving licence at a police station in order to encourage people to carry their driving licences.

Enforcement Technology

Technology has an important role to play in enforcement. We endorse the review's conclusion in principle that the use of cameras to detect speeding and red light offences is acceptable, and that satisfactory procedures can be developed for using the evidence from such devices.

We intend to press ahead with testing the equipment in consultation with the police, and examining its costs and benefits in order to assess the extent to which such equipment might be used and the timing of its introduction.

We accept the recommendation for a more co-ordinated approach to research between Government Departments in co-operation with the police in this field.

Knowledge of The Law

The Government recognise the importance of increasing public knowledge and understanding of traffic law. Preparation of a new layman's guide which the review recommended must await completion of the primary legislation which will be needed to implement the main changes to road traffic law which are now envisaged. The Government will consult widely on its content.

The report contains a number of other recommendations on which we are at present consulting. We shall continue to work on all the recommendations with a view to announcing our conclusions on the report as a whole early in the new year.

PSO Grant

Mr. Fallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make an announcement about the public service obligation grant to the British Railways Board for 1988-89.

Mr. Channon: The public service obligation grant, which constitutes the central Government support for British Rail's services on the Network SouthEast and provincial sectors, will be £572·5 million for 1988-89. The settlement will, as usual, be subject to adjustment for certain factors to be settled with the British Railways Board.

P and O Ferries

Mr. David Shaw: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement about his Department's investigation into the allegations that the P and O ferry, Free Enterprise II sailed with her bow doors open in November 1987.

Mr. Channon: My Department has carried out a thorough investigation into the alleged incident. As I informed the House on 16 May, at column 659, the ship was not sailing from port but moving from one berth to another within the confines of the harbour. The investigation concluded that the manoevre did not present any danger to the ship or to anyone on board. Moreover, there was no contravention of the statutory requirements and no offence was committed.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement about radio communication aboard the P and O ferry European Trader.

Mr. Portillo *[holding answer 25 July 1988]:* A qualified radio officer is required on board this vessel, and the radio communications equipment fully complies with statutory requirements.

Vehicle Batteries

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people were injured by exploding vehicle batteries in the last year for which figures are available.

Mr. Peter Bottomley *[holding answer 25 July 1988]:* No statistics are available. I understand that accidents of this kind are likely to be very rare in this country.

I shall be replying shortly to the hon. Member's correspondence about vehicle batteries.

London Underground (Fire Safety)

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on what date his Department received London fire brigade inspection reports on the London Underground deep underground stations in 1987 and in each of the preceding five years.

Mr. Portillo *[holding answer 25 July 1988]:* None was received in 1987. The last report received from the London fire brigade of one of its inspections of London Underground stations was dated 10 May 1983 and was received on 16 May 1983. After that date the system of reporting the results of fire inspections changed and

reports were no longer sent to the railway inspectorate. London Underground Limited took on the task of recording the results of fire inspections. It did not initially adopt the practice of sending copies of its own reports to the railway inspectorate. Subsequently, as part of its investigations into the fire at Green Park, the inspectorate asked that the fire reports should again be sent to it. Those for the intervening period were received in bulk and thereafter as each report arises.

Small Cars (Exhaust Fumes)

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received about proposals to limit toxic exhaust fumes from small cars; if his Department is studying proposals being considered by the European Community; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley *[holding answer 25 July 1988]:* The vehicle manufacturers were closely consulted over the proposals. They made it clear to the Government that they regarded an early settlement on the basis of these proposals as preferable to a delay in agreement.

My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment announced on 30 June, at column 368, that a political agreement by qualified majority, and subject to a United Kingdom parliamentary scrutiny reserve, was reached at the 28 June Environment Council. More complete details of the proposal and the agreement are in the supplementary explanatory memorandum 4637/88, COM(87)706 dated 8 July 1988.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Lord Chancellor's (Pension)

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the level of pension and the lump sum paid in respect of the previous Lord Chancellor; and what remuneration he receives in his ex-officio capacity as a Lord of Appeal in Ordinary.

Mr. Brooke: Under the terms of the Parliamentary and other Pensions Act 1972, Lord Havers receives a pension of £36,015. Retiring Lord Chancellors do not receive lump sum payments.

Former Lord Chancellors do not receive salaries in respect of their service on the Appellate Committee. They are, however, entitled to a daily fee when they sit. Between November 1987 and February 1988 Lord Havers received a total of £4,760 in such fees.

Public Expenditure

Mr. Nicholas Baker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he proposes to make changes to the definition of the public expenditure planning total.

Mr. Major: The Government's objective for public spending is that it should decline as a proportion of national income. This objective relates to the total spending of central and local government and is expressed in terms of general Government expenditure (excluding privatisation proceeds). The Government seek to achieve this objective by controlling expenditure within the targets for the public expenditure planning total, which are set for three years ahead in the public expenditure survey.

Hitherto the planning total has included not only Government's spending on their own programmes but also the total spending of local authorities. In a White Paper published today, "A New Public Expenditure Planning Total" Cm. 441, the Government propose that when the new arrangements for local government finance come into operation in England and Wales the coverage of the planning total should be changed. In future, it will include spending on their own programmes, grants paid to local authorities, the credit approvals they issue for local authority borrowing for capital expenditure, the payments to local authorities from the proceeds of the national non-domestic rate, and the external financing limits of public corporations. Thus the new planning total will include those elements for which central Government are responsible and exclude spending which local authorities determine and finance themselves.

Redefining the planning total to include only the expenditure for which central Government are responsible will make it a more effective instrument for planning and control of central Government's operations. In combination with the disciplines on local authority spending introduced by the reform of local government finance, it will help to achieve the Government's wider spending objective, which will continue to be directed towards total Government expenditure. Distinguishing the spending for which central Government are responsible from that which results from local authorities' decisions will also enhance local accountability, thereby reinforcing the changes brought about by the introduction of the community charge.

One feature of the proposals is that plans for grants and credit approvals will be set out for three years ahead rather than one as at present. This will assist local authorities in their expenditure planning.

It is proposed to bring the new planning total into operation from 1 April 1990, the date of introduction of the community charge in England and Wales. This means that the 1989 public expenditure survey, the results of which will be announced in the 1989 Autumn Statement, will be conducted on the new basis.

These changes are designed to improve planning and control of public spending. They do not represent any dilution in the Government's determination to reduce the size of the public sector or to restrict total public spending, whether by central or local government.

Value Added Tax

Mr. John Hughes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has any plans to impose value added tax on the sale of used goods; what representations he has received on this matter from Oxfam and other charities; and what assessment he has made of the implications of such a move for the work of major international charities.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 25 July 1988]:* My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer has no plans to alter the present zero rating for goods donated to charity shops. My right hon. Friend has received a number of representations from Oxfam and its supporters about the implications for this zero rate of the EC Commission's proposals for tax approximation by 1992. My right hon. Friend has made it clear that, while the Government are committed to the completion of the single market, they do

not believe tax approximation to be a necessary part of that process and will reject any proposals which restrict the United Kingdom's ability to retain zero rates.

Statistical Divisions

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list for 1979, 1984 and the most recent year the numbers of staff by grade in the statistical divisions in his Department; if he will differentiate between staff in the statistical posts and staff in administrative posts; and if he will give separate figures for *(a)* Customs and Excise and *(b)* the Inland Revenue.

Mr. Brooke *[holding answer 21 July 1988]:* The numbers of staff in the statistical divisions in Her Majesty's Treasury, Customs and Excise and the Inland Revenue are:

Staff in statistical divisions (staff in post, 1 April)

	Her Majesty's Treasury	*Inland Revenue*	*Customs and Excise*
1979[1]			
Statisticians	6	19	7
Administrative Grades	24	235	886
Total	30	254	893
1984[2]			
Statisticians			
Grade 5 Statistician	2	4	1
Grade 7 Statistician	11	13	4
Senior Assistant Statistician	4	2	3
Assistant Statistician	1	1	—
Total	18	20	8
Administrative Grades			
Grade 3	1	1	—
Grade 5	—	—	—
Grade 6	—	1	1
Grade 7	—	3	2
SEO	4	8	11
HEO	8	29	28
EO	19	46	111
AO	9·5	34	216
AA	3	12	142
Total	44·5	134	511
	62·5	154	519
1988			
Statisticians			
Grade 5 Statistician	2	4	1
Grade 7 Statistician	8	13	1
Senior Assistant Statistician	2	3	3
Assistant Statistician	1	2	1
	13	22	6
Administrative Grades			
Grade 3	—	1	—
Grade 5	—	—	1
Grade 6	—	1	—
Grade 7	—	3	2
SEO	2	9	10
HEO	6	35·5	24
EO	12	50	89
AO	8	28	193
AA	5	14	229
	33	141·5	548
Total	46	163·5	554

[1] The numbers for 1979 can be disaggregated by grade only at disproportionate cost.
[2] The difference between 1979 and 1984 reflects the transfer of some functions from the Civil Service Department to the Treasury.

Statisticians working outside statistical divisions are excluded from these figures.

WALES

"Promoting Better Health"

Mr. Roy Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has received concerning the White Paper, "Promoting Better Health"; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: We have received a variety of representations from professional and other organisations in Wales, together with a number of comments from individuals. These have confirmed my view that the development of primary care is essential to the maintenance of effective Health Service provision for the Principality.

House Sales

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) what proposals he has to end the practice known as gazumping in Wales; and whether he will make a statement;

(2) what proposals he has under consideration to slow house price rises in Wales; what consultations he intends to undertake; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: I do not consider that Government intervention in the market for owner-occupation would improve the situation.

Public Appointments

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will provide a list of all public appointments, paid and unpaid, made by him since June 1987.

Mr. Peter Walker: I shall write to the hon. Gentleman and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Water Pollution

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many incidents of water pollution by farm wastes were recorded in each of the years 1980 to 1987, and in 1988 to date, in Wales; how many of these incidents were attributable to pollution by silage effluent, and by slurry; how many of these incidents were the subject of warning letters and prosecutions; and how many prosecutions were successful.

Mr. Peter Walker: The information is as follows:

	1985	*1986*	*1987*
Number of Incidents[1]	462	404	716
of which caused by Silage Effluent	127	76	212
of which caused by Slurry	162	129	186
Number of prosecutions	14	19	59

[1] In area covered by the Welsh Water Authority.

These details are not available for the years prior to 1985 and are not yet available for 1988.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Great Yorkshire Agricultural Show

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food why no Minister from his Department attended the Great Yorkshire Agricultural Show.

Mr. MacGregor: My noble Friend the Parliamentary Secretary was due to attend the Great Yorkshire Agricultural Show to represent my Department on Wednesday 13 July, but was prevented from doing so at short notice by parliamentary business. Unfortunately at that stage no other Minister was available to take over this engagement.

Farm Animal Welfare Council

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met members of the Farm Animal Welfare Council; and what subjects were discussed.

Mr. Donald Thompson: My right hon. Friend last met members of the Farm Animal Welfare Council on 26 October 1987 to discuss religious slaughter. I last met council members on 17 May 1988 to discuss the council's new studies on enforcement of farm animal welfare regulations and codes, new husbandry systems and equipment, and promotion of farm animal welfare.

Environmental Protection

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what he is doing to promote environmentally sensitive agriculture throughout England.

Mr. Ryder: The Government promote environmentally sensitive agriculture through a wide range of measures. In particular, under the environmentally sensitive areas scheme, 10 areas have now been designated in England. The agriculture improvement scheme has since 1985 encouraged farmers to invest in environmentally beneficial items, such as hedges, shelter belts, dry stone walls and farm waste control. A major objective of my new farm woodland scheme which comes into operation on 1 October 1988 is to enhance the environment.

We have taken a number of initiatives to reduce the risk of agricultural pollution. These include controls on the use of pesticides and the issue, free of charge, of the code of good agricultural practice.

In addition to those measures, my Department's Agricultural Development and Advisory Service provides farmers with free advice on environmental matters on request.

Green Pound

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what progress he has made in the European Economic Community on negotiations over the green pound.

Mr. MacGregor: On 18-19 July the Agriculture Council formally confirmed, as part of the price-fixing agreement, that as the next stage in dismantling MCAs by 1992 the green pound will be devalued on 1 January 1989 so as to reduce United Kingdom MCAs by 3·2 points in all sectors except beef, for which decisions on green rates are to be taken later. It was also agreed that the Commission should now examine the measures to adopt for future stages. These were issues for which the United Kingdom, however, had particularly pressed.

Sheep

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what has been the percentage reduction in the respective sheep premium payments in the current year as a result of the European Community sheepmeat stabiliser; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The sheepmeat stabiliser came into effect on 23 May this year. An immediate reduction of 3 per cent. was applied to the guide price used for calculating payments of sheep variable premiums in Great Britain. The basic price which will be used to establish the level of 1988 annual ewe premiums has been reduced by 1·85 per cent. in Great Britain and 1·23 per cent. in the rest of the Community (reflecting the lower rate of stock expansion there); levels of actual payments are dependent upon market prices.

Set-aside Scheme

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his latest estimate of the net cost to Great Britain of his set-aside scheme.

Mr. MacGregor: I do not expect there to be a net cost, since the value of incentive payments should be outweighed by savings on CAP support costs.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many farmers have entered each tier of an environmentally sensitive area agreement in each of the following areas, and if he will list the total area of land involved in each case: *(a)* Somerset levels, *(b)* Norfolk and Suffolk Broads and *(c)* Breckland.

Mr. Ryder: The information is not yet complete, as agreements resulting from applications received in 1988 have not yet been finalised. I will be including the information in my report to Parliament on the operation of the scheme later in the year.

Water Pollution

Ms. Walley: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many incidents of water pollution by farm waste were recorded in each of the years 1980 to 1987, and in 1988 to date, in England; how many of these incidents were attributable to pollution by silage effluent, and by slurry; how many of these incidents were the subject of warning letters and prosecutions; and how many prosecutions were successful.

Mr. Ryder: Water pollution incidents from farm waste in England and Wales, excluding the Welsh water authority area, have been as follows:

Year	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*
Total incidents	3,048	3,023	3,174
—of which caused by silage effluent	879	516	791
—of which caused by slurry	719	735	736
Number of related prosecutions	145	109	166

Information on incidents in the year 1988 to date, in years prior to 1985, and on numbers of warning letters and successful prosecutions is not readily available.

Potatoes

Mr. Alexander: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement about the Government's future support policy for potatoes.

Mr. MacGregor: Revised support arrangements were introduced for potatoes in Great Britain on 1 July 1985. They are due to be reviewed before 30 June 1990, to enable decisions to be taken on the form of any subsequent support. To give time for a thorough debate and give the industry as much notice as possible of any changes, we must make an early start to the review. The Secretaries of State for Scotland and for Wales and I will, therefore, be issuing a consultation paper in the autumn seeking comments from all interested parties.

It seems unlikely on present indications that any changes as a result of the review would take effect before 1 July 1991. In so far as this would necessarily involve an extension of the support arrangements financed jointly by the Government and the Potato Marketing Board beyond 30 June 1990, during the review the Government will be exploring with the farmers unions and the board ways of reducing their financial commitment after that date.

Wildlife

Mr. Morley: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) what assessment he has made of the way in which wildlife habitats and the landscape in upland areas would be affected by the implementation of current proposals for the reform of the sheepmeat regime of the common agricultural policy;

(2) what assessment he has made of the way in which wildlife habitats and the environment would be affected by the implementation of budgetary stabilisers in the cereals, beef, dairy and sheep sectors.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 25 July 1988]:* The potential impact on the environment of upland areas is one of the factors which I shall be taking into account in the continuing negotiations in Brussels on reform of the sheepmeat regime. It is too soon to form any assessment of what, if any, effects on the environment can be identified following the introduction of stabilisers earlier this year.

Thames Barrier

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will review the future effectiveness of the Thames barrier in the light of the impact of pollution and the greenhouse effect on Thames water levels.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 25 July 1988]:* I am satisfied that the Thames barrier will continue to provide effective flood protection even if the most extreme predictions for sea level rise materialise. The barrier's design allows for increased sea levels of 0·75 m by the year 2030 and a further rise of up to 1 m could be accommodated. Engineers from Thames Water, who are responsible for the barrier, and MAFF are closely monitoring the evidence emerging about rising sea levels, but no special action is necessary at the present time.

Food Poisoning

Mr. Shersby: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what information he has concerning a

campaign by the Food and Drink Federation to educate the public about ways to avoid food poisoning by improving domestic hygiene; whether the campaign has the support of his Department; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: I have been asked to reply.

The Food and Drink Federation's campaign is a very welcome initiative by the food industry to help people improve food hygiene in their houses and kitchens. It has the support of both the Department and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

This initiative complements the pilot phase of a separate food hygiene education campaign run jointly by the Department, MAFF and the Health Education Authority. The results of this pilot phase will be used to decide how future phases, in 1989 and beyond, can best inform and educate the general public about good food hygiene practice. Copies of the FDF booklet and our pilot leaflet have been placed in the Library, together with a MAFF report "Food Hygiene—Report on a Consumer Survey" used in the preparation of the leaflet.

SCOTLAND

Rating Reform

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland which categories of hospitalised war veterans he proposes to exempt from payment of poll tax in Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: War veterans who are solely or mainly resident as patients in a hospital, residential care home, nursing home or hostel as defined in paragraphs 8 and 9 of schedule 1A to the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Act 1987, proposed to be inserted by paragraph 34 of schedule 12 to the Local Government Finance Bill, will be exempt from personal community charge liability.

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list those salmon fishings which in the current financial year are liable for non-domestic rates, as a result of being within existing district salmon board areas and separately entered in the valuation roll, and which will cease to be so liable as a result of the Local Government Finance Bill; and if he will state the current rateable value of each such fishing.

Mr. Lang: The information requested is not available centrally.

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he intends to meet the principal of Strathclyde university to discuss the effect of the poll tax on Scottish students.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend has at present no plans to do so.

Technical Drawing

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether the Government will publish the evidence made available to the committee set up to review the future of O-grade technical drawing.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The review group which was set up by the Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum (SCCC) to review the future of O-grade technical drawing and O-grade engineering had access to and took account of extensive correspondence received from teachers of technical education, representatives from industry, teacher organisations and hon. Members. Evidence was not sought, however, on the basis that it would be published and in the circumstances publication would not be appropriate.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he will make a statement on the Government's response to the ad hoc committee's recommendation that O-grade and higher grade technical drawing should be phased out.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: My right hon. and learned Friend and I are considering the review group's recommendations. An announcement of our conclusions will be made shortly.

Nurses

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the number of nurses per 10,000 of the population for each health board.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The whole-time equivalent number of qualified nurses per 10,000 population for each health board and for Scotland at 30 September 1987 is set out in the table.

	Number
Scotland	69
Argyll and Clyde	55
Ayrshire and Arran	51
Borders	60
Dumfries and Galloway	74
Fife	60
Forth Valley	64
Grampian	67
Greater Glasgow	85
Highland	73
Lanarkshire	58
Lothian	68
Orkney	72
Shetland	66
Tayside	87
Western Isles	67

Members' Correspondence

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the average length of time taken by his Department to respond to correspondence from right hon. and hon. Members during the summer recess.

Mr. Rifkind: Precise information in the form requested could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Gartcosh Steel Strip Mill

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps have been taken to estimate the number of small businesses which became bankrupt as a result of the closure of the Gartcosh steel strip mill; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: The information required to produce such an estimate is not readily available, and could not be derived from regularly available statistical sources.

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what account was taken when setting the rate support grant to Strathclyde regional council and Strathkelvin district council of the effects of the closure of the Gartcosh steel strip mill.

Mr. Lang: Local authorities are compensated for any loss of rate income resulting from a plant closure through the resources element of rate support grant.

Forestry

Mr. John M. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what cost benefit analysis will be undertaken before commercial conifer forestation is approved for grant-aid under the woodland grant scheme.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: No cost-benefit analysis is undertaken, since the decision whether or not to plant under the woodland grant scheme is a commercial one for each owner to take, altough the Forestry Commission would withhold grant-aid for any planting proposals which were not silviculturally sound or eventually capable of producing a crop of utilisable timber.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether new afforestation proposals made by the Forestry Commission fall within the scope of the Environmental Assessment (Afforestation) Regulations 1988; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Forestry Commission planting does not fall within the scope of these regulations, but I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to him on 19 July, at column *586*, by my right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether an environmental statement will normally be required in accordance with the Environmental Assessment (Afforestation) Regulations 1988 in respect of afforestation proposals made under the woodland grant scheme which would affect a site of special scientific interest or an area meeting the criteria for designation as a special protection area under European Community directive 79/409/EEC.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The Forestry Commission will shortly be publishing guidance on the application of these regulations which will include an indication of the circumstances in which an environmental assessment is most likely to be required.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland why the Forestry Commission will not consult voluntary bodies, local groups or other non-statutory agencies about new afforestation proposals; and if he will ask the Commission to publicise, by way of notices in local newspapers or the *London* or *Edinburgh Gazette*, applications made under the woodland grant scheme for new afforestation over 5 hectares.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: As stated by my right hon. and learned Friend in his reply of 10 December 1987, *Official Report*, columns *251-54*, to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro), we take the view that the Forestry Commission's present consultation arrangements strike broadly the right balance between wider public involvement and the risk of increased bureaucracy and administrative costs. The statutory authorities consulted by the commission are encouraged to consider the views of voluntary bodies and others in commenting on forestry applications.

My right hon. and learned Friend does not consider that it would be reasonable or practical to ask the commission to publicise all applications under the woodland grant scheme for new planting over 5 hectares.

Disabled People

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he intends to meet representatives of disability organisations to discuss the implementation of the Disabled Person's Act 1986.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I have no plans to do so at present.

Prisons (Racial Harassment)

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what further measures he intends to take to tackle the problem of racial harassment in Scottish prisons.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I refer the hon. Member to the measures I announced in my speech to the House on 8 July 1988, when I also made it clear that there was no evidence that racial harassment in Scottish prisons was a widespread problem.

Language Teaching

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what his policy is for the teaching of languages other than English in Scottish schools.

Mr. Rifkind: The teaching of foreign languages in our secondary schools has for long been an important element in the education of the ablest pupils. Against the background of achievement and expansion in other areas of the curriculum in recent years, it is right that the position of languages should now be more clearly defined.

A modern foreign language is currently studied by some 40 per cent. of each year cohort in S3 and S4 and by less than 10 per cent. thereafter. These figures are too low.

A modern foreign language is already a core element for pupils in S1 and S2, but all pupils, not just the more able, should continue their experience of at least one modern foreign language beyond this level. Recent developments in language teaching make this increasingly capable of achievement and my aim is that by 1992 it should be the norm for pupils to study at least one modern foreign language throughout the compulsory years of secondary school. I intend to ask education authorities to give priority to this. I would also expect a modern secondary foreign language to be provided in those years for pupils who wished it and to see an increased proportion of pupils continuing the study of languages into S5 and S6.

For long the principal foreign language taught in our schools has been French and this is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future. But other languages, particularly those of our main European partners, have strong claims to be more widely studied and I shall be asking education authorities to consider how opportunities for the study of these languages can be increased.

The study of Latin and Greek has declined in recent years in face of the expanding curriculum. The classical languages, none the less, represent an important part of our heritage and provide a valuable educative experience. It is right that opportunities for their study should continue to be available and encouraged. I shall therefore be asking education authorities to ensure that some schools in each area continue to offer these languages in addition to the study of a modern foreign language.

Currently, the teaching of foreign languages takes place only in the secondary school. Attempts to introduce language teaching in primary school have not previously met with success. Nevertheless, I intend to consider how progress can be made towards introducing the study of foreign languages at the primary stage.

I turn now to Gaelic and Asian languages. Gaelic is a living part of the Scottish heritage and culture and I reaffirm our general policy of support for the learning and teaching of the Gaelic language and the teaching of other subjects through Gaelic where these facilities can be provided and where there is demand for them. Difficulties can arise in fitting Gaelic along with a modern European language into an already crowded timetable, but new courses and materials, for learners and native speakers alike, should help in overcoming these difficulties and ensuring a healthy uptake of the subject.

Asian languages are the heritage of a significant number of our population and it is right that these languages and the traditions they represent should be respected and fostered. At the same time, it is important to impart to all our children a good knowledge of English and in the primary school those languages have a particular role in acting as a bridge to proficiency in English. In the secondary school the considerations which apply to Gaelic are again relevant, but the scarcity of trained teachers and teaching materials are particular limiting factors.

In formulating these policies I have taken account of the statement of position by the Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum entitled "The Provision of Languages other than English in Primary and Secondary Schools in Scotland". I am arranging for a copy to be placed in the Library.

I shall shortly ask education authorities to put in hand the action necessary to implement the policies I have outlined. These have implications for the management of schools, and because they must be implemented within planned provision will involve a gradual switch of resources to language departments from other departments. The pace of implementation will depend on local circumstances, but in the majority of cases resources should allow these policies to be implemented within the time scale envisaged.

For too long we have lagged behind our European partners and competitors in the matter of linguistic competence. In view of our growing links with Europe and the advent of the single European market in 1992 it is time to arrest and reverse that trend. A major effort will be required and I ask education authorities, teachers and all concerned with educational provision to join me in ensuring that rapid progress is made.

Bail

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many people were placed on bail in Scotland in the year ended December 1987.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I regret that the information requested is not available.

Water Supplies

Mr. Clay: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish a table showing how many people were disconnected from their water supplies for each year between 1978-79 and the latest date available.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: This information is not held centrally. A water authority (regional or islands council) would disconnect a domestic household's supply only for operational reasons. These would include repairing leaks in household plumbing systems or in the authority's mains, making connections or lining pipes.

Water Pollution (Farm Waste)

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many incidents of water pollution by farm waste were recorded in each of the years 1980 to 1987, and in 1988 to date, in Scotland; how many of these incidents were attributable to pollution by silage effluent, and by slurry; how many of these incidents were the subject of warning letters and prosecutions; and how many prosecutions were successful.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The numbers of water pollution incidents in Scotland arising from farm waste in each of the years 1982 to 1987 are as shown in the table. Cases within those totals involving silage effluent and slurry are shown separately. Complete data are not available for 1980, 1981, or 1988 to date. Statistics on numbers of warning letters issued by river purification boards are not held centrally.

Type of incident	*Number of incidents*	*Number of successful prosecutions*	*Number of unsuccessful prosecutions*
1982			
Total farm waste	263	2	—
Silage effluent	86	—	—
Slurry	51	2	—
1983			
Total farm waste	414	16	1
Silage effluent	232	9	—
Slurry	73	3	1
1984			
Total farm waste	330	12	—
Silage effluent	116	4	—
Slurry	71	6	—
1985			
Total farm waste	763	13	—
Silage effluent	503	10	—
Slurry	88	2	—
1986			
Total farm waste	478	7	1
Silage effluent	241	2	1
Slurry	70	0	—
1987			
Total farm waste	713	17	1
Silage effluent	428	6	—
Slurry	88	5	—

Teachers Superannuation Scheme

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he will lay before Parliament the Government Actuary's report on the actuarial inquiry into the teachers superannuation scheme (Scotland) for the quinquennium 1 April 1981 to 31 March 1986.

Mr. Rifkind: I have today laid this report before Parliament (House of Commons No. 552) and arrangements have been made for its publication tomorrow.

Registered Establishments Act

Mr. Bill Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects to implement the Registered Establishments (Scotland) Act 1987.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The Act will come into force on 17 October 1988. It empowers local authorities to charge fees for their work on the registration and inspection of voluntary and private residential establishments for the elderly and other client groups subject to prescribed limits. It also provides for the joint registration with the health boards of establishments providing both nursing and residential care and for the making of conditions for regulation subject to right of appeal. Limits on fees which my right hon. and learned Friend proposes to prescribe for the purpose of the Act have been the subject of recent consultation.

I believe the charging of registration fees will be useful in enabling local authorities to further their efforts to secure and maintain the same standards of care as they would be expected to provide in their own establishments.

Complaints (Common Defender)

Sir Hector Monro: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps are being taken to improve availability in Scotland of an effective judicial remedy for a number of individuals with similar complaints against a common defender.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The Scottish Law Commission has agreed to accept a formal reference from my noble and learned Friend the Lord Advocate under section 3(1)(e) of the Law Commission Act 1965, in the following terms:

a. To consider the desirability and feasibility of introducing in Scottish civil court proceedings arrangements to provide a more effective remedy in situations where a number of persons have the same or similar rights;
b. to consider how such arrangements might be funded; and
c. to make recommendations.

Prison Officers

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what procedures for monitoring the background of prison officers exist to ensure the recruitment of a suitable proportion of staff from ethnic communities in Scotland.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 25 July 1988]:* Application to join the Scottish prison service is open to anyone who can satisfy the basic entrance standards in height, eyesight and age. Ethnic origin is not a factor which is taken into account.

However, the new initial recruit training course includes a module whose specification aims to make "students fully aware of their role and responsibilities with regard to the custody and care of inmates from different ethnic backgrounds".

The same module will be used by staff training officers attached to individual establishments for the training of serving staff, a process which has already started.

Agriculture (Subsidies)

Mr. Morley: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the approximate total value of all direct public subsidies to agriculture in Scotland in each year between 1980 and 1987, distinguishing between direct grants from national and European Community schemes, and price support provided under the common agricultural policy.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 25 July 1988]:* The information requested is as follows:

	National and EC schemes (gross expenditure) £ million	*Price support under CAP £ million*
1980-81	132	70
1981-82	116	70
1982-83	124	115
1983-84	133	150
1984-85	141	150
1985-86	143	180
1986-87	137	115

Health Care Projects

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the number of specialists consulted since 1980 in order to supplement the in-house expertise in the Scottish Development Agency in the evaluation of health care projects.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 28 March 1988]:* The number of specialists consulted by the agency since 1980 in connection with the evaluation of health care product development projects is 64. Specialists include scientists, clinicians, medical practitioners and management consultants. For private medical projects, health boards and social work departments are consulted as appropriate.

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list those individuals in the Scottish Development Agency, with their functions, who provide in-house expertise in the evaluation of health care projects, giving their relevant qualifications, including medical qualifications.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 28 March 1988]:* Health care projects fall into two main categories: private medical projects, and health care product development projects. The agency's involvement with the former calls for expertise in company finance and property development, which is provided by staff of the appropriate agency divisions. For health care product developments, the agency's health care and biotechnology division provides in-house expertise in evaluating market demand, any relevant technical factors and the skills and experience of those engaged in management. The division is staffed by four project executives with relevant management and

technical experience who consult external experts as appropriate. No member of the staff of the division has medical qualifications.

Private Medical Projects

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list those individuals and medical bodies the Scottish Development Agency is consulting in connection with the eight private medical projects currently being considered for support.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 28 March 1988]:* Of the eight private medical projects which are currently being considered for support, seven involve the setting up of nursing or residential homes for elderly people and would have only local impact. In each of these cases the agency will ensure that health board and social work department licensing requirements are met.

The remaining project is Health Care International. In this case my right hon. and learned Friend's approval was required. Before giving his approval he consulted, through the Scottish Home and Health Department, a wide variety of interested parties. In addition, the Scottish Development Agency helped the company to meet and discuss the project with a number of individuals and organisations in the medical and political fields—including the hon. Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden.

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list those individuals and medical bodies the Scottish Development Agency has consulted since 1980 when considering support for private medical projects.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 28 March 1988]:* No private medical projects were supported by the Scottish Development Agency before 1983. In taking forward such projects it is standard practice for the agency to ensure that appropriate health board or social work department registration requirements are met. Where appropriate, further consultations take place with individuals and organisations.

East Kilbride Development Corporation

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to the answer given on 24 June to the hon. Member for East Kilbride, if he will give the dates of each of the occasions in the last 12 months the Minister of State, the hon. Member for Galloway and Upper Nithsdale (Mr. Lang), met officials of the East Kilbride development corporation; and whether the housing policies of the development corporation were discussed on any of those occasions.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 7 July 1988]:* I have met officials of East Kilbride development corporation on a number of occasions in the last 12 months. Details are as follows:

1 September 1987—Visit to Motorola during tour of factories in Glasgow area.

16 October 1987—East Kilbride 40th anniversary dinner.

27 November 1987—Informal lunch with chairmen, chief executives and managing directors of the five new town development corporations.

3 June 1988—Informal dinner with chairmen, chief executives and managing directors of the five new town development corporations.

7 June 1988—Motorola press conference to announce opening of design centre.

The only occasions when housing policies were discussed were my meetings with chairmen, chief executives and managing directors on 27 November 1987 and 3 June 1988. As the hon. Member is aware, I have also met representatives of SLANT (Scottish Local Authorities with New Towns) and with the hon. Members representing four of the five new towns on 15 June, when we discussed, among other things, housing policy for the Scottish new towns.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Housing Revenue Accounts

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish in the *Official Report* a summarised housing revenue account, consistent with table 18.1 of Cm. 288-II, for each of the years 1982-83 to 1990-91 for *(a)* local authorities, *(b)* the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, *(c)* the new town development corporations in Northern Ireland and *(d)* Housing Corporation-financed housing in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Needham: The relevant figures for *(b)* the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's revenue account and for *(d)* support to the voluntary housing movement are given in the table. All housing functions of *(a)* Northern Ireland local authorities and *(c)* new town development corporations were taken over by the Housing Executive before 1975. The Housing Corporation does not operate in Northern Ireland: the voluntary sector is supervised direct by the Department of the Environment (NI).

£ million

	1982-83 outturn	*1983-84 outturn*	*1984-85 outturn*	*1985-86 outturn*	*1986-87 outturn*	*1987-88 outturn*	*1988-89 outturn*	*1989-90 outturn*	*1990-91 outturn*
Northern Ireland housing executive revenue account—expenditure									
1. Loan charges	130·3	139·1	156·8	167·7	179·7	190·5	203·0	214·2	225·8
2. Housing and grounds maintenance	48·2	45·1	50·5	54·4	58·4	63·4	64·0	64·0	64·5
3. Supervision and management	27·9	31·9	33·8	36·7	37·4	41·0	40·9	42·0	43·0
4. House renovation grants	34·3	45·5	58·4	60·2	56·5	45·2	36·0	31·0	32·0
5. Miscellaneous	7·7	7·8	9·1	9·0	9·2	10·0	10·0	10·0	10·5
Total	248·4	269·4	308·6	328·0	341·2	350·1	353·9	361·2	375·8
Revenue account—receipts									
1. Rents from dwellings and garages	116·0	123·2	127·6	131·8	137·2	143·1	155·7	—	—
2. Rents from commercial property	1·0	1·0	1·1	1·1	1·1	1·2	1·2	—	—
3. Miscellaneous	2·5	2·5	3·0	2·6	3·2	3·3	3·4	—	—
Total	119·5	126·7	131·7	135·5	141·5	147·6	160·3	166·0	171·0
Voluntary housing movement									
DOE grants and loans	29·5	38·6	40·2	38·2	41·3	43·6	44·1	42·5	40·7
Receipts	0·0	2·6	2·6	3·1	7·2	9·4	9·2	7·5	7·7

Social Services (Down)

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland why the Eastern health and social services board's recent advertisement for an assistant director of social services in the Lisburn unit of management, indicated that similar duties in the Down unit of management would be within the postholder's ambit of responsibility.

Mr. Needham: This is a matter for the Eastern health and social services board. The board had advised that in advertising this post it said that for an interim period the successful candidate may be required to undertake similar duties in Down unit of management. The assistant director of social services, post in Down unit of management, will become vacant from 1 September 1988. The board is taking this opportunity to examine the need for organisational changes. The assistant director of social services Lisburn unit of management would assume responsibility for Down pending completion of such a review.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the current position with regard to the post of assistant director of social services in the Down unit of management, Downpatrick, County Down.

Mr. Needham: This is a matter for the Eastern health and social services board. The board has advised that the assistant director of social services post in Down unit of management will become vacant from 1 September 1988. The need for the post is being reviewed.

Gaelic

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what representations he has received on the position of Gaelic within the core curriculum in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement.

Dr. Mawhinney *[holding answer 21 July 1988]:* A substantial number of the responses to the Government's consultative paper on education reform have referred to the position of Irish in the curriculum. No decisions on this or any other aspect of the reform proposals have yet been taken.

Incomes

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how many children for each year since 1979 in Northern Ireland were living in families *(a)* below, *(b)* at and *(c)* up to 140 per cent. of income support or supplementary benefit level classified by employment status; whether they were in one, or two-parent families on the latest basis, and on a basis comparable with 1979; what proportion of these children made up the total number of children; and whether they were in families of one, two, three, four or more children;

(2) if he will estimate for each year since 1979 the number of people in Northern Ireland who had incomes *(a)* below, *(b)* at and *(c)* up to 140 per cent. of the income support or supplementary benefit level on the latest basis and on a basis comparable with 1979; what percentage of the population they represented in each case; what his estimate is of the number of children living in such households; and what percentage of total children they represent in each.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 22 July 1988]:* Information in the form requested is not readily available and could be compiled only at disproportionate cost.

Home Helps

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Monklands, West from the Secretary of State for Social Services on 13 May, *Official Report*, columns *273-74*, if he will supply similar information on the level of home help provision in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 25 July 1988]:* The information requested is given in the following table:

As at 30 September	*Home helps (wte) per thousand population (all ages)*
1979	2·52
1980	2·52
1981	2·63
1982	2·54
1983	2·46
1984	2·35
1985	2·29
1986	2·11

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Southern Africa

Sir John Biggs-Davison: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a further statement about Her Majesty's Government's efforts to secure peace in southern Africa.

Mrs. Chalker: We welcomed the announcement on 20 July of agreement to principles for a settlement in Angola and Namibia by the Governments of Angola, Cuba and South Africa. The Government have consistently called on all parties involved to follow the path of negotiation, not conflict. We also welcome recent signs of improved relations between South Africa and Mozambique.

Women Workers

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* showing for each member of the United Nations in ranked order in index form, with the United Kingdom = 100, the proportion of the female population who were economically active for the years 1960, 1979, 1980 and the latest year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement concerning Her Majesty's Government's policies in the light of this information.

Mrs. Chalker: Statistics on the percentage of women active in the economy in more that 140 member countries of the United Nations are available in the "World Demographic Estimates and Projections, 1950-2025" (United Nations document ST/ESA/SER/.R/79), a copy of which is available in the Library of the House.

St. Helena

Dr. Marek: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he plans to take any initiative to increase the number of electors who are registered to vote in St. Helena in advance of the forthcoming elections.

Mrs. Chalker: The St. Helena Government are planning a comprehensive publicity campaign and a door-to-door delivery of the registration forms in advance of the forthcoming elections.

Falkland Islands (Housing)

Dr. Marek: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if, pursuant to his answer of 19 July, the guidelines for housing standards set by the Executive Council of the Falkland Islands have been met in the case of migrant workers and others; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: The vast majority of expatriate contract workers on the Falkland Islands, who come mainly from Britain and St. Helena, are housed at Mount Pleasant airport in permanent buildings which conform to the building guidelines adopted by the Falkland Islands Government.

Most of those housed elsewhere in the islands live in modular structures—for example, Portakabins—purchased from the Ministry of Defence and which conform broadly to British standards.

Passports

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many full-time permanent staff were employed in the passport office in each year from 1979 to when his Department ceased to be responsible for the office.

Mrs. Chalker: Responsibility for the passport office was transferred to the Home Office on 1 April 1984. The number of staff employed in the passport office between 1979 and 1983 was:

Financial Year	*Number*
1979-80	945
1980-81	1,004
1981-82	972
1982-83	1,005
1983-84	1,005

These figures included messengerial and other support staff who also served other branches of the FCO.

Foreign Affairs Council

Mr. Sims: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish in the *Official Report* a statement on the outcome of the Foreign Affairs Council held on 25 July.

Mrs. Chalker: I attended the Foreign Affairs Council in Brussels on 25 July.

The Council discussed the community's relations with Eastern Europe at an important juncture, following signature of the EC/CMEA joint declaration, the initialling of a trade and co-operation agreement with Hungary, and in the light of the Soviet wish to explore the possible scope of an EC-Soviet agreement. The Council agreed that the Community could play a positive role in the development of relations between East and West Europe, but that the pace of reform in Eastern Europe would be largely dictated by internal developments. The Council also agreed that the Community should continue to give priority to agreements with individual CMEA states rather than CMEA itself; that each country should be treated according to its individual economic and political circumstances; and that all agreements must be firmly based on mutual advantage.

The presidency and the Commission reported on their plans for handling follow-up to the Hanover summit.

The Council resolved the main issue which has delayed the establishment of a court of first instance. It decided that the jurisdiction of the new court will cover competition, coal and steel, and staff cases, and that a review after two years will consider whether anti-dumping cases should also be included. In a conference of representatives of member states, Ministers considered and provisionally accepted nominations to the Court of Justice and agreed to finalise the procedure in September.

Representatives of the presidency troika and Portugal met a delegation from the European Parliament to discuss the dates for the 1989 elections. It has since been confirmed that these will be 15-18 June.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Civil Defence

Mr. Thorne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what booklets and information are currently available to the general public about home defence and civil protection;

(2) what current efforts are being made to increase public awareness of home defence and civil protection; and what plans he has for any future campaign.

Mr. John Patten: In 1985 we published the emergency planning guidance to local authorities which provides detailed planning advice on wartime and other emergencies. It is accompanied by handbooks on communal shelter, protective qualities of buildings and emergency feeding. Work is in hand on new handbooks on communications and environmental health. A booklet entitled "Domestic Nuclear Shelters—Technical Guidance", published in 1981, is still in print.

The booklet and video entitled "Civil Protection", published in 1986, give a general introduction to the subject of civil defence and emergency planning. There are no immediate plans to revise this material. The quarterly magazine "Civil Protection" provides information on matters of current interest. Copies of all publications are in the Library.

Mr. Thorne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many local authorities have been required to draw up an emergency plan; which have complied and which have not; and if he will make such plans available to the general public.

Mr. John Patten: All 54 county councils and fire and civil defence authorities in England and Wales are required to draw up emergency plans under the Civil Defence (General Local Authority Functions) Regulations 1983. Monitoring of their performance in doing so will not be completed until the end of 1989, but none is refusing to meet its statutory obligations. The Government encourage the publication of plans, but this is a matter for individual local authorities. Additionally, local authorities have responsibilities under the Control of Industrial Major Accident Hazards Regulations 1984 in relation to the preparation of plans to deal with any off-site consequences of accidents at certain major installations in their areas.

Mr. Thorne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the financial arrangements with local authorities for the funding of works in connection with home defence and civil protection; and if he will set out the sums expended to the present date.

Mr. John Patten: Grant-aid is payable towards the cost of the discharge by local authorities' of their statutory civil defence functions, including works in connection with the establishment of emergency control centres for use in the event of hostile attack or its threat. There is central funding of some works connected with communications. The Civil Protection in Peacetime Act 1986 allows civil defence resources to be used in response to peacetime emergencies. The expenditure figures do not specifically identify the funding of works. Overall local authority expenditure which attracted civil defence grant was as follows:

	£ million
1983-84	11·20
1984-85	13·27
1985-86	15·25
1986-87	16·90
1987-88	[1]21·26

[1] estimated

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what practical equipment has been supplied to the South Yorkshire fire and civil defence forces for combating the after effects of a possible nuclear attack or accident.

Mr. John Patten: The Home Office has supplied radiation monitoring equipment and communications equipment to the South Yorkshire fire and civil defence authority for civil defence purposes. Information about equipment obtained from other sources is a matter for the authority to provide.

Prison Service (Graduates)

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the number of graduates who entered the prison service in each of the last three years; at what grade such people enter the service; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: All prison officer recruits enter at unified grade VIII. An accelerated promotion scheme has recently been introduced under which selected graduates and other exceptionally able candidates may progress swiftly to the senior ranks. Across the service as a whole, staff are recruited to a wide range of disciplines. Information about the numbers who are graduates is not readily available, and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Women Prison Governors

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the number of women prison governors employed within the prison service; and if he will list the prisons of which they are governors.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: There are 82 women in prison service unified grades V to I, which broadly speaking, correspond to the previous governor and assistant governor grades. The six establishments listed currently have female governors.

Her Majesty's Prison Blundeston
Her Majesty's Prison Brixton
Her Majesty's Prison Bullwood Hall
Her Majesty's Youth Custody Centre Hewell Grange
Her Majesty's Youth Custody Centre Hollesley Bay
Her Majesty's Prison Kingston

Prison Officers

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what is the number of male prison officers employed in female prisons in England and Wales;

(2) what is the number of women prison officers employed in male prisons in England and Wales.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: On 9 May, the latest date for which information is available, 67 male prison officers, prison service unified grades VI to VIII were employed in female establishments. One hundred and one female officers were employed in male establishments. A further 919 men and 234 women were employed in establishments which accommodate both men and women.

Animal Welfare

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the necessity of the experiments on animals using Dithienon and Lindane carried out under licences granted to Hazleton United Kingdom; and until what date these licences run.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: It is not our practice to give information either on whether licences have been granted for the performance of work at particular establishments or on the terms of particular licences.

Police Manpower

Mr. Robert Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to announce further details of increases in police manpower.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: We are not yet in a position to say.

Prison, Saltney Ferry, Clwyd

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any proposals to build a prison at Saltney Ferry, Clwyd, north Wales; if he is considering any other sites in the county of Clwyd; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The construction of a prison at Wrexham was included in the prison building programme in 1986. Clwyd county council has recently proposed two sites in other parts of the county, of which Saltney Ferry is one. No decisions have been taken about these sites, which are said to be discussed shortly with the county council.

Prisoners (AIDS)

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of those presently incarcerated in Her Majesty's prisons have been diagnosed as HIV positive.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: On 22 July 1988 the prison population of England and Wales included 62 inmates reported as having been identified as HIV antibody positive.

Data Protection

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what account of the work at the committee independently reviewing the workings of the Data Protection Act he expects the Data Protection Registrar to take in his comprehensive survey.

Mr. Renton: The Data Protection Registrar, who is independent of the Government, is consultant and adviser to the interdepartmental committee reviewing the Data Protection Act. He will attend meetings of the committee and will therefore be aware of its work.

Blair Peach

Mr. Sedgemore: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will instruct the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis to waive privilege in respect of the Cass inquiry documents covering the Blair Peach case and allow solicitors acting for Mr. Peach's family to release to the public their contents.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand that the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis regards the use of the documents supplied in the Blair Peach case for purposes outside those for which they have been disclosed on discovery as a matter for the courts.

Mr. Sedgemore: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if the documents of the Cass inquiry concerning the Blair Peach case identify or help to identify any person involved in the killing of Blair Peach.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Director of Public Prosecutions considered the report of the investigation into the circumstances surrounding the death of Mr. Peach and decided that the available evidence was insufficient to justify any criminal proceedings against any officer.

Mr. Sedgemore: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to why he refused consent to hearings in the Blair Peach litigation taking place in open court.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that the plaintiffs appealed against an order to give security for costs and applied for the appeal to be heard in open court. The judge in chambers decided that it was not appropriate to hear the appeal relating to security of costs in open court. Counsel for the Metropolitan police opposed the application on the grounds that publication of the matters which would be raised might prejudice a fair hearing of the later trial for which a date had been fixed.

Lotteries

Mr. Fry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received concerning the proposed national lottery to raise funds for the National Health Service from the National Bingo Game Association Ltd., and what response he has made.

Mr. John Patten: The chairman of the National Bingo Association Ltd. wrote to my right hon. Friend on 31 May about the question of a national lottery for the National Health Service. A reply has been sent thanking him for his letter.

Mr. Fry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will bring forward amendments to the Gaming Act 1968 to enable licensed bingo halls to sell on their premises tickets for any future national lottery.

Mr. John Patten: The arrangements for the sale of tickets would no doubt be one of the matters for consideration if it were proposed to bring forward legislation to enable a national lottery to take place.

Nationality

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the number of applications received for registration under the Nationality Act on 30 June.

Mr. Renton: This information is not readily available, and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Ethnic Monitoring

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many and what percentage of the membership of the Police Complaints Authority are from ethnic minorities.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Police Complaints Authority at present has 13 members, including a chairman and two deputy chairmen. Of the 13, three (or 23 per cent.) are from ethnic minorities. There is one vacancy.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many complaints the Police Complaints Authority has received during the last 12 months for which records are available; and how many and what percentage of such complaints are from people known to belong to ethnic minorities.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: In the 12 months to 30 June 1988 the authority dealt with 12,347 complaints. The ethnic origins of complainants are not known.

Bedford Prison

Mr. Irving: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners at Bedford prison were locked up for an average of 20 hours or more a day in the most recent convenient week.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: In the seven-day period ended 16 July 1988, five prisoners were locked in their cells for an average of 20 hours or more a day. All five had been segregated under rule 43 for reasons of good order and discipline.

Mr. Irving: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many hours' association prisoners at Bedford prison receive per week.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Currently, prisoners at Bedford are allowed about eight hours of association per week.

Crime Statistics

Mr. Knowles: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has about the levels of crime in other countries in relation to the levels in the United Kingdom.

Mr. John Patten: The only readily available information is that compiled by Interpol, whose latest figures are for 1984 and are given in the following two tables. The figures show that rising crime is a feature common to most Western European countries. United Kingdom recorded crime rates are relatively low for homicide and attempted murder and rape, relatively high for burglary, robbery and wounding and particularly high for car theft. However, these figures are unlikely to be comparable between countries: definitions and counting procedures may differ, as may levels of reporting and recording.

Table 1 Interpol statistics on the levels of offences recorded by the police in certain countries

1984 (unless stated)	*Number per 100,000 population*					
Country	*Homicide and attempted murder*	*Wounding*	*Rape*	*Robbery and violent theft*	*Burglary*	*Theft of cars*
Western European countries						
England and Wales	1·6	224	2·2	50	1,807	694
Scotland	1·4	92	4·4	87	2,179	632
Northern Ireland (1983)	19·8	131	5·0	119	1,361	106
United Kingdom (1)	2·0	210	2·4	55	1,784	635
Austria	2·4	2	5·2	30	806	17
Belgium	3·3	89	5·7	50	n/a	141
Denmark	5·8	116	7·7	36	2,230	470
Ireland	1·1	3	2·0	55	1,057	30
Finland	5·6	37	6·4	34	773	172
France	4·6	70	5·2	106	810	483
Germany	4·5	104	9·7	46	1,554	118
Greece	1·8	4	0·9	2	73	n/a
Italy (1983)	5·3	n/a	1·8	36	n/a	276
Netherlands	12·3	113	7·2	53	2,329	156
Norway (1983)	0·9	22	4·2	n/a	n/a	273
Portugal	4·6	1	2·0	22	100	61
Spain	2·2	27	3·6	147	1,070	298
Sweden	5·7	26	11·9	44	1,709	460
Other countries						
Australia	3·4	59	13·8	84	1,754	585
Canada	6·3	117	n/a	93	1,421	305
Japan	1·5	20	1·6	2	251	29
USA	7·9	290	35·7	205	1,264	437

[1] Calculated—not shown in Interpol returns
n/a Not available

Table 2

Interpol statistics on the annual average increase in offences recorded by the police per 100,000 population in certain countries

1974-1984 (unless stated)	*Percentages*
Country	*Annual average percentage increase*
Western European countries	
England and Wales	7·7
Scotland	7·5
N. Ireland (1974-1983)	7·2
Austria	2·7
Denmark	3·6
Finland	2·1
France	9·4
Germany	5·3
Italy (1974-1983)	−2·5
Netherlands	13·8
Norway (1974-1983)	7·5
Sweden	4·3
Other countries	
Australia	10·5
Canada	−0·9
Japan	2·1
USA	0·3

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish a table in the *Official Report*, showing, for each month since January 1986, the number of people held in detention, while awaiting the result of an application for political asylum, who injured themselves or attempted suicide.

Mr. Renton: No statistical information is maintained relating specifically to detailed political asylum applicants who have injured themselves or attempted suicide. I shall write to the hon. Member with such information as we can make available.

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* showing, for each year since 1979, the number of people who were held in detention while awaiting a decision on a request for political asylum and the proportion they constituted of the total numbers of people seeking asylum.

Mr. Renton: The information readily available about detention was given in response to a question from the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, West (Mr. Randall) on 12 July, at column 106. Figures for the number of applications received for refugee status or

asylum were given in table 1 of of the Home Office statistical bulletin, "Refugee Statistics, United Kingdom", 1987, issue 16/88, copies of which are in the Library.

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what criteria are used to decide whether or not an applicant for United Kingdom political asylum is held in detention until a decision is made.

Mr. Renton: Consideration is given to the grant of temporary admission, or temporary release in respect of illegal entrants, in all cases where a person is liable to be detained under the provisions of the Immigration Act 1971. The power to detain is used sparingly and temporary admission or release is readily granted where the immigration officer is satisfield that the person will comply with its terms. The need for detention is kept under regular review.

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps are taken to assess the psychiatric condition of applicants for political asylum.

Mr. Renton: There is no routine psychiatric assessment of asylum seekers, but any known medical factors are taken fully into account in the consideration of their application. When an asylum applicant is detained there is access to medical care where necessary at all times.

Members' Correspondence

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the average length of time taken by his Department to respond to correspondence from right hon. and hon. Members during the summer recess.

Mr. Hurd: Information is not available in the form requested, but the average turn-round time of ministerial correspondence in my Department during the third quarter of 1987 was 45 days.

Prisoners (Condoms)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what further consideration has been given to the possibility of prisoners being allowed confidential access to condoms in the wake of the conclusions and recommendations of the advisory council on the misuse of drugs in its report on "Aids and Drug Misuse".

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Minister for Health to a question from the hon. Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Forth) on 29 March, at columns *452-54*.

Prisoners (Drugs)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action he has taken to protect drug misusers in prison from the risk of contracting the HIV virus.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The education and counselling of prisoners, including drug misusers and other risk behaviour groups, is given high priority. Central initiatives have included the wide distribution of printed material and a video film which stress the high risk from sharing needles and syringes. Governors have been urged to use such material to the best effect, and encouraged to develop local educative initiatives. A comprehensive education package with unequivocal messages both for prisoners in general and for specific target groups is in preparation.

Measures taken to combat the misuse of drugs in establishments have included increasing the number of dogs specially trained in drug detection work, training dogs in the detection of heroin and cocaine as well as cannabis, improving staff training on drugs, the issue of further guidance aimed in particular at the prevention of smuggling by visitors and by prisoners returning from home leave, and abolition of the privilege whereby unconvicted prisoners were permitted to have food and drink sent in to them, thereby closing a significant avenue for smuggling.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures have been taken to encourage drug misusers in prison to identify themselves; and what steps are taken to reduce or eliminate their drug dependency, and ensure that controlled drug intake arrangements free from AIDS infection are available for those requiring them.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: As I announced in answer to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Warwick and Leamington (Sir D. Smith) on 31 March, at columns *681-82*, the possibility of a history of drugs misuse is one of the factors medical officers inquire into during the course of their examination of inmates being received into prison custody. Where drug dependency is identified help in withdrawing is offered, its nature determined by the medical officer's clinical assessment of the individual case. Additionally, at a number of establishments personal support continuing after withdrawal is provided by members of staff or drug counselling agencies from the community.

Guidelines prepared in discussion between the prison department and probation service for the introduction at all establishments of a more co-ordinated response to drug misusers were issued on 25 September 1987 and copies were placed in the Library. These describe the responsibility of the prison governor to ensure the development of a coherent system and the complementary roles of medical and probation officers in the provision of care and support. The use of suitable drug counselling agencies from the community is encouraged. The expectation is that as these through-care arrangements develop, rather than seek to conceal their habit, inmates will increasingly be inclined to identify any need of help on or shortly after reception. This and concurrent action to combat the entry into prison of illicit drugs will be especially valuable where they are in HIV high-risk behaviour groups.

Immigration Act 1988

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the names of persons and organisations invited to his office to mark the Royal Assent being given to the Immigration Act 1988; if he will list the names of persons and organisations who declined his invitation; and at what he estimates the cost of the hospitality provided on this occasion.

Mr. Hurd: As in the past, I have invited the Chairman and members of the Standing Committee and officials

closely involved in the Bill to attend a small party to mark its completion. Eighteen hon. Members and 21 officials have been invited. Acceptances have been received from eight hon. Members and from 15 officials. I expect the cost to be about £20.

Murder and Manslaughter

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons convicted of *(a)* murder and *(b)* manslaughter have been convicted of (i) murder and (ii) manslaughter after release from prison, in each year since 1965.

Mr. John Patten *[holding reply 22 July 1988]:* The total number of suspects convicted of murder or manslaughter who had previously been convicted of murder or manslaughter, including those who commit the second offence before release from prison or hospital, is published annually in table 4.10 of "Criminal Statistics, England and Wales", copies of which are available in the Library. The number of persons who have been convicted of a second homicide after release from prison or hospital is given in the following table:

Persons convicted of murder or manslaughter in England and Wales and released on licence or termination of sentence and convicted again of murder or manslaughter.

	Previous conviction for murder		Previous conviction for manslaughter	
	Convicted for murder	Convicted for manslaughter	Convicted for murder	Convicted for manslaughter
1966	—	—	—	1
1967	—	—	—	—
1968	—	—	—	—
1969	—	—	—	—
1970	—	—	1	1
1971	—	—	—	1
1972	—	—	—	—
1973	—	1	—	1
1974	—	—	—	2
1975	1	—	1	1
1976	1	1	1	—
1977	—	—	2	1
1978	—	—	1	—
1979	—	1	1	—
1980	—	—	—	—
1981	1	1	1	1
1982	1	—	—	1
1983	1	—	2	1
1984	—	—	1	2
1985	1	—	—	—
1986	1	—	2	—
1987[1]	—	—	—	1

[1] Provisional figures.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons were murdered in each year since 1958.

Mr. John Patten *[holding answer 22 July 1988]:* The number of offences decided at court to be murder is published annually in table 4.2 of "Criminal Statistics, England and Wales", copies of which are in the Library: the figures for 1958-86 are given in the following table. Each offence relates to a separate victim. The corresponding figures for 1987 are not yet available.

Offences initially recorded by the police as homicide and later decided by the courts to be murder[1]

England and Wales

Year	Murder
1958	26
1959	44
1960	41
1961	38
1962	38
1963	38
1964	47
1965	54
1966	64
1967	66
1968	73
1969	69
1970	91
1971	86
1972	88
1973	81
1974	154
1975	97
1976	102
1977	112
1978	123
1979	160
1980	125
1981	148
1982	160
1983	152
1984	165
1985	168
1986	204

[1] As at 1 June 1988.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons were found guilty of *(a)* murder and *(b)* manslaughter in each year since 1958.

Mr. John Patten *[holding answer 22 July 1988]:* The number of persons convicted of murder and manslaughter is published annually in table S2.1(A) of "Criminal Statistics, England and Wales, Supplementary Tables Volume 2", copies of which are in the Library; the figures for 1958-1986 are given in the following table. The corresponding figure for 1987 is not yet available.

Persons found guilty of murder and manslaughter by year of completion of court proceedings
England and Wales

Year	Murder	Found guilty Manslaughter due to diminished responsibility	Other manslaughter
1958	30	25	48
1959	42	21	54
1960	42	23	55
1961	51	36	56
1962	31	34	63
1963	46	46	72
1964	44	41	73
1965	57	47	84
1966	72	51	109
1967	63	49	109
1968	74	44	118
1969	75	47	117
1970	97	66	124
1971	97	68	127
1972	79	76	141
1973	90	80	154
1974	112	79	177
1975	107	66	196
1976	104	92	194
1977	115	82	144
1978	105	79	143

Year	Murder	Found guilty Manslaughter due to diminished responsibility	Other manslaughter
1979	136	92	186
1980	169	78	193
1981	126	84	167
1982	184	90	182
1983	132	84	164
1984	156	72	168
1985	173	65	200
1986	179	49	194

DNA Testing

45. **Mr. Janner:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will make a statement concerning the use of DNA testing in disputed immigration and natonality cases.

Mr. Hurd *[holding answer 21 July 1988]:* I have today placed in the Library the report of a pilot trial by the Home Office and Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the use of DNA profiling in immigration casework. Copies of the report are being sent to all—including right hon. and hon. Members—with known interests in the outcome. Further copies are available on request.

The Government are grateful for the assistance they have received from Professor Jeffreys of Leicester university, ICI Cellmark Diagnostics, Professor Dodd and Dr. Lincoln of the London hospital medical college, and its independent scientific adviser, Professor Sir David Weatherall of Oxford university.

The main findings of the trial are that DNA profiling is viable and, with the use of the single locus probe, appears to be the most accurate method now available for determining parentage in immigration cases. The Government will therefore continue for the present to accept the validated results of commercial testing under the interim procedures issued by the Home Office last year. It follows that, where applicants can show through a validated DNA test result a qualifying relationship with both parents, and where the other requirements of immigration law are met, their claims will be accepted and the Home Office will not contest outstanding appeals.

The pilot was a scientific trial to test procedures and not a statistical investigation based on a properly constructed representative sample. It follows that, from the limited data available, no valid statistical inferences may be drawn about how far different decisions on admission would have been reached in the past if DNA testing had been available, or on the extent to which future applications are likely to be successful.

We are considering whether DNA testing should continue to be left to private initiative or organised under a centrally run scheme. The Government are clear that the cost of any such schemes should not fall on the taxpayer. We do not consider that a scheme should be either automatic for all settlement applicants or compulsory, though reasonable inferences could be drawn from refusal to take a test. We shall announce our final conclusions in due course.

Copies of the report may be obtained, free of charge, from Room 905, Home Office, Lunar house, Wellesley road, Croydon CR9 2BY.

EMPLOYMENT

Training Scheme

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how much will be paid in total during the first year of implementation to trainees on the employment training scheme, over and above their unemployment benefit.

Mr. Nicholls: In the first full year of employment training the Training Commission plans to spend around £800 million on training allowances of which some £190 million is for the lead over benefit and other allowances.

The Training Commission and training managers are also jointly funding a training bonus scheme. Trainees will receive a bonus for completing their action plan of three months or more and a higher bonus for achieving a vocational qualification or a credit towards one.

Training managers or practical training providers may also choose to give additional financial support to trainees.

Factory Inspectors

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many vacancies there are in the Factory Inspectorate; what has been the total number of vacancies by year from 1979 to date; by what region; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: On 1 July 1988 there were 40 vacancies in the Factory Inspectorate. Recruitment competitions were organised in the period 1979 to 1988 to fill the following number of vacancies.

Year	Number of vacancies
1979	90
1980	0
1981	0
1982	0
1983	0
1984	45
1985	30
1986	75
1987	70
1988	35

It is not possible to break down the total number of vacancies geographically. A further recruitment competition for factory inspectors is planned for the autumn of 1988.

Employment Training

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the average weekly amount available on employment training excluding supplementary grants to purchase training.

Mr. Nicholls: Excluding supplementary grants of up to £40 per trainee per week, a basic grant of £17·50 per trainee per week and an initial administration fee of £15 for each trainee will be paid to training managers under employment training.

Training managers would also expect to receive contributions of about £5 per day from employers offering practical training placements and also contributions from patrons of some projects. The Training Commission is also

making separate grants available for training providers' staff, for special help for people with disabilities, for assessment and certification and for higher and technical level skill training.

Leave

Mr. Grocott: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether his Department monitors the extent to which extended leaves are available to employees.

Mr. Nicholls: No. Terms and conditions of employment are a matter for employers and employees or their representatives to determine.

Members' Correspondence

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the average length of time taken by his Department to respond to right hon. and hon. Members' correspondence during the summer recess.

Mr. Nicholls: The Department of Employment took an average of about one month to respond to right hon. and hon. Members' correspondence received during the 1987 summer recess.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Nellist: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give for the latest available most nearly comparable dates the number of unemployed workers in Coventry and the number of vacancies at *(a)* the jobcentre and *(b)* the careers office, broken down into (i) full-time jobs, (ii) part-time jobs, and (iii) places on various Government schemes, by title and duration of scheme.

Mr. Lee *[holding answer 22 July 1988]:* Following is the available information. On 9 June 1988 the number of unemployed claimants in the Coventry local authority district was 17,572. At Coventry jobcentre, which covers an area nearly corresponding to Coventry local authority district, the level of unfilled vacancies, excluding community programme vacancies, registered on 3 June 1988 was 595, of which 420 were full-time and 175 part-time. The numbers of vacancies on Government training programmes registered at the jobcentre on the same date were 486 community programme places, of which 98 were full-time and 388 part-time. In addition, there were three voluntary project programme places and 18 job training scheme places.

At Coventry careers office there were 132 unfilled vacancies registered on 3 June 1988; these are not separately identified as full-time and part-time vacancies. Also some of these vacancies could have been notified to a jobcentre as well as a careers office.

In the Coventry local authority district the number of YTS places planned for first and single year trainees in the current financial year is 2,436, of which 1,069 were unfilled on 3 June 1988.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Elderly People

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what change there has been in the numbers of long-stay hospital beds for elderly people provided by each regional health authority over the last five years.

Mrs. Currie: I regret that information is not collected in the form requested. The latest figures for the average daily available geriatric beds are shown in the table.

Average daily available geriatric beds in all NHS hospitals, England, 1982-1986

Regional Health Authority	*Year*					*Percentage change 1982-1986*
	1982	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	
Northern	3,809	3,885	3,894	3,940	3,949	3·7
Yorkshire	5,090	5,041	4,938	4,960	4,827	−5·2
Trent	5,204	5,229	5,233	5,237	5,263	1·1
East Anglian	2,372	2,417	2,452	2,467	2,497	5·3
North West Thames	3,366	3,329	3,380	3,417	3,460	2·8
North East Thames	4,555	4,574	4,635	4,636	4,614	1·3
South East Thames	4,237	4,233	4,088	3,985	3,740	−11·7
South West Thames	3,064	3,035	2,975	2,907	2,878	−6·1
Wessex	3,543	3,510	3,477	3,468	3,433	−3·1
Oxford	2,027	2,006	1,974	1,866	1,825	−10·0
South Western	3,771	3,848	3,807	3,782	3,720	−1·4
West Midlands	6,256	6,230	6,235	6,176	6,054	−3·2
Mersey	3,136	3,171	3,180	3,120	3,042	−3·0
North Western	5,135	5,193	5,175	5,230	5,161	0·5
Special Health Authorities	80	102	127	130	126	57·0
England	55,646	55,801	55,571	55,320	54,588	−1·9

Source: SH3 return.

Cases treated, throughput[1] and average length of stay, in the geriatric sector, England, 1982 and 1986

	1982	*1986*	*Change 1982-1986*	*Percentage change 1982-1986*
In-patient cases treated	297,200	396,311	99,111	33·3
Throughput	5·3	7·3	2·0	37·7
Average length of stay (days)	62·3	44·8	−17·5	−28·1

[1] In-patient cases treated per available bed.

Pensions

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will detail the overall increase in the real value of national insurance pensions over *(a)* the period 1974 to 1979 and *(b)* the period 1979 to the present date.

Mr. Scott: The information requested is in the table. The upratings shown are those which applied for most of 1974 and 1979.

Real terms increase in retirement pension

	Single person	*Married couple*
(a) October 1973 to November 1978	20·1	19·1
(b) November 1978 to April 1988	2·4	2·5

White Hart Training Centre, Harrogate

Mr. Robert Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what consideration has been given to offering the White Hart training centre in Harrogate to the private sector; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: The National Health Service Training Authority is actively considering the future role of its two training centres and all options for their future use are being considered. The authority hopes to reach a conclusion on this by early 1989.

Cholesterol Screening

Mr. Simon Coombs: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what plans he has to introduce cholesterol screening.

Mrs. Currie: We are inviting the Standing Medical Advisory Committee to advise on the cost-effectiveness of wider cholesterol testing in the prevention and treatment of heart disease.

Health Education Authority

Mr. Simon Coombs: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on the work of the Health Education Authority, listing its achievements since its formation.

Mrs. Currie: The Health Education Authority was set up in April 1987 as an integral part of the National Health Service to advise Ministers on health education issues and to take forward its health education campaigns. The authority is carrying forward its health education work in 10 main areas—smoking, heart disease, AIDS, dental health, alcohol and drug misuse, family and personal health, young people, adult and community, the elderly and professional development. In many cases it is developing work undertaken by the former Health Education Council. Issues such as women's health and ethnic minority health are also being addressed.

The main new developments have been in two major areas, AIDS and the "Look After Your Heart" campaign. Following its assumption of responsibility for development of the mass media aspects of the public education on AIDS, the authority has since run separate campaigns aimed at the general public, in particular young sexually active adults, and holiday and business travellers. These have been supported by the publication of new leaflets giving information about AIDS and HIV infection.

The authority has also worked closely with the Department to launch and take forward the joint "Look After Your Heart" campaign. This activity, together with the wide range of other health education work, is continuing.

St. George's Hospital, Tooting

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the present estimated costs of the complete rebuilding of St. George's hospital, Tooting; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: Including building, engineering, fees and equipment, the cost of rebuilding phases I, II, IIA and IIG2 and F of St. George's hospital, Tooting, with the new accident and emergency unit currently under construction, is £125·5 million.

Coronary Heart Disease

Mr. Bell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the proportion of deaths from coronary heart disease; and what equivalent information he has for other members of the European Community.

Mrs. Currie: The latest available information is shown in the table. Data have, with the exception of those for the United Kingdom and England and Wales, been taken from the 1987 edition of World Health Organisation "World Health Statistics" annual; for Belgium, the data were obtained from the "UN Demographic Year Book 1986".

Proportion of total deaths which have ischaemic heart disease[1] as underlying cause

Country	*Year*	*Percentage of total deaths*
Belgium	1984	13·3
Denmark	1985	28·7
Federal Republic of Germany	1986	19·3
France	1985	9·9
Greece	1985	11·0
Ireland	1984	26·6
Italy	1983	14·3
Luxembourg	1986	14·8
Netherlands	1985	20·9
Portugal	1986	8·5
Spain	1981	9·8
United Kingdom[2]	1987	27·8
England and Wales[2]	1987	27·5

[1] International Classification of Disease (9th revision) code 410-414.
[2] Provisional. Source OPCS.

Note:
There may be differences in the assignment of underlying cause between countries. Direct comparisons should therefore be made with care.

Occupational Pensions

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate the savings made by the change introduced in paragraphs 5 to 9 and 12 of schedule 4 to the Social Security Act 1988 which require that occupational pensions paid to dependents should now be treated as earnings in assessing claimant's income.

Mr. Scott: The estimated savings in a full year are £3 million.

Council Expenses

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services why council travelling and subsistence expenses are classed as income for income support purposes; and if he has any plans to change this situation.

Mr. Scott: Any payment to councillors solely to enable them to carry out their duties is disregarded. Payments to councillors for travelling and subsistence which are not made wholly, exclusively and necessarily in respect of expenses incurred in the course of their duties, represent a reward for their services and are therefore treated as earnings in income support. When added to any other earnings, they attract a weekly disregard of £5, or £15 in certain circumstances. There are no plans to change these arrangements.

Income Support

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people received supplementary benefit at the latest available date; and how many currently receive income support in *(a)* Clwyd South-West, *(b)* Wales and *(c)* Great Britain.

Mr. Scott: The constituency of Clwyd, South-West is served by the local offices at Rhyl, Wrexham and (from 18 April 1988) Deeside. The boundaries are not conterminous.

The information requested is as follows:

	Clwyd South-West	*Wales*	*Great Britain*
People in receipt of supplementary benefit at 17 November 1987	34,107	287,978	5,056,102
People in receipt of income support at 31 May 1988	30,524	258,789	4,431,409

The figures relating to income support are provisional and subject to amendment.

Source: 100 per cent. count of cases in action. These figures may however, overstate the number of people receiving supplementary benefit. The footnote to the reply given to my hon. Friend, the Member for Hyndburn, (Mr. Hargreaves) on 31 March 1988, at columns *660-61*, refers.

Severe Weather Payments

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the number of people who during the last winter were able to claim under the severe weather heating allowance.

Mr. Scott. Information is not available in the form requested. The provisional number of payments made under last winter's exceptionally cold weather scheme is 99,783.

Civil Defence

Mr. Thorne: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will set out his plans for emergency medical care in time of war—or national emergency; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: The Department has recently issued revised civil defence planning guidance to the National Health Service. It replaces the existing guidance issued in 1977 and takes account of changes in the Government's planning assumptions and in management and structure within the NHS.

The guidance is designed to assist health authorities and others to plan the various phases of putting the NHS on a crisis footing in the event of war, however unlikely that may be. A copy has been placed in the Library.

Members' Correspondence

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the average length of time taken by his Department to respond to correspondence from right hon. and hon. Members during the summer recess.

Mr. Moore: The average length of time taken to respond to correspondence from right hon. and hon. Members during the last summer recess was 31 calendar days.

Transplants

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has completed his consideration of the Hoffenberg report on the supply of transplant organs; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: Further to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Tynemouth (Mr. Trotter) on 18 December 1987, at column *934*, we have recently issued for consultation a draft health circular on the provision of donor organs for transplantation. This implements the key recommendation of the Hoffenberg report. Health authorities, medical organisations and others with a particular interest in the subject have been invited to comment by 30 September 1988.

Patients (Treatment)

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate for each specialty group the percentage of patients *(a)* nationally and *(b)* by region who are treated outside the district within which they live.

Mrs. Currie: I shall let the hon. Member have the available information which can be provided without incurring disproportionate costs as soon as possible.

Institutional Care (Discharges)

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will increase funding to local authorities to enable an improvement in the monitoring of patients discharged from long-term institutional care.

Mrs. Currie: When determining the level of grant to local authiorities for future years, the Government will take into account all responsibilities falling on social services departments, including those which will arise in relation to patients discharged from long-term hospital care when section 7 of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986 is implemented.

Marriage Breakdown

Mr. Carrington: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate the annual cost to public funds of providing support to people whose problems are attributable to marriage breakdown.

Mr. Scott: Information about benefits paid to people in this situation is not available in the form requested. The latest published information shows that supplementary benefit in payment to divorced and separated women at February 1986 amounted to £619 million a year. This takes account of maintenance paid by the liable relative to the Department or direct for divorced or separated women claimants totalling £115 million per annum at February 1986.

Abortions

Mrs Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has concerning the number of abortions performed in England and Wales in the latest year for which figures are available which were performed on pregnancies arising out of the use of in vitro fertilisation techniques; and what were the grounds for those abortions.

Mrs. Currie: Information on the method of fertilisation is not required to be collected on the abortion notification form, and it is therefore not possible to provide the data requested.

In Viro Fertilisation

Mrs. Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has concerning the frequency of major handicap in babies conceived through in vitro fertilisation techniques.

Mrs. Currie: I understand that the Medical Research Council is currently funding a study of data on children conceived by in vitro fertilisation, and the results will be available next year.

Housing Benefit (Non-dependants' Income)

Mr. Buchan: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services for what reasons it is considered necessary to ask for the precise income, instead of whether over or under £49·20, of a non-dependant in regulation 63(1) of the Housing Benefit Regulations, April 1988.

Mr. Scott: The threshold below which deductions in respect of non-dependants in remunerative work are made at a lower rate is subject to regular review. It would not be practicable to renew stocks of claim forms each time the threshold was reviewed. Moreover, it would be inevitable that some old stocks would remain in circulation after the rate had been changed, thus misleading claimants and necessitating additional inquiries.

Disabled People

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to the answer of 21 July, if he will name the seven local authorities which failed to provide returns concerning services they provided for people with disabilities for 1986-87; and what action he is taking.

Mr. Scott: The local authorities concerned are: Cleveland, Wolverhampton, Westminster, Kingston-Upon-Thames, Kent, Devon and the Isles of Scilly. Several reminders have been sent.

Patient Registration Data

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will list the organisations asked to comment on his Department's consultation document on DHA use of family practitioner committee patient registration data; what representations have been received; and of those, how many were for or against the proposals;

(2) when the Government expect to respond to representations received regarding the consultation document on DHA use of patient registration data; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: Copies of the consultation document were sent by the Department to the following bodies in England:

Regional Health Authorities (14)
District Health Authorities (191)
Family Practitioner Committees (90)
Special Health Authorities for London Teaching Hospitals (8)
Community Health Councils (191)
Health Service Commissioner
General Medical Council
General Medical Services Committee
Joint Consultants' Committee
Community Medicine Consultative Committee
British Medical Association
Royal College of General Practitioners

English National Board for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting
Joint Committee of Professional Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting Associations (England)
Royal College of Nursing
Royal College of Midwives
Health Visitors' Association
Data Protection Registrar
Society of FPCs
Society of Administrators FPS
National Association of Health Authorities
Inter-Regional Secretariat for Health Authorities
Association of Community Health Councils for England and Wales
Royal Institute of Public Administration
Institute of Health Service Managers
British Computer Society
Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain
General Whitley Council (Staff Side Secretary)
National Council for Voluntary Organisations
National Association of Citizens' Advice Bureaux
Consumers' Association
Patients' Association
National Council for Civil Liberties
National Consumer Council.

The document was publicised in the reply given to my hon. Friend the Member for Ludlow (Mr. Gill) on 25 November 1987, at column *243*, and in a press release on the same day.

Over 400 responses were received. The great majority of responses recognised that there would be additional benefit to patient care if DHAs could use patient registration data, and supported such use on condition that questions about the extent and nature of proper safeguards were resolved. We are considering all the issues arising from the process of consultation and will bring forward proposals as soon as we are in a position to do so.

Mentally Ill and Handicapped and Elderly Patients

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the number in each region of *(a)* hospital beds, *(b)* local authority and health authority day places, and *(c)* places in sheltered accommodation, for (1) the mentally handicapped (2) mentally ill and (3) elderly patients.

Mrs. Currie: Figures for 1986, the latest year for which statistics are readily available centrally, have been published and are in the Library.

Figures for the number of available staffed beds at 31 December 1986 in National Health Service mental illness and mental handicap hospitals and units in England are in table 2·1 of booklets 9 and 10 respectively of the series, "Mental Health Statistics for England".

The table gives the estimated average number of daily occupied beds during 1985 for the elderly in National Health Service non-psychiatric hospitals in England; later estimates for the elderly are not currently available.

Average number of beds occupied daily by patients aged 65 years and over in NHS non-psychiatric hospitals in England, 1985

Region	*Number*
Northern	6,080
Yorkshire	8,108
Trent	8,500
East Anglian	3,658
North West Thames	6,886
North East Thames	8,643
South East Thames	7,394
South West Thames	4,783
Wessex	4,581
Oxford	3,731
South Western	5,816
West Midlands	10,911
Mersey	5,331
North Western	8,173
Special health authorities	442
England, total	93,037

Figures for day patients, other than out-patients, attending National Health Service mental illness and mental handicap facilities in England during 1986 are also contained in the two booklets mentioned.

Figures for people attending day centres within local authorities are contained in the Department's publication A/F 86/8, "Adult Training Centres for Mentally Handicapped People and Day Centres for Mentally Ill, Elderly and Younger Physically Handicapped People, at 31 March 1986, England", by local authority area.

Figures on "sheltered accommodation" are not centrally available by regional health authority. However, figures by local authority area are available for certain categories of accommodation in publications A/F 86/11, "Homes and Hostels for Mentally Ill and Mentally Handicapped People, at 31st March 1986, England", and RA/86/2, "Residential Accommodation for Elderly and for Younger Physically Handicapped People: All Residents in Local Authority, Voluntary and Private Homes, Year ending 31 March 1986, England".

No reliable figures for day patients attending other National Health Service facilities specifically for the elderly are collected centrally.

Independent Living Fund

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will announce the names of the chairman and vice-chairman of the Independent Living Fund.

Mr. Scott: At their last meeting the trustees elected Mrs. Winifred Tumin as their chairman and Miss Pauline Thompson as vice-chairman. They also elected Mr. Stewart Lyon as treasurer.

Miss Sharon Campbell

Mr. Robert G. Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will make a statement about the inquiry into the care and after-care of Miss Sharon Campbell.

Mrs. Currie: We received the report of the independent committee of inquiry, chaired by Mr. John Spokes, QC, on 22 June 1988. It is being published in full today and copies are being placed in the Library.

The Government are very grateful to Mr. Spokes and his colleagues, Dr. Michael Pare and Mr. George Royle, for their work. Their extremely helpful report examines the care provided for a young woman, Miss Sharon Campbell, by health and local authorities between 1980 and 1984. It examines her treatment as a psychiatric in-patient at Bexley hospital, and subsequent out-patient treatment and the care provided by two social services authorities when she was living in the community in Lewisham. It considers also the circumstances in which she killed her former social worker, Miss Isabel Schwarz, and examines the responses to earlier threats and incidents of violence by Miss Campbell.

The report draws attention to the dedicated care and treatment given to Miss Campbell by many professional staff. It identifies also a number of shortcomings in co-ordination and liaison; inadequate supervision of staff; and regrettable omissions by some individuals. It is, however, clear from the committee's findings that Miss Campbell received a generally good level of attention from the caring services and that, although her behaviour was unpredictable and, at times, threatening, her action in killing Isabel Schwarz was of a wholly different order from that which characterised earlier violence or threats by her.

The report makes recommendations for the care of mentally disordered people in the community; record-keeping by, and communications between, health and local authorities, professional staff and others; the safety, training and supervision of social workers; and other related matters. Ministers are considering those recommendations which are addressed specifically to the Secretary of State and some others which may call for action or consideration by the Department. We shall take action to implement any changes that are necessary. We expect that the health and local authorities directly concerned in the care of Sharon Campbell will also consider the report's findings with particular care and act upon them as necessary.

Officials are in touch with the Royal College of Psychiatrists and other professional bodies about a recommendation that they might co-operate in preparing a report on discharge and after-care procedures for mentally ill patients. The report also contains recommendations which will be of value to health and local authorities in their service planning, the delivery of good

quality patient and client care, and the safety and security of staff. Copies are being sent today to all health and local authorities in England.

Violence to Staff

Mr. Stevens: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will publish the report of his advisory committee on violence to staff.

Mrs. Currie: I am grateful to the members of the committee for their assistance in producing a most useful report. Copies of the committee's report, which I am placing in the Library, are today being sent to health authorities, family practitioner committees, local social services authorities and to managers within the Department of Social Security. I hope it will be of particular value to those who are locally responsible for the provision of health and personal social services and for the operation of the social security system.

We continue to be very concerned about violence against staff by members of the public, and we take seriously our duty to protect those who work for us all.

DEFENCE

Saudi Arabia

2. **Mr. Tim Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the recently announced arms deal with Saudi Arabia.

36. **Mr. Chapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement about the recent contract for the sale of Tornados to Saudi Arabia.

82. **Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the latest arms sales to Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the recently announced arms deal between the United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Younger: The recently announced signature of a formal understanding with the Saudi Arabian Government provides for an enhancement to the project Al Yamamah involving the supply of additional aircraft, specialised naval vessels and a construction programme. I believe the agreement is of considerable importance and benefit to both countries.

24. **Mr. John M. Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will give details of the implications for west midlands industry of the recent major arms contracts with Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Sainsbury: Employment consequences for individual regions cannot yet be assessed, but it is clearly excellent news for British industry and has the potential to help support and sustain jobs in a wide range of companies and regions.

26. **Mr. Cran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what estimate he has as to the number of jobs that will be created or protected among British firms as a result of the signing of the recent arms deal with Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Sainsbury: It is too early to assess the employment consequences.

NATO Defence Ministers (Meeting)

7. **Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he will next meet the Defence Ministers of European North Atlantic Treaty Organisation countries; and what subjects he will discuss with them.

Mr. Younger: I will next meet Defence Ministers of European NATO countries at an independent European programme group meeting in September. We will discuss a wide range of defence matters.

Gibraltar

9. **Mr. Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the annual cost of maintaining a British military presence in Gibraltar.

Mr. Freeman: The estimated cost of maintaining a British military presence in Gibraltar in 1988-89 is £71 million.

British Bases

18. **Mr. Sumberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what has been the cost over the last five years of employing manpower to protect British bases from unauthorised incursions, and the threat of criminal damage, by protesters.

Mr. Sainsbury: Activities by protesters and the threat of such activities produce a considerable increase in the task of protection of military units and MOD establishments in the United Kingdom. However, it is not possible to identify that part of the total cost of protection which is attributable to the activity of protesters. In addition, there will have been costs incurred by local constabularies.

Cruise Missiles

19. **Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proposals have been received from the United States Administration for Upper Heyford and Lakenheath to be used as bases for United States F111 aircraft armed with air-launched cruise missiles.

23. **Mr. James Lamond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proposals have been received from the United States Administration for Upper Heyford and Lakenheath to be used as bases for United States F111 aircraft armed with air-launched cruise missiles.

60. **Dr. Reid:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proposals have been received from the United States Administration for Upper Heyford and Lakenheath to be used as bases for US F111 aircraft armed with air launched cruise missiles.

76. **Ms. Primarolo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proposals have been received from the United States Administration for Upper Heyford and Lakenheath to be used as bases for US F111 aircraft armed with air-launched cruise missiles.

Mr. Younger: No proposals have been received from the United States Administration. The redeployment to Europe of dual capable aircraft currently based in the United States is one force restructuring option currently under consideration within NATO, but no decisions on

this or any other option have yet been taken. There would in any case be no question of the redeployed aircraft being armed with strategic air-launched cruise missiles (ALCMs).

28. **Mr. McFall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the role in current North Atlantic Treaty Organisation strategy of long-range sea-launched cruise missiles; and what changes in the role are currently being considered.

40. **Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the role in current North Atlantic Treaty Organisation strategy of long-range sea-launched cruise missiles; and what changes in the role are currently being considered.

72. **Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the role in current North Atlantic Treaty Organisation strategy of long-range sea-launched cruise missiles; and what changes in this role are currently being considered.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs), which the United States navy has been deploying since 1984, provide a flexible and survivable addition to the US sea-based nuclear deterrent. Their specific role is to hold at risk fixed targets on land. SLCMs are not formally assigned to NATO.

41. **Ms. Ruddock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent discussions he has had with his United States counterpart about the possibility of F111s stationed in the United Kingdom carrying air-launched cruise missiles.

66. **Mr. Litherland:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent discussions he has had with his United States counterpart about the possibility of F111s stationed in the United Kingdom carrying air-launched cruise missiles.

Mr. Younger: I refer the hon. Members to the answer I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Sunderland, South (Mr. Mullin).

NATO (Conventional Stability Talks)

20. **Mr. Michael Welsh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions North Atlantic Treaty Organisations Defence Ministers have had concerning a mandate for the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation negotiators at the forthcoming conventional stability talks.

65. **Mr. Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions North Atlantic Treaty Organisations Defence Ministers have had concerning a mandate for the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation negotiators at the forthcoming conventional stability talks.

69. **Mr. Anthony Coombs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what further progress has been made in conventional force reductions in Europe.

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what consultations have taken place between North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Defence Ministers on reaching a common position on the forthcoming conventional stability talks.

Mr. Younger: I refer the hon. Members to the reply I gave earlier today to the hon. Members for Falkirk, East (Mr. Ewing) and for Glasgow, Shettleston (Mr. Marshall).

Trident

21. **Mr. Strang:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he last discussed Britain's Trident programme with his United States counterpart; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and Mr. Carlucci, the United States Secretary for Defence, last discussed the Trident programme, together with a number of other subjects, when they met in April of this year.

Glenmoriston Estate (Sale)

22. **Mr. Kennedy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he is yet in a position to assess the defence implications of the proposed sale of Glenmoriston Estate, Inverness-shire; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: I have written to the hon. Member, explaining that it has been decided not to seek to acquire part of the Glenmoriston estate for Army training purposes.

Warsaw Pact/NATO Conventional Forces

25. **Mr. Bill Michie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will give the latest estimate of the conventional balance between the Warsaw pact and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation; and if he will make a statement.

30. **Mr. Parry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will give the latest estimate of the conventional balance between the Warsaw pact and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation; and if he will make a statement.

45. **Mr. Wareing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will give the latest estimate of the conventional balance between the Warsaw pact and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation; and if he will make a statement.

68. **Dr. Moonie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will give the latest estimate of the conventional balance between the Warsaw pact and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The latest estimate of the balance of NATO and Warsaw pact conventional forces in Europe was published in chapter 6 of the "Statement on the Defence Estimates 1988". As the statement makes clear, the Warsaw pact enjoys huge numerical superiority and its forces are deployed so as to enable them to initiate surprise attack and large-scale offensive action. The Warsaw pact also has the potential to bring forward massive land-based reinforcements across relatively short distances. By contrast, NATO is faced with the need for many of its reinforcements to cross the Atlantic.

NATO Ships (Nuclear Weapons)

27. **Mr. Patchett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any plans to review with his colleagues

in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation the number of nuclear weapons carried by NATO ships; and if he will make a statement.

49. **Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any plans to review with his colleagues in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation the number of nuclear weapons carried by North Atlantic Treaty Organisation ships; and if he will make a statement.

53. **Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any plans to review with his colleagues in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation the number of nuclear weapons carried by North Atlantic Treaty Organisation ships; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Younger: I refer the hon. Members to the reply I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Hillhead (Mr. Galloway).

COD Donnington (Fire)

29. **Mr. Grocott:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many witnesses have so far been interviewed by the Ministry of Defence team inquiring into the fire at COD Donnington.

Mr. Freeman: The board of inquiry into the fire at COD Donnington has so far taken evidence from 27 witnesses.

Strategic Defence Initiative

31. **Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what account Her Majesty's Government take, in deciding whether to maintain their support for the strategic defence initiative, of the latest information and evidence on the technical feasibility of the project; and if he will make a statement.

56. **Miss Lestor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what account Her Majesty's Government take, in deciding whether to maintain their support for the strategic defence initiative, of the latest information and evidence on the technical feasibility of the project; and if he will make a statement.

80. **Mr. Illsley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what account Her Majesty's Government take, in deciding whether to maintain their support for the strategic defence initiative, of the latest information and evidence on the technical feasibility of the project; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what account Her Majesty's Government take, in deciding whether to maintain their support for the strategic defence initiative, of the latest information and evidence on the technical feasibility of the project; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: The aim of the strategic defence initiative research programme remains to determine the feasibility of effective ballistic missile defences, and it would be inappropriate to prejudge the outcome of such work. Accordingly, the Government continue to support the strategic defence initiative research programme and the involvement in it of United Kingdom entities.

Front-line Aircraft

32. **Mr. Martlew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his estimate of the current proportion of the RAF front-line aircraft which are not fully operational.

70. **Mr. Morgan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his estimate of the current proportion of the RAF's front-line aircraft which are not fully operational.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer the hon. Members to the reply I gave earlier today to the hon. Members for Hemsworth (Mr. Buckley) and for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley).

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence why the Hawk aircraft referred to on page 23 of the "Statement on the Defence Estimates" are not included in the list of front-line RAF units given on page 76 of the same document.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Annex C of volume 1 of the "Statement on the Defence Estimates 1988" is primarily concerned with front-line units. The Hawk aircraft mentioned on page 23 are not included because their primary role is training.

Nuclear Weapons

33. **Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any plans to improve safeguards against accidental use of nuclear weapons; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: We are fully confident that appropriate safeguards exist to prevent the accidental use of the United Kingdom's nuclear weapons. We keep our safeguarding arrangements under constant review.

Submarine Technology

34. **Mr. Ingram:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the current level of expenditure on conventional submarine technology.

Mr. Sainsbury: The majority of expenditure on conventional submarines is currently directed towards the introduction into service of the type 2400 upholder class. As stated in table 3.2 of the 1988 "Statement on the Defence Estimates", volume 2, the current commitment of funds to this programme is £620 million.

Destroyers and Frigates

35. **Mr. Douglas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the current numbers of destroyers and frigates available for operational purposes in the Royal Navy.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Following HMS Coventry joining the fleet earlier this month, there are currently 48 destroyers and frigates in service with the Royal Navy, of which 41 are available for operational deployment immediately or within a short period.

Aircraft Recognition

37. **Mr. Boateng:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will review the effectiveness of the technology

currently used by the Royal Navy to distinguish between oncoming civilian and military aircraft; and if he will make a statement.

51. **Mr. Frank Cook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will review the effectiveness of the technology currently used by the Royal Navy to distinguish between oncoming civilian and military aircraft; and if he will make a statement.

55. **Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will review the effectiveness of the technology currently used by the Royal Navy to distinguish between oncoming civilian and military aircraft; and if he will make a statement.

83. **Mr. Galbraith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will review the effectiveness of the technology currently used by the Royal Navy to distinguish between oncoming civilian and military aircraft; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The effectiveness of technology used by the Royal Navy is kept under regular review.

Identity Cards

38. **Mr. Favell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people for whom he has responsibility carry an identity card.

Mr. Sainsbury: This information is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. However, idendity cards are carried by all regular members of Her Majesty's forces and by most reservists. Various MOD civilian staff also carry identification cards, mainly when serving in service establishments or with Her Majesty's forces afloat or overseas. Dependents of service and MOD personnel serving overseas may also carry identity cards. Security passes, warrants and other documents are also issued to service and civilian personnel as required for the execution of their duties.

Defence Establishments (Dispersal)

39. **Mr. Fallon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what further consideration is being given to moving defence establishments to the northern region.

Mr. Sainsbury: I have nothing to add at present to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Devlin) on 30 June, at column *319*.

Persian Gulf

42. **Sir John Biggs-Davison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement about the current situation with regard to British and Allied patrolling of the Gulf.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The British Government welcome the current moves towards a settlement of the Iran-Iraq conflict, but it would be premature to modify the current pattern of operations of the Armilla patrol or the tri-national United Kingdom/Netherlands/Belgium mine countermeasures until the threat to merchant shipping in the Gulf has clearly been seen to have diminished.

Tornado Aircraft

43. **Mr. Sedgemore:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what percentage of the RAF's Tornado allocation is currently flying with ballast in the nose cone to compensate for the absence of radar systems found to be not fully functional.

63. **Ms. Walley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what percentage of the RAF's Tornado allocation are currently flying with ballast in the nose cone to compensate for the absence of radar systems found to be not fully functional.

77. **Mr. Skinner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what percentage of the Royal Air Force's Tornado allocation are currently flying with ballast in the nose cone to compensate for the absence of radar systems found to be not fully functional.

Mr. Sainsbury: There are no front-line Tornado F3 aircraft flying with ballast.

Stonehenge

44. **Ms. Abbott:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Ministry of Defence police as to the powers under which members of that force were recently deployed at Stonehenge on land not owned by his Department; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Ministry of Defence police as to the powers under which members of that force were recently deployed at Stonehenge on land not owned by his Department; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: I refer the hon. Members to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) on 30 June, at column *324*.

Wormhoudt

46. **Mr. Rooker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if his Department has yet completed its consideration of requests for posthumous awards for bravery at Wormhoudt in May 1940.

Mr. Freeman: Awards and medals for battles and operations which took place during the second world war were examined in detail in 1946. It was judged that no further awards should be instituted after that date. This decision was approved by His Majesty King George VI, and the ruling remains in force today. I am therefore unable to recommend the grant of any posthumous awards for actions during the second world war.

Gallantry medals are awarded on the basis of recommendations put forward at or near the time of the incident. They are then subjected to selection by the appropriate chain of command. Although great care was taken during the 1946 review to consider those who deserved gallantry awards, there must inevitably have been very many acts of individual bravery which have not been formally recognised. This does not detract from the bravery shown by the individuals concerned.

I accept that there will inevitably be a sense of injustice that the great courage and self-sacrifice shown by Capt. James Frazer Lynn-Allen, CSM Augustus Jennings and Sgt. Stanley Moore, in the face of the brutality of their captors at Wormhoudt in May 1940, was not officially recognised. Captain Lynn-Allen first remonstrated with

the SS guards before being killed while assisting a wounded man to escape to safety. CSM Jennings and Sgt. Moore died smothering grenades with their bodies. Their actions deserve our highest praise and admiration and are, I know, a source of pride and comfort to the survivors of the massacre, their regiment and their relatives.

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his policy towards the citing by authors and researchers of the war crimes interrogation unit's reports of the Wormhoudt massacre to which they have been given access in military museums.

Mr. Freeman *[holding answer 6 July 1988]:* I would expect access to public records in military museums to be in accordance with the criteria laid down in the public records lists.

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any proposals to withdraw copies of war crimes interrogation unit's reports of the Wormhoudt massacre from military museums.

Mr. Freeman *[holding answer 6 July 1988]:* I have no present plans to do so.

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will publish a list of titles of the documents relating to the Wormhoudt massacre which his Department is making available to the relevant authorities in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Mr. Freeman *[holding answer 6 July 1988]:* We will make all the evidence we have available to the relevant authorities in the Federal Republic of Germany. Once German legal proceedings are concluded, consideration will be given to opening, for public inspection, all the files so made available.

Mangusta Programmes

47. **Mr. Duffy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he next expects to have talks about the EH101 and A129 Mangusta programmes.

Mr. Sainsbury: My right hon. Friend regularly takes stock with his European colleagues of progress on important collaborative projects, such as the Anglo-Italian EH101 helicopter programme and the proposed A129 light attack helicopter, which is being studied by the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands.

Spare Parts (Labelling)

48. **Mr. Latham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress has been made by the Chief of Defence Procurement in introducing a labelling scheme for spare parts, following his recent statement to the Public Accounts Committee.

Mr. Sainsbury: The great majority of defence contractors are now co-operating with the Ministry's spares price-labelling requirements. The proportion of price-labelled stocks is steadily increasing in service depots.

Royal Dockyards

50. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if, in the light of the projected redundancies at Devonport and Rosyth, he will reconsider the balance between the core programme and unallocated work for the royal dockyards.

81. **Mr. Ted Garrett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if, in the light of the projected redundancies at Devonport and Rosyth, he will reconsider the balance between the core programme and unallocated work for the royal dockyards.

Mr. Sainsbury: I refer the hon. Members to the answer I gave earlier today to the hon. Members for Burnley (Mr. Pike) and for Ogmore (Mr. Powell).

RAF Aircraft (Demonstrations)

52. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will outline current Royal Air Force practice with regard to the organisation of commercial demonstrations of different aircraft in service.

Mr. Freeman: The Defence Export Services Organisation considers requests from industry for assistance in the organisation of commercial demonstrations of defence equipment in service. The Royal Air Force, in turn, like the other services, makes every effort to provide the required facilities.

Nuclear Test Site (Nevada)

54. **Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the likely continued availability of Nevada as a test site for British nuclear weapons and as to the factors which will influence this.

64. **Mrs. Wise:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the likely continued availability of Nevada as a test site for British nuclear weapons and as to the factors which will influence this.

71. **Mr. Doran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the likely continued availability of Nevada as a test site for British nuclear weapons and as to the factors which will influence this.

Mr. Sainsbury: I refer the hon. Members to the answer I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer).

Radar Tracking Techniques

57. **Mr. Ian Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether there are any plans to review the radar tracking techniques used on British warships in the light of recent events in the Gulf.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Operating procedures on Her Majesty's ships are kept under constant review.

Procurement Policy

58. **Mr. Wigley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what measures his Department operates to ensure that its procurement policy takes account of regional economic development needs.

Mr. Sainsbury: I have nothing to add to the answer I gave to the hon. Member on 24 June, at column *739*.

ALARM

59. **Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his latest estimate of the time and cost overruns on the ALARM anti-radar missile programme.

61. **Mr. Meale:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his latest estimate of the time and cost overruns on the ALARM anti-radar missile programme.

Mr. Sainsbury: I have nothing to add to the reply given to the hon. Member for Rhondda (Mr. Rogers) on 29 April, at column *309*.

Low Flying

62. **Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he last met representatives of countryside and farming organisations to discuss problems associated with low-flying military exercises.

Mr. Freeman: Neither I nor my right hon. Friend have attended any such meetings recently. However, officials, during the course of normal business, are in fairly regular contact with representatives of countryside and farming organisations with regard to low-flying military exercises and other matters.

Mr. Canavan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the frequency of low-level RAF flights *(a)* in Scotland and *(b)* in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Freeman: A low-level training sortie or flight covers on average 2·5 low-flying areas and the number of flights that take place entirely within Scotland is not separately recorded. A comparison in terms of aircraft movements can be made, although available statistics cover all British military users, not just the RAF. On this basis, in 1987 there were 24,679 movements in Scotland and 262,948 movements in the United Kingdom as a whole.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if United States Air Force B-52 aircraft are permitted to use the Highlands restricted area for terrain following radar low flying.

Mr. Freeman *[holding answer 16 June 1988]:* Normally only RAF and United Kingdom-based USAF aircraft are allowed to conduct low-flying training with terrain following radar in the Highlands restricted area, although an exception has been made in the past for USAFE C-130 aircraft based in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which types of United States military aircraft are permitted to fly at less than 250 ft in the three tactical training areas in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Freeman *[holding answer 16 June 1988]:* Use of the three tactical training areas (TTAs) in the United Kingdom is not formally limited to certain aircraft types, although in practice approval to operate in a TTA would normally be sought only on behalf of aircraft whose operational role required such low-level flights. All requests to operate in a TTA are considered on their merits; no requests have been received from the United States air force.

Defence Commitments (Review)

67. **Mr. Wallace:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any plans to institute a review of Britain's defence commitments; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer the hon. Member to the reply which my hon. Friend the Member for Hertfordshire, North (Mr. Stewart) gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow) on 27 April, at column *144*.

NATO (Expenditure)

73. **Mrs. Mahon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he next expects to discuss with North Atlantic Treaty Organisation colleagues the relative share of military expenditure borne by individual countries within the Alliance.

78. **Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he next expects to discuss with North Atlantic Treaty Organisation colleagues the relative share of military expenditure borne by individual countries within the Alliance.

Mr. Haynes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he next expects to discuss with North Atlantic Treaty Organisation colleagues the relative share of military expenditure borne by individual countries within the Alliance.

Mr. Younger: I refer the hon. Members to the answer I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Sunderland, North (Mr. Clay).

Military Equipment Sales (Middle East)

74. **Mr. Dykes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he is now able to review the potential of further high technology military equipment sales to middle eastern countries following the recent announcement of major new defence contracts with the kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Sainsbury: We, of course, keep under constant review the potential for defence sales to the middle east as elsewhere. We therefore support the companies concerned in their pursuit of all potential sales opportunities where these are consistent with Government policy, which takes into account political, strategic, security and humanitarian factors.

Chemical Weapons

75. **Mr. Graham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what new confidence building measures are proposed in the area of chemical weapons, following the recent exchange of visits by British and Soviet scientists to their respective facilities.

84. **Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what new confidence building measures are proposed in the area of chemical weapons, following the recent exchange of visits by British and Soviet scientists to their respective facilities.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: We are currently making a detailed assessment of the recent exchange of visits between the Chemical Defence Establishment, Porton Down, and the Soviet military chemical facility at Shikhany. When the outcome of this assessment is available, we will consider what further steps might be taken in this field.

Arms Sales

79. **Mr. Hind:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a further statement on the progress of DESO in the promotion of arms sales in 1987-88.

Mr. Sainsbury: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave him on 28 June 1988.

Listed Military Buildings

Miss Widdecombe: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to announce disposal plans for the redundant listed buildings recently visited by the advisory committee on listed military buildings.

Mr. Freeman: The Historic Military Buildings Committee most recently visited three sites in Gosport in May. The disposal of RNAD Priddy's Hard is being planned for mid-1989 and we hope to announce further details later this year. The future of Fort Rowner is currently being discussed with the local authorities concerned. St. George's barracks will be released in due course for sale when new accommodation for the present occupants has been completed.

The committee has also visited Woolwich. The future of the majority of historic buildings on the Woolwich Arsenal west site is inextricably linked with the future location of the Directorate General of Defence Quality Assurance. It is now clear, however, that the riverside area will not be required, and although the precise boundaries have still to be defined it will be possible to release for other purposes a substantial area of land including the Grand Store, New Laboratory Square, Riverside Guardroom and Mallets Mortar. Once the boundaries have been determined we will seek discussions with the planning authorities at an early date.

Information Technology

86. **Mr. Simon Coombs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much his Department spends on information technology to assist in the control of Ministry stocks.

Mr. Sainsbury: We estimate that some £16·3 million will be spent in the financial year 1988-89 on information technology to assist, directly or indirectly, in the control of Ministry stocks. This figure includes the acquisition of new hardware, the replacement of life-expired hardware and ongoing commitments for maintenance and software licences.

Territorial Army

87. **Mr. Tredinnick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he intends to take to improve Territorial Army recruitment.

Mr. Freeman: The Government continue to make every effort to improve Territorial Army recruitment through local and national recruiting campaigns, and we keep under careful review pay and conditions of service of volunteers. Results have so far been satisfactory, but we are not complacent and continue to look for new sources of recruitment to tap. The Government have also taken a number of measures to improve retention, including measures to improve the quality of training. In addition we are about to launch a campaign recommended by the national employer liaison committee to promote public awareness of the value of the Territorial Army and the other reserve forces.

Property Services Agency

88. **Mr. Brazier:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps his Department is taking to prepare for the untying of the exclusive contractual relationship with the Property Services Agency.

Mr. Freeman: A small team has been established within MOD to plan the arrangements for dealing with works services after 1 April 1990. They have completed preliminary consultations and commenced their detailed work.

Overseas Students

89. **Mr. Andrew Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many overseas students were trained at defence establishments in 1987.

Mr. Freeman: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Batley and Spen (Mrs. Peacock) on 1 July 1988, at column *223*.

Film-making (Public Relations)

90. **Mr. Summerson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps the services' public relations departments take to assist and advise film and television programme makers in the preparation of items of military history or interest.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: All requests for assistance and advice are considered on their merits. In general, assistance is given when it is compatible with the interests of the Department to do so, subject to suitable resources being available.

Frigates and Destroyers (Orders)

91. **Dr. Michael Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress he has made in achieving better value for money from his frigate and destroyer orders for the Royal Navy.

Mr. Sainsbury: The progress that is being made is demonstrated in the recent order for three type 23 frigates, where the average unit cost of each is about £10 million less than the average of the last three ordered in 1986.

Shipbuilding Industry

92. **Mr. Couchman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what estimate he has made of how many jobs have been secured directly and indirectly in the shipbuilding industry by orders for ships for the Royal Navy in the last 12 months.

Mr. Sainsbury: Orders placed in the last 12 months for three Duke class type 23 frigates, one auxiliary oiler replenishment vessel and four Sandown class single role minehunters (together with some other minor contracts) are estimated to have secured an average of 13,000 to 14,000 jobs directly and indirectly over the next four years or so. The order for a Vanguard class SSBN placed this year will secure jobs for about 5,000 over a similar period.

Combined Cadet Force

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many branches of the Combined Cadet Force are currently functioning in *(a)* maintained and *(b)* independent schools; what numbers of pupils are involved in each case and at what annual cost; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: There are currently 254 detachments of the CCF, of which 58 are in maintained schools, with 6,579 pupils. There are 196 detachments in independent schools, with 38,158 pupils. I regret that it is not possible to provide a cost breakdown between the two categories. Additionally, there are 143 detachments of the ACF in schools, with 4,016 cadets; over one third of these are "closed" detachments limited to pupils of the school.

The CCF is part of the national youth movement and provides a great many young people with the opportunities to develop qualities of good citizenship and the spirit of service. The Government are very conscious of their value and will continue to encourage their well-being.

Home Service Force

Mr. Thorne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the current composition of the Home Service Force in terms of (i) its establishment, (ii) numbers currently recruited and (iii) what weapons and equipment are issued; and what are his plans for expanding the Home Service Force.

Mr. Freeman: The current establishment of the Home Service Force is 4,497; recruited personnel numbered approximately 3,157 as at 31 May 1988. The Home Service Force is issued with standard Army weapons and equipment appropriate to its operational role. It is planned to increase the establishment of the Home Service Force to 5,000 by 1990.

Mr. Thorne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what criteria led to the formulation of the tasks of the Home Service Force; what assessment was made as to the numbers and establishment of a Home Service Force necessary to be able to perform such tasks; and what are the age limits for membership of the Home Service Force.

Mr. Freeman: The Home Service Force is intended to draw on the pool of manpower who have had some prior military training and who therefore can fulfil a useful role with a minimum of training. It was decided that such personnel would best be suited to the home defence role, thus releasing Regular Army and other manpower for other tasks. The establishment selected reflects the numbers that it was assessed, on the basis of the trial conducted in 1982, might be available. Enlistment to the Home Service Force is between the ages of 20 and 50, with a maximum retention age of 60.

Contracts (Profit Formula)

Mr. Patrick Thompson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the report by the review board on its third annual review of the profit formula for Government non-competitive contracts.

Mr. Younger: The Government accept the principal recommendation by the review board in its report that there should be no change in the existing profit formula which has been in operation since 1 July 1987—*Official Report*, 24 July 1987, column 602. Discussions are already taking place between officials and the CBI on other aspects of the board's report. Copies of the report have been placed in the Library.

Members' Correspondence

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the average length of time taken by his Department to respond to correspondence from right hon. and hon. Members during the summer recess.

Mr. Younger: The average length of time taken to respond to correspondence from right hon. and hon. Members during the summer recess should not differ greatly from our normal practice of answering within three weeks. However, allowance must be made for some slight delays owing to summer leave arrangements.

Nuclear Test Victims

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what action he is taking to investigate the claims of the British Nuclear Test Veterans Association that they have discovered malformity in 700 children born to test veterans; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will instruct the National Radiological Protection Board to expand the range of medical conditions included in its next report, for the 10 years commencing January 1984, into the incidence of disease and conditions affecting British nuclear test veterans; if he will ensure that cases of skin disease, depression, genetic disorders, infant mortality, sterility, deformity, miscarriage and still birth will be considered for investigation; and if he will make a statement;

(3) what action he is taking to investigate the causes of infant mortality, deformity, miscarriages and still birth amongst the families of ex-service men who served in the Pacific during the 1950s;

(4) what action he is taking to investigate medical conditions, not related to mortality and cancer, which may have arisen due to ex-service men's exposure to radioactivity during their military service in the Pacific in the 1950s;

(5) what action has been taken to investigate cell scarring in thyroid, liver and intestinal tissues, the reduction of lymphoid cells in blood, overgrowth of lymph tissues in lymph glands and premature aging, as conditions arising from over exposure to ionising radiation among British nuclear test veterans serving in the Pacific during the 1950s;

(6) what action has been taken to investigate cases of temporary or permanent sterility, reduced fertility and hereditary changes in later generations due to changes in chromosome and gene formation, as conditions arising from over-exposure to ionising radiation, among British nuclear test veterans serving in the Pacific during the 1950s;

(7) what action has been taken to investigate cases of bone cell inflammation and bone cell death, as conditions arising from over exposure to ionising radiation, among British nuclear test veterans serving in the Pacific during the 1950s;

(8) what action has been taken to investigate cases of eye cataracts and eye surface burns, as conditions arising over-exposure to ionising radiation, among British nuclear test veterans serving in the Pacific during the 1950s;

(9) what action has been taken to investigate cases of varicose veins as a condition arising from over-exposure to ionising radiation among British nuclear test veterans serving in the Pacific during the 1950s;

(10) what action has been taken to investigate cases of redness, blistering, baldness, ulceration and scarring of the skin, as conditions arising from over-exposure to ionising radiation, among British nuclear test veterans serving in the Pacific during the 1950s.

Mr. Sainsbury: When the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB) was commissioned to undertake its recent study, the conduct of that study was left as a matter for the professional judgment of the NRPB, in consultation with other experts, such as the Imperial Cancer Research Fund. The board decided to rely primarily on mortality as an indicator of health and also used the readily available cancer registration data. In choosing these reliable sources the NRPB recognised the impracticability of attempting to obtain comprehensive data about the wide range of other diseases, the records relating to which are much less complete. None the less, it was recognised from the outset that, if the findings showed cause for concern, other investigations might prove to be necessary.

In the event, the conclusion of the report is that participation has not had a detectable effect on the expectation of life of the participants nor on their total risk of developing cancer. This overall conclusion stands despite the observed higher incidence of certain leukaemias and multiple myelomas in the participants as opposed to the control group, not least because this higher incidence was more marked among participants not present at the time of detonation.

The Government do not therefore accept that there is any justification for further investigation other than the follow-up of mortality and cancer registration data recommended by the NRPB to investigate the incidence of disorders referred to in the questions.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence in how many cases the service medical records of former military personnel who served in the Pacific during the British nuclear tests in the 1950s have been released to their general practitioners.

Mr. Sainsbury: General practitioners are not required to state the specific purpose for which such records are required; thus the information requested is not available.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many service men who took part in British nuclear tests in the 1950s have been consulted and examined by the National Radiological Protection Board as part of their report of the incidence of mortality and cancer in British nuclear test veterans.

Mr. Sainsbury: The mortality and cancer incidence information which was analysed by NRPB was obtained from records held by Office of Population, Censuses and Surveys (OPCS), National Health Service (NHS) central registers and other official records. Individual service men were neither consulted nor examined. As the report acknowledges, a valuable contribution to checks of the validity and completeness of the study was made by various groups and ex-service organisations who supplied lists of names of participants.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if the crew of ships which took part in the Monte Bello tests in 1952 were included in the National Radiological Protection Board report into the mortality and cancer incidence in United Kingdom participants in United Kingdom atmospheric nuclear weapon tests and experimental programmes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: All the Royal Navy ships that participated in the nuclear test programme were identified and their crews included in the NRPB study. It was estimated that a 99 per cent. coverage of Royal Naval personnel had been achieved, as shown in table 5.5 of the NRPB report.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what action has been taken to investigate the complaints of aborigines at Wallatina station who claim that the Totem 1 blast in 1953 which took place at Emu field was the cause of mass sickness and fatalities; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: The evidence presented on behalf of Her Majesty's Government to the Australian Royal Commission, which included substantial new work on theoretical modelling of the path of the fallout, does not support the contention that harm could have been caused to aborigines at Wallatima by the Totem 1 explosion in 1953. The decision to embark on any further investigation is a matter for the Australian Government.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what would be the estimated average mortality rate due to multiple myeloma for the British nuclear test veterans as investigated by the National Radiological Protection Board for the 10 years 1984 to 1994.

Mr. Sainsbury: In the study (on page 86, section 10) the NRPB estimates that during the 10-year period 1984 to 1994 about 30 deaths would be expected from leukaemia and multiple myeloma in the participants and a similar number in the controls, if the men experienced the normal national mortality and cancer rates in England and Wales. Of these 30 deaths, approximately one third are expected to be from multiple myeloma. Of course, some assumptions have been made in obtaining these figures and they are provisional estimates.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will take steps to compensate fully British nuclear test veterans and their families who are suffering from, and have lost relatives due to, multiple myeloma and leukaemia, other than chronic lymphatic leukaemia, following the publication of the National Radiological Protection Board's investigation into the mortality and cancer incidence in United Kingdom participants in United Kingdom atmospheric nuclear weapon tests and experimental programmes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: Former service men or their next-of-kin who believe that their health may have suffered as a result of participation in the United Kingdom nuclear test programme are already entitled to apply to the

Department of Social Security for consideration of a war pension or gratuity. The decision concering the award is one for the Department of Social Security, but it is not necessary for the applicant to prove negligence, and the Department of Social Security will accept claims if it is satisfied that there is reliable evidence of reasonable doubt that the disability suffered is attributable to service.

Maralinga (Radioactivity)

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the extent of contamination at Maralinga, in square acres, to the present date; what weight of plutonium is buried there, whether he has received representations from the Australian Government to decontaminate Maralinga and to remove the plutonium; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: The area at Maralinga where residual levels of surface radioactivity have been measured extends to about 200 square kilometres (50,000 acres). The amount of plutonium in the burial pits does not exceed 20kg and may be much less. The Australian Government have made no request for the United Kingdom to participate in any clean-up operation, but we are providing technical advice and assistance on an agreed basis.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what are the current conditions and contamination level of the Monte Bello Islands, Emu and Maralinga; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: Recent surveys of the Monte Bello Islands show that some small areas of low surface radioactivity remain, and that the minor access restrictions that apply now can probably be removed totally within the next 30 years. I understand that the Australian Government intend to return control of the islands to the Western Australian Government, who have plans to designate the area a nature reserve and marine park. The current condition of the Emu field area is that low levels of surface radioactivity extend to an area of about 10 square kilometres. The highest levels there are considerably lower than the highest levels at Maralinga.

Chemical Warfare Research

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information is available to those currently engaged in chemical warfare research on the extent and implications of Japanese research programmes into bacteriological warfare using prisoners of war during the war of 1941 to 1945.

Mr. Freeman: Those engaged in chemical defence research have access to all such information held by the Government.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will set up an inquiry into the alleged use by the Japanese of prisoners of war for research programmes into bacteriological warfare during the war of 1941 to 1945.

Mr. Freeman: Allegations that British prisoners of war held by the Japanese were used in bacteriological warfare experiments between 1941 and 1945 have been the subject of lengthy and exhaustive investigation. No evidence to substantiate them has been found and there are therefore no plans to institute a further inquiry.

United Kingdom Mobile Force

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the current provision for logistical support for the United Kingdom mobile force; and how much of it is currently provided by the Danish Government.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The United Kingdom mobile force is a self-contained force which incorporates its own logistic support group. Current plans provide for some additional logistic support to be provided for the United Kingdom mobile force by the Danish Government. Details of the plans and amounts of support provided are, however, classified.

Western European Union

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Western European Union has been used as a forum for co-ordinating policy on any other out-of-area issues, apart from mine clearance operations in the Gulf.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Western European Union consultation on out-of-area issues has been confined to matters relating to the Gulf, which includes co-ordination of the joint Belgium/Netherlands/United Kingdom mine countermeasures force. However, one of the objectives of the United Kingdom presidency of the Western European Union is to develop the Western European Union as a forum for co-ordinating European approaches to out-of-area issues generally.

Abbot Self-propelled Howitzer

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when companies were asked to bid for the contract to replace the Abbot self-propelled howitzer; how many bids were received; when the last bid was received; and when he expects to announce the replacement order.

Mr. Sainsbury: A request for quotations for 155 mm self-propelled howitzers was issued to industry in December 1986. Responses were received last year from four companies, but it was necessary to seek further information and revised proposals from some of the companies involved. These revised proposals were received in January this year. Regarding the way ahead, I would refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Berkshire, East (Mr. MacKay) on 8 June 1988, at column *586*.

Main Battle Tank

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions have taken place between his Department and other North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Defence Ministries concerning the collaborative producton of a new main battle tank.

Mr. Sainsbury: There are no current discussions with our NATO allies on any proposals for collaborative production of a new main battle tank. However, we are looking jointly with some allies at the characteristics of tank main armament that may be required in the future.

DROPS

Sir Ian Gilmour: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the answer of 15 July, *Official*

Report, column *377*, what information he has about civilian injuries caused by the DROPS vehicle overturning on 17 June.

Mr. Sainsbury: I have no knowledge of any MOD or other civilian being involved in the incident.

ENVIRONMENT

Planning Inquiries (Kent)

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list all the inquiries into planning applications relating to Kent conducted since 9 June 1987.

Mr. Ridley: Since 9 June 1987 inquiries have been held into the following planning applications, which I have called in for my decision:

Local planning authority	*Proposed development*
1. Dartford Borough Council	Business Park, hotel, residential development, nature reserve and Dartford Northern Bypass on land at Dartford Marshes; joint inquiry into mixed development scheme south east of River Cray and Thames Road
2. Dartford Borough Council	Office development at Hawkley Road/Darenth Road, Dartford
3. Dartford Borough Council	Business Park and residential development in North West Sector, Dartford
4. Dartford Borough Council	Residential development at Darenth Park Hospital
5. Maidstone Borough Council	Motorway service area at M20 at Hollingbourne
6. Rochester upon Medway District Council	Industrial building and airship for the manufacture and testing of microlight aircraft at The Paddock, Borroughs Lane, Middle Stoke
7. Sevenoaks District Council	Two motorway service areas at Pedham Place and West Kingsdown
8. Sevenoaks District Council	Residential development at Croft Road, Westerham
9. Sevenoaks District Council	Residential development at Bowsers Meadow, Westerham
10. Sevenoaks District Council	Industrial and warehousing development at M20/M25 junction, Swanley
11. Sevenoaks District and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Councils	Service area on A21 at Kennards Farm and Barrets Wood, Leigh
12. Shepway District Council	Marina and associated residential development at Princes Parade, Hythe
13. Shepway District Council	Windsurfing centre at New Romney Pit, Greatstone
14. Thanet District Council	Access road to Ramsgate Harbour and associated development
15. Thanet District Council	Retail development at Margate Road, Broadstairs

Planning Applications

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing *(a)* the number and percentage of planning applications refused, *(b)* the number and percentage of refused planning applications going to appeal and *(c)* the number and percentage of appeals upheld by his Department for the district council areas of Cotswold, New Forest and Test Valley boroughs over each of the last five years.

Mr. Ridley: The information readily available is given in the tables.

	Planning applications			*Planning appeals*			
	Received	*Refused*	*Percentage*	*Received*	*Decided*	*Allowed*	*Percentage*
Cotswold District Council							
1984-85	1,365	245	17·9	61	40	13	32·5
1985-86	1,412	254	18·0	51	36	11	30·6
1986-87	1,489	256	17·2	46	38	14	36·8
1987-88				69	35	13	37·1
New Forest District Council							
1984-85	2,277	437	19·2	133	112	36	32·1
1985-86	2,204	414	18·8	141	104	41	39·4
1986-87	2,279	421	18·5	180	141	53	44·7
1987-88				201	168	62	36·9
Test Valley District Council							
1984-85	1,359	180	13·2	57	62	19	30·6
1985-86	1,369	192	14·0	73	54	26	48·1

	Planning applications			Planning appeals			
	Received	Refused	Percentage	Received	Decided	Allowed	Percentage
1986-87	1,581	285	18·0	109	75	37	49·3
1987-88				123	119	48	40·3

Waste Imports

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will state the quantity of toxic waste substances, arising from energy industries, which was imported into the United Kingdom in the last five years for detoxification treatment.

Mr. Moynihan: This information is not held centrally.

Channel Tunnel

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make it his policy to call in any application for planning permission for the construction of a Channel tunnel terminal at the White City.

Mr. Trippier: The White City is one of several sites being considered by BR for a second terminal. I cannot give any commitment in advance of planning applications, if any, that might be submitted to the local planning authority.

Princes Dock, Liverpool

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to reach a decision on the planning application of Erril Holdings for the development of Princes dock, Liverpool; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: This planning application is with Liverpool city council. If Liverpool wished to approve it the council would require special authorisation from the Secretary of State for the Environment as there are proposals to extend the Merseyside Development Corporation which include the site in question. The rights of the applicant to appeal against non-determination or refusal remain intact.

Liverpool Docklands

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many planning applications have been made for the development of Liverpool docklands at the latest date.

Mr. Trippier: Statistics on planning applications are not collected for an area known as Liverpool docklands. For the period 1983-88, the Merseyside Development Corporation has approved 165 applications.

London Docklands (Roads)

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will place in the Library a map showing those roads planned or projected in or adjacent to the area of the London Docklands Development Corporation that are *(a)* to be built and owned by the corporation and *(b)* to be constructed and owned by a local authority or the Department of Transport; and if he will make a statement on the arrangements he expects to make for those in category *(a)* in respect of their servicing and maintenance.

Mr. Trippier: A plan showing LDDC's road proposals will be placed in the Library shortly. The corporation will service and maintain its own roads, until such time as they may be adopted by an appropriate highway authority. Roads constructed by the Department of Transport and the local highway authorities are matters for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport, and for the relevant local authorities, respectively.

Housing and Planning Act 1986

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment which sections of the Housing and Planning Act 1986, remain to be brought into force; and if he will list the dates on which he intends to make them operative.

Mr. Ridley: The following provisions of the Housing and Planning Act 1986 remain to be brought into force: sections 5, 7, 8, 30-38, 42, and 43 and certain minor and consequential amendments and repeals.

These provisions will be brought into force as appropriate, when the necessary preparatory work, including the making of statutory instruments, has been completed. However, the current Housing Bill includes provision to repeal section 7.

Council House Sales

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish in the *Official Report* the number of council-owned dwellings sold under the right to buy for each year since 1980 in *(a)* each London borough and *(b)* England as a whole.

Mr. Ridley: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many council houses and flats in Devon and Cornwall have been sold by each local authority since the Housing Act 1980.

Mr. Ridley: Sales reported by the local authorities are given in the table:

	Houses	Flats
Devon		
East Devon[1]	1,237	38
Exeter	1,218	68
Mid Devon[1]	1,179	4
North Devon	1,080	4
Plymouth[1]	3,818	181
South Hams[1]	922	27
Teignbridge	1,347	18
Torbay[1]	993	10
Torridge	755	13
West Devon[1]	646	8
Cornwall		
Caradon	837	12
Carrick[1]	964	7
Kerrier	749	13
North Cornwall	1,029	11
Penwith[1]	658	20
Restormel	1,001	29
Isles of Scilly[1]	9	2

[1] incomplete data.

Housing (Devon and Cornwall)

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has any information regarding the number of people on housing association waiting lists in each local authority area in Devon and Cornwall.

Mr. Ridley: This information is not collected by my Department.

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the projected building of council accommodation over the next five years in each local authority in Devon and Cornwall.

Mr. Ridley: The only projections centrally available at present are the figures of starts and completions for the years up to 1989/90 provided by the authorities in their 1987 housing investment programme HIP2 returns; these are available in the Library.

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will list the total number of people currently on the council housing waiting lists of each district authority in Devon and Cornwall;

(2) if he will list the total number of empty council housing units in each local authority area in Devon and Cornwall, dividing housing into houses, flats and caravans;

(3) if he will list the total stock of council accommodation currently owned by each district authority in Devon and Cornwall dividing the accommodation into houses, flats and caravans.

Mr. Ridley: The latest available information on the number of households on waiting lists for council housing is for April 1987 and was provided by local authorities in their 1987 housing investment programme returns; the figures appear in column B51 in the "HIP1 All items print", which is available in the Library. Local authorities' criteria for inclusion of names on the waiting lists are not uniform and the frequency of reviewing the lists varies.

The numbers of dwellings owned by each authority in Cornwall and Devon and, of these, the numbers vacant, including any awaiting demolition, appear in columns A11 and A81, respectively, of the same document.

The numbers of houses, flats and bungalows built for each authority with one, two or three bedrooms but not four-bedroomed or other dwellings, appear in "Housing Rents Statistics at April 1987", published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, which is also available in the Library.

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the number of council houses and flats that have been built per year in each local authority in Devon and Cornwall since 1979.

Mr. Ridley: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Poor Housing

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has yet allocated the additional £3 million which he announced on 17 June would be made available to areas of poor quality private sector housing; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley: Letters will be sent shortly to the leaders of the following local housing authorities informing them of the Government's intention to make available additional capital allocations for 1988-89 to assist them tackle their worst areas of private sector housing:

	£ million
Allerdale	0·20
Birmingham	0·40
Blackburn	0·40
Bolton	0·20
Hyndburn	0·20
Pendle	0·10
Rochdale	0·20
Sheffield	0·40
Stoke-on-Trent	0·25
Wirral	0·50

The additional expenditure is expected to be targeted on area schemes involving a mix of clearance, renovation, new build and environmental improvements in partnership with the private sector, housing associations and other agencies. These schemes will complement other Government initiatives, such as Estate Action and housing action trusts, to improve conditions in rundown urban areas, and it is intended that additional resources will continue to be made available in subsequent years, subject to satisfactory progress, to enable programmes to be completed. Discussions are continuing with other housing authorities with a view to expanding the number of schemes next year.

Members' Correspondence

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the average length of time taken by his Department to respond to correspondence from right hon. and hon. Members during the summer recess.

Mr. Ridley: Precise information in the form requested could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. A random sample taken during the 1984 summer recess suggested that the average time taken to reply to right hon. and hon. Members was then approximately 25 days.

Waste Disposal

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what assessment his Department has made of the availability of landfill sites for disposal of household, industrial and toxic waste to the end of the century; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: At present rates of mineral extraction and waste disposal by landfill, rather more void space is created each year than is required for landfill. Not all voids are suitable for use or landfill and they are unevenly spread throughout the country. In general, however, we do not expect there to be a shortage of void space for the disposal of United Kingdom waste.

Local Authorities (Finance)

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the total of loans outstanding on capital account for local authorities in England and Wales at 31 March in each year from 1980-81 to 1987-88.

Mr. Ridley *[holding answer 25 July 1988]:* The figures are based on capital outturn returns submitted by local authorities and relate to England and Wales. Returns for 31 March 1988 are not yet available.

Outstanding Loan Debt for all services on Capital Account

	£ billion
31 March 1981	33·9
31 March 1982	35·9
31 March 1983	38·2
31 March 1984	40·9
31 March 1985	42·2
31 March 1986	44·7
31 March 1987	45·6

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list for each year from 1980-81 to 1987-88 *(a)* the local authority borrowing requirement and *(b)* the public sector borrowing requirement.

Mr. Ridley *[holding answer 25 July 1988]:* The figures requested are as follows. They relate to the United Kingdom.

£ million

	Local authority borrowing requirement	*Public sector borrowing requirement*
1980-81	2,120	12,519
1981-82	−225	8,622
1982-83	87	8,935
1983-84	1,206	9,717
1984-85	2,386	10,100
1985-86	1,670	5,654
1986-87	238	3,436
1987-88	1,465	−3,486

Stray Dogs

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his estimate of the number of unwanted stray dogs destroyed in 1987; and whether he will seek to explore the costs and benefits of free subsidised sterilisation for all dogs whose owners wish it.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I have been asked to reply.

No central record is kept of the number of stray dogs seized by the police, local authorities or others, and so it is not possible to estimate the number of unwanted stray dogs destroyed.

As regards the introduction of free subsidised sterilisation for dogs, we have at present no evidence of any general agreement on the need for such a measure or of any widespread public demand for it.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 27 July 1988

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mortgage Fraud

Mr. Heddle: To ask the Attorney-General what discussions he has had with the chief land registrar with a view to reducing the incidence of mortgage fraud.

The Attorney-General: I have had no discussions with the chief land registrar about mortgage frauds. Such frauds occur in areas of the conveyancing process with which the Land Registry is not directly involved.

Magistrates (Hertfordshire)

Mr. Robert B. Jones: To ask the Attorney-General whether he will list the new magistrates appointed in June 1988 to the Hertfordshire bench, Dacorum division, together with their ages and occupations.

The Attorney-General: Five new justices were appointed by the Lord Chancellor in May 1988 to the dacorum Bench. They were:

Mr. N. G. Crispin, aged 44, a school teacher;
Mrs. C. M. Dogherty, aged 44, a pharmacist;
Mrs. M. Morris, aged 51, a nurse not presently employed;
Mr. D. A. D. Smith, aged 52, a company director; and
Mr. H. K. Wilson, aged 40, a principal scientific officer with the Health and Safety Executive

Social Security Commissioners

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Attorney-General how many inquiries have been raised by personal attendance *(a)* at the London office of the social security commissioners in (i) English cases, (ii) Welsh cases and *(b)* Edinburgh office of the social security commissioners.

The Attorney-General: This information is not recorded.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Attorney-General what assessment he has made of the implications of the proposed transfer of the central DHSS administration to Wales for his Department's policy towards having a resident social security commissioner in Cardiff; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: My noble and learned Friend the Lord Chancellor is responsible for the administration of the office of the social security commissioners. Any changes to the central administration of the DHSS or its location would not affect directly the current administrative arrangements for the commissioners in Cardiff or elsewhere.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Attorney-General how many appeals to the social security commissioners have been heard in Cardiff during 1988; and how many cases from Wales have been dealt with during the same period without an oral hearing.

The Attorney-General: During the first six months of 1988, 26 oral appeals were heard by social security commissioners in Cardiff. Of that number, 22 were appeals by Welsh residents; the claimants in the other four appeals were resident outside Wales but within reasonable travelling distance of Cardiff. During the same period, 37 cases from Wales were disposed of without an oral hearing.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Attorney-General how many staff of the social security commissioner's office are employed in Cardiff permanently to assist visiting commissioners.

The Attorney-General: None. Social security commissioners visiting Cardiff are accompanied and assisted by a member of staff from the office of the social security commissioners in London.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Attorney-General how many social security commissioners are permanently resident in the Edinburgh office; and what is the total number of staff employed in that office.

The Attorney-General: There are three social security commissioners resident in Edinburgh and seven staff employed in the Edinburgh office.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

16 to 18-year-olds

Mr. Grocott: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science, in the latest year for which figures are available, what proportion of young persons between the ages of 16 and 18 years were in full-time education; and what were the corresponding figures for France, West Germany, Japan and the United States of America.

Mr. Butcher: The readily available information for 16 to 18-year-olds is shown in the table. Rates for part-time students, including the youth training scheme for the United Kingdom, are shown where available as they form an important element in certain countries. It is planned to have more timely statistics available later in the year.

Participation in education and training[1] of 16 to 18-year-olds, 1981
Percentage of age group

Country	*Full-time[2]*	*Part-time[1]*	*All education and training*
France	58	8	66
Germany, Federal Republic of	45	[3]40	84
Japan[4, 5]	69	3	73
USA[5]	79	—	79
United Kingdom[6]			
(1981)	32	32	63
(1987)	31	33	64

Source: Statistical Bulletin 10/85.
Education Statistics for the United Kingdom.
[1] Including apprenticeships, YOPs, YTS and similar schemes.
[2] Including higher education for some 18-year-olds.
[3] Including compulsory part-time education for 16 and 17-year-olds in Germany.
[4] Estimated from new entrant and enrolment data; excludes some 18-year-olds, in "special training schools"—which provide certain types of vocational training for those aged 18 and above.
[5] Including private sector higher education.
[6] Includes estimates for those studying only in the evening. Includes private sector full-time further education and training, estimated as 6 per cent.

Chess Associations

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will indicate total value of grants made by his Department to chess associations in England and Wales in each of the last five years; and what he expects it to be in current financial year.

Mr. Jackson: The Department of Education and Science pays grant to the British Chess Federation to assist with its administrative costs and with expenditure incurred in participating in international competitions. The total grants made in the last five financial years are as follows:

	£
1983-84	31,123
1984-85	27,256
1985-86	31,492
1986-87	35,273
1987-88	36,349

The grant allocation for the current financial year is £37,300.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales is responsible for chess associations in Wales.

Training Allowance

Mr. Grocott: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what would be the cost of extending the training allowance payable under the YTS to all those between the ages of 16 and 18 years currently engaged in full-time education, net of the cost of child benefit.

Mrs. Rumbold: After deducting child benefit, the annual cost of paying an allowance at the same rate as YTS training allowances to all 16 to 18-year-olds currently in full-time education is estimated to be £800 million.

National Advisory Council for the Youth Service

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he expects to reach and publish conclusions on the future of the National Advisory Council for the Youth Service; and what representations he has received on this subject; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: My right hon. Friend has received no formal representations about the future of the National Advisory Council for the Youth Service. He expects to make an announcement before the end of the year.

Grenoble Reactor

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if, pursuant to the reply to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy, *Official Report*, 14 June, column *106*, on the ILL multilateral high flux test reactor at Grenoble, the inspection to which it makes reference covers both *(a)* safety issues and *(b)* safeguards issues.

Mr. Jackson: The inspection covers both safety and safeguard issues.

Polytechnics and Colleges

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he has decided which additional institutions to bring into the polytechnics and colleges sector from 1 April 1989; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: Subject to the passage of the Education Reform Bill and any further representations that may be made before I reach a final decision, I have provisionally decided to exercise the power conferred by clause 120(1) to incorporate Buckinghamshire college of higher education, Cambridgeshire college of arts and technology, Salford college of technology and Luton college of higher education as higher education corporations within the polytechnics and colleges sector.

I have provisionally decided not to exercise that power in respect of two other institutions which made provisional applications: Harrow college of higher education and Gloucestershire college of arts and technology.

TRANSPORT

Crash Barriers

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people have died in the past five years because of the absence of a system of separation between the carriageways on dual carriageways.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The absence of a system of safety fencing is not in itself a cause of accidents.

The accident report forms used by the police do not record causes of accidents. Even if details of all candidate accidents were readily available, the number of cases in which fatal consequences would have been avoided had a system of safety fencing been present could only be a matter of speculation.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) when he expects the A1 and A74 dual carriageways to receive complete crash barrier protection;

(2) what extent of the A1 and A74 dual carriageways are protected by crash barriers.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Some 115 miles, 53 per cent., of the A1 is already protected by central reserve safety fencing. A programme of installing central reserve safety fencing on the A1 is under way. It will be completed by the early 1990s.

The A1(M) and the A74 in England have full central reserve safety barrier protection.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he was further plans to increase the extent of crash barrier cover on dual carriageways;

(2) what is his policy on enforcing the erection of crash barriers when planning new dual carriageways.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Yes.

A programme to provide central reserve safety fencing on most existing and new dual carriageway trunk roads was announced on 17 December 1986, at column *537*. Safety fencing on existing and new non-trunk road dual carriageways is a matter for local highway authorities.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is *(a)* the total mileage of dual carriageways covered by crash barriers and *(b)* the percentage that represents the total mileage.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Some 598 miles of trunk road dual carriageway are protected by central reserve safety fencing. This represents 37 per cent. of the total mileage of trunk road dual carriageways.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what distance of dual carriageway is not covered by any form of crash barriers.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Some 1,036 miles of trunk road dual carriageway are now not covered by central reserve safety fencing.

Drunk Driving

Mr. Grocott: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, in the latest year for which figures are available, how many persons have had their driving licence returned to them after a conviction for driving while under the influence of alcohol and, of those, how many were required to produce evidence of education or treatment for alcoholism; and how many were refused the restoration of their licence because of their inability to produce such evidence.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: This information is not available.

Public Expenditure

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will publish a table in the *Official Report*, in the same format as the written reply of 7 July, *Official Report*, columns *687-81*, on receipts classified as charges in respect of his programme expenditure over the years 1982-83 to 1990-91, indicating the receipts in respect of running costs expenditure together with a supplementary analysis indicating, separately, the amounts of receipts in respect of programme expenditure and of running costs expenditure estimated to have been met from other public expenditure programmes.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The table shows receipts in respect of running costs expenditure, none of which is estimated to have been met from other public expenditure programmes. None of the receipts in respect of programme expenditure, which were shown in the written reply of 7 July, at columns *693-94*, is estimated to have been met from other public expenditure programmes.

Receipts in the Department of Transport programme in respect of running costs expenditure

£ million

	1982-83	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*1987-88*	*1988-89*	*1989-90*	*1990-91*
Central Government									
Licensing and testing schemes (receipts from the driver testing and training organisation and from the vehicle inspectorate for support services)	4	5	5	6	7	7	8	8	8
Research and development (receipts in respect of research carried out at the Transport and Road Research Laboratory on repayment terms)	2	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	2
Driver and vehicle licensing (mainly fees for transfer of cherished marks and for duplicate licences)	4	6	6	7	9	10	10	10	11

Notes:
(1) None of these receipts was in respect of payments included in other Departments' running costs.
(2) Figures in the table are consistent with Cm 288.

Infrastructure Investment

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he next intends to meet private sector firms to discuss transport infrastructure investment.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The Secretary of State and I met 40 private sector firms on 18 July and will continue to take forward this initiative.

Association of County Councils

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he last met the Association of County Councils; and what was discussed.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I met representatives of the Association of County Councils at the national annual consultative meeting on 5 July. A wide range of matters relating to roads was discussed. A joint approach for the reduction of road casualties was agreed.

Hell's Angels, Kent

Mr. Speed: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the recent ministerial visit to the Hell's Angels gathering in Kent; and if he will publish the subsequent ministerial correspondence about this event.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Yes. I visited the Hell's Angels 10th Kent custom bike show at Snargate on 8 July. I enjoyed the show and the opportunity to talk to Dr. Maz Harris and the other Hell's Angels who organised the event.

I congratulate the Hell's Angels on raising £2 for charity from every person attending the show.

In my letter to Dr. Harris of 13 July, I said:

"We clearly share much common ground on motor cycle safety even if we don't see eye to eye on all areas. I believe the rest of the weekend went well. If all road users behaved as sensibly and safely as the motor cyclists I saw coming to the Kent show on Friday the roads would be safer for us all.

I was impressed with the smooth running of the event—organisers of major sporting events might have something to

learn from you. I told *The Times* on Friday night that I expected neither arrest nor trouble from the 20,000 bike enthusinsts. I was told 'That's a rash statement .' It was not.

I am giving this letter a fairly wide circulation.

An idea: why don't you approach David Evans MP of Luton Football Club for a Hell's Angel charity game against MPs?"

Dr. Harris, in his reply of 19 July, said:

"The show did indeed go off entirely trouble free and succeeded, with the aid of the Elham Valley Lions Club, in raising over £30,000 for local charities. Nearly 25,000 bikers enjoyed themselves in fine style, their behaviour throughout the event being lauded and applauded by newspapers throughout the area.

I feel strongly that the continuing success of the Kent Custom Bike Show proves that motor cyclists are more than capable of behaving themselves in public if treated with the same degree of respect that is accorded to other groups in our society. One wonders whether or not the trouble which erupts from time to time at the British Grand Prix and similar motor cycle sporting events is not precipitated by the high-handed attitude of the organisers of those events whose sole aim seems to be to fleece their customers as heavily as possible and give them as little as possible in return.

I'm none too impressed with conspiracy theory, but isn't it odd that no motor cycle magazines, apart from Back Street Heroes, publicise the success of the Kent Show as Britain's —or should I say mainland Britain's—premier biking event?

As for your suggestion about arranging a charity football match between a team of Hell's Angels and a team of MPs, I must say that the idea appeals and will follow it up at the earliest opportunity.

Once again, many thanks for your encouraging comments about our show. I look forward to talking to you in the future."

Radioactive Materials (Transit)

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport why information on the incidence of radioactive materials lost in transit over the period 1979 to 1982 is not kept.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: It was not kept centrally. It has been since 1982.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list by date, radioactive content, quantity and transport route each of the six occasions on which medical isotopes have been lost in transit from 1983 to the present.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The radiological consequence of these six losses of medical and industrial isotopes since 1983 is considered to have been minimal. The details are as follows:

1987, an americium-241 source of 11 GBq was lost possibly from a bonded warehouse near Heathrow airport.

1987, a carbon-14 source of 12 MBq was reported by Lufthansa German Airlines to have gone astray at Heathrow airport.

1986, an iodine-125 source of 2·25 GBq was reported by Lufthansa German Airlines to have been lost at its cargo terminal at Heathrow airport.

1985, an iron-55 source of 200 kBQ went missing from a scientific instrument despatched from Clandon Scientific Limited, Aldershot, to its parent company in Finland via Heathrow airport.

1985, five sources were stolen from a locked car in a car park in Lancaster. The items stolen were mainly static eliminators comprising:

(i) Model 703 static meter containing 7400 MBq of tritium.

(ii) Model 210 static eliminator containing 880 MBq of polonium-210.

(iii) Model 315 static eliminator containing 440 MBq of polonium-210.

(iv) Model 205 spot eliminator containing 370 MBq of polonium-210.

(v) Model 902F ionising air gun containing 370 MBq of polonium-210.

1984, a consignment of four industrial sources was washed overboard from an offshore support vessel going from Aberdeen to Dundee Kings North drilling rig. The details of the sources lost were:

(i) An americium-241/beryllium source of 590 GBq.

(ii) An americium-241/beryllium source of 18·5 GBq.

(iii) Two caesium-137 sources each of 55·5 GBq.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if any nuclear materials designated by *(a)* his Department or *(b)* the Environment Directorate General of the European Commission, as nuclear waste are transported within United Kingdom national boundaries by air.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: No.

Motorways (Vehicle Use)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will estimate how many vehicles used each of Britain's motorways in each of the last five years; and if he will express the figures by class of registration.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The figures requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Motorways (Access)

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will state his policy for allowing direct access to motorways.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Our policy on motorways is against allowing direct access to the main carriageway or slip roads from any development other than service areas and related facilities. This was set out in my answer to a question from the the hon. Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd) on 16 November 1987, at columns *405-6*.

Exceptions are made for motorway service areas on land owned by the Department and for maintenance depots. In addition, special consideration may be given to major transport infrastructure requirements, such as airports. Local planning authorities will be directed to refuse planning permission for unacceptable developments.

This policy recognises the importance of special roads as high-speed through routes and the heavy investment in them. It is essential, if they are to realise their design potential, that they should be kept free of accesses, apart from road junctions and the other exceptions stated. In this way, traffic flows and speeds may be maintained and the risk of accidents and interruptions to traffic flow minimised.

Woolwich Ferry

Mr. David Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he is now satisfied that the Woolwich ferry will now be able to provide a regular and reliable service; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I am happy to say that the staff have now agreed the new working arrangements arising from the management review of the ferry. These provide

more efficient staffing and operating schedules. They have now been implemented. A reliable and cost-effective service should now be maintained.

Road Hump Regulations

Mr. Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will review the current road humps regulations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We are currently reviewing the regulations to make a greater diversity of road humps and locations available to local highway authorities. We want to adopt a common sense approach to these regulations so that maximum benefits can be gained from the use of these cost-effective accident reduction measures. We intend to begin consultations with local authorities and other interested organisations in early autumn of this year.

Bridges (Damage)

Mr. Watts: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what consideration his Department has been giving to the problems of damage caused to bridges by overheight road vehicles; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: These problems have been considered by a departmental working party. A copy of its report, "A Strategy for the Reduction of Bridge Bashing," has been placed in the Library.

The working party points out that the bridges mainly at risk are some 3,400 rail over road bridges of less than 16' 6" (5·03 m) in height, most of them on local roads. Bridge strikes can cause not only road casualties, but also death and injury to rail users in cases where the track is dislodged by the strike. In addition, substantial damage to property can occur.

The working party notes that in 1987 an average of some 23 bridge strikes a month were recorded, most of these not having serious consequences. This represents a substantial reduction on the rate 15 years ago. So far, road casualties in the United Kingdom from bridge strikes have been few, and there have been no rail casualties. None the less, there have been a number of bridge strikes which could have led to more serious consequences, and the working party's assessment is that the risk of a strike causing loss of life from a train derailment is of the order of one in 10 years. They identify a package of possible measures for consideration, assuming that it was desired to reduce substantially over five years the incidence of the more serious categories of bridge strike. These include:

(1) improved road signing, including replacement of advisory bridge height signs with mandatory ones, and in particular cases where justified by the risk, installation of infra-red systems which detect overheight vehicles in advance, and trigger display of a sign to the driver;

(2) structural measures to increase the clearance at certain vulnerable trunk road bridges (in the context of the general bridge strengthening programme already announced);

(3) procedures for notifying local highway authorities and the police of movements of vehicles above certain heights;

(4) extensions of requirements for display in drivers' cabs of the height of vehicles, and installation of warning devices on certain vehicles to show when lifting gear is raised;

(5) consideration by British Rail of the installation of emergency telephones in certain cases;

(6) further development of facilities for offering route plans for movements of high vehicles;

(7) advice to licensing authorities to take into account bridge bashing incidents when administering licensing of heavy goods vehicles and their drivers;

(8) legislation to permit erection at bridges of beams and other devices not forming part of their structure which are designed to arrest an overheight vehicle, although the working party considers the practical problems and cost of such devices make them unattractive, at least in the short term.

It will never be possible to eliminate the risks of bridge bashing. The basic problem is one of driver awareness and driver error. The need is to consider ways of increasing this awareness, and reducing the scope for error. The working party's report is a useful contribution to this. We intend in the light of it to improve road signing at our lower trunk road bridges, and to assess case by case whether the risks warrant installation of an infra-red detector system. We intend to consult the local authority associations on the analogous action which local highway authorities might take in relation to local road bridges. An amendment will be made as soon as possible to the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 1981 to enable mandatory instead of warning signs to be installed at bridges without the expense of a traffic regulation order.

The Department also invites licensing authorities to take into account bridge bashing incidents in the exercise of their functions, in so far as this is possible under the present law.

We are already consulting industry on the question of installing warning devices on skips and tipper lorries and will similarly consult bodies representing manufacturers and users on the working party's recommendations for an extension of the requirements for displaying height in vehicle cabs. In addition, the Department will want to seek the views of representatives of users, local authorities and the enforcement authorities about a system of notification for movement of high vehicles. Any new regulatory measures will be taken only if they are justified in the light of both their benefits and the financial burdens they impose on industry, local authorities and regulatory bodies. Decisions on any notification system will need to be considered particularly carefully from this standpoint.

My right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Scotland and Wales will carry out separate, parallel consultations on the working party's recommendations with local authorities in Scotland and Wales. In addition to consulting specific organisations on the working party's recommendations (copies of the report are being sent to them) we would very much welcome other views and suggestions. These should be addressed to: Highways Maintenance Branch, Department of Transport, 2 Monck Street, London SW1P 2BQ. Copies of the report are available from Her Majesty's Stationery Office, priced £6.

Trunk Roads (London)

Mr. Robert G. Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether accident investigation and prevention techniques are being used to reduce casualties on trunk roads in London; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: In 1987-88, using systematic AIP analysis, the Department identified over 100 sites on trunk roads in London where casualties could be reduced by low-cost engineering solutions. It is now organising remedial measures, including anti-skid surfacing, new or improved signs and road markings, better lighting and different signal timings. The estimated first year rate of return for the first 100 sites is 312 per cent.: an estimated reduction of 325 casualties every year.

The systematic AIP approach reveals the common factors in accidents at a location. It also provides a flow of work suitable for bulk purchase contracts.

Last year the savings on such a contract for anti-skid surfacing were approximately £300,000 and effectively halved the cost of treating each site.

Shipping Companies (Crew Relief Costs)

Sir David Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what arrangements he is making to use the power in the Merchant Shipping Act 1988 enabling him to provide financial assistance to shipping companies in respect of their crew relief costs.

Mr. Channon: I am placing in the Library a document entitled, "A Scheme for Department of Transport Assistance with Crew Relief Costs," which outlines the assistance scheme I am introducing under powers contained in the Merchant Shipping Act which received Royal Assent on 3 May.

I am fully aware that the shipping companies face a powerful financial incentive to employ cheaper Third-world crews. It is important for the continuing capacity of the United Kingdom merchant fleet to carry out its vital functions in time of emergency that sufficient United Kingdom ships are manned by British seafarers. The Merchant Shipping Act 1988 contains a provision which enables me to provide assistance towards the cost of flying out and repatriating crews of United Kingdom, Isle of Man or Channel Islands registered ships operating outside the limited European trading area (roughly from Bergen to Cadiz). From 1 September, ship operators will receive reimbursement of approximately half the cost of such journeys undertaken on or after 4 July by seafarers who are ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom, the Isle of Man, the Channel Islands or the Irish Republic.

The availability of assistance should make it more attractive to employ British crews, and I hope that shipping companies will take this into account in reaching decisions on the crewing and flagging of their vessels.

Registration Numbers (Sale)

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what were the results of his Department's public consultation exercise on proposals for the sale of registration numbers; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Channon: The consultation exercise on the sale of attractive registration numbers ended on 31 May, and most major consultees have now responded. Consultation papers were made widely available to the public and special interest groups: 210 responses were received from motoring organisations, motor traders and their representatives, historic vehicles clubs, police representatives and members of the public. Some 80 per cent. of the responses, including almost all of those received from trade and motoring interests, supported the idea of sale in principle. Some 3 per cent. contained objections. In the light of these responses and the general favourable public interest in the consultation exercise, I propose to continue to develop the proposals with a view to the necessary legislation being introduced in due course.

Many respondents, however, expressed reservations about the idea of selling previously issued numbers. This has strengthened my view that the scheme should, initially at least, be restricted to unissued numbers—of which there are more than adequate supplies.

Arundel Bypass

Mr. Michael Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Arundel of 12 April, *Official Report*, column 81, a decision has been reached on the possibility of constructing the Crossbush section of the Arundel bypass in advance of the rest of the scheme.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I am pleased to say that we are going ahead. The case for proceeding with the Crossbush section in advance of the main scheme is acceptable. The necessary work is now under way for publication of draft orders under the Highways Act this autumn.

London Airspace

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has as to how many times in the last year the helilanes into London airspace have been closed without warning to those using them.

Mr. Peter Bottomley *[pursuant to his reply, 23 May 1988, c. 56]:* I want and need to make a correction. Wrong information was given. I apologise.

Advance notice was not given in each of the closures mentioned in my earlier answer. The closures were the subject of telephoned advice at the time of closure.

Only 13 of them were preceded by warning through notices to airmen (NOTAM). The NOTAM action gave very little advance warning.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Overseas Aid

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the value of overseas aid in the current year in real and money terms; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chris Patten: The current year cash planning figure for the aid programme, not including aid administration, is £1,307 million.

Southern Africa

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the level of aid to front-line states in the light of recent developments in southern Africa.

Mr. Chris Patten: I refer the hon. Member to the answer which my right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, gave the hon. Member for Eccles (Miss Lestor) on 13 May at column *250*. We shall continue to maintain aid to the countries of the region at a substantial level.

Overseas Development Administration Annual Review

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he expects to publish the latest edition of the Overseas Development Administration's annual review.

Mr. Chris Patten: The 1987 annual review, which for the first time includes articles from the business and voluntary sectors, is being published today. Copies have been placed in the Library of the House.

PRIME MINISTER

Ministers (Advisers)

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Prime Minister if she will publish in the *Official Report* the terms and conditions of service attaching to political and special advisers to *(a)* herself, *(b)* Secretaries of State and *(c)* Ministers, with particular reference to political activity outside their paid duties.

The Prime Minister: Special advisers are civil servants. They have the same conditions of service, except as regards superannuation and severance, and are subject to the same rules of conduct as other civil servants, with the exception of the rules governing the acceptance of outside appointments after resignation or retirement and certain aspects of the rules on political activities. All the other provisions of the Civil Service pay and conditions of service code therefore apply to them.

There are two areas of political activity where special advisers may be allowed more freedom than other civil servants. With the approval of the Minister they may *(a)* attend party functions and maintain contact with party members; and *(b)* take part in policy reviews organised by the party.

In addition, and subject to the approval of the Minister, special advisers are permitted to undertake all forms of local political activity provided they observe the rule of discretion applicable to civil servants. This does not include local activites in support of national politics.

Political advisers are not civil servants and are not paid from public funds. Although the provisions of the Civil Service code are not generally appropriate, political advisers are required to avoid conflict of interest between their work for Ministers and their private and business affairs.

National Engineering Laboratory

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Prime Minister if she has received any letters in support of the privatisation of the National Engineering Laboratory, East Kilbride; and if she willmake a statement.

The Prime Minister: To date I have received no letters in support of the privatisation of the National Engineering Laboratory, East Kilbride.

EMPLOYMENT

Small Businesses

Mr. David Shaw: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the achievements of his Department and his policies in helping small businesses over the last 12 months compared with the previous 12 months; and if he will publish the performance indicators by which his Department monitors those achievements and the statistical results of such monitoring.

Mr. Fowler *[holding answer, 19 July 1988]:* I am pleased to announce that in 1987 the number of businesses registered for VAT increased by 45,000. This is the largest increase since 1979. In the period 1979 to 1987 the number of businesses registered for VAT has increased on average by more than 500 per week. In 1987 nearly 900 additional businesses were created each week.

Between 1979 and 1987 the number of self-employed people increased by 50 per cent. to 1·9 million. From 1986 to 1987 alone there was an increase of 230,000 self-employed people. These figures show clearly the strength of the small business sector, which has resulted both from the encouragement given to it by the Government and others and from the willingness of individuals to take advantage of the opportunities that exist in the United Kingdom today.

I set out below some of the measures for which my Department has been responsible over the past year.

The Small Firms Service

The small firms service offers advice, information and counselling to small businesses. During 1987-88 the SFS continued to maintain emphasis on counselling established businesses and on supporting and working with other small business advisory services.

On 5 July my right hon. Friend, the Minister of State announced that the national reference book, a database of information sought by small firms used and developed by the small firms service inquiry staff, is now available to other advisory services upon subscription. Statistics about the work of the service in England are set out below:

	1986-87	*1987-88*
Inquiries	283,537	266,174
New counselling cases	27,158	27,259
Counselling sessions	38,210	39,138

The small firms service annual report which was published on 5 July provides further information. Copies are held in the House of Commons Library.

Local Enterprise Agency Support

The Local enterprise agency grant scheme was introduced on 1 April 1986. This is a five year scheme of financial assistance designed to establish a network of viable self-supporting enterprise agencies. In 1986-87 £2,359,960 was paid in grants to 168 agencies. A further £2,713,856 was paid to 186 agencies in 1987-88.

Enterprise Allowance Scheme

Over the past year the scheme has continued to expand. The number of entrants in 1986-87 was 86,715 rising to 106,305 in 1987-88. Provision has been made for 110,000 entrants in 1988-89.

The scheme continues to encourage the formation of viable businesses with the potential for growth and job generation. The most recent survey of applicants showed that of those who received the allowance for a full year, 65 per cent. are still trading three years after start up and, at that point, for every 100 businesses still trading 114 additional jobs have been created.

Loan Guarantee Scheme

This scheme was extended for a further three years in 1986, with the premium payable reduced from 5 per cent. to 2·5 per cent. An evaluation of the scheme has recently been carried out by consultants who are due to report shortly. In addition a telephone survey of current users of the scheme is taking place.

In 1987-88 1,234 loans to a value of £46·23 million were issued. This compares with 1,050 loans to a value of £40·37 million in 1986-87.

In January 1988 simplified administrative procedures were introduced for loans up to £15,000. Since then the rate of applications has increased and is now running at around 200 a month.

Business Expansion Scheme

This scheme was introduced in 1983 and has played an important part in improving the flow of equity finance to small companies. It offers individual taxpayers the opportunity to offset the value of new equity investments of up to £40,000 a year in qualifying unquoted companies against their liability to tax.

In his Budget statement my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced a ceiling of £500,000 on investments under the BES in any one company in any period of 12 months. This will encourage prospective investors to examine smaller companies and gives a clear indication to smaller companies, investors and advisors that the BES is aimed at providing equity finance for smaller businesses.

The Prince's Youth Business Trust

The Department has agreed to match private sector donations to the trust. In 1987-88 £1·5 million was paid to the trust. The Department's contribution is to be used to provide loans to young people setting up in business or expanding an existing business.

Training

Expenditure by the Training Commission (previously the Manpower Services Commission) on small firms training was increased from £18·6 million in 1986-87, benefiting 67,000 people, to £19·3 million, benefiting 107,000 people, in 1987-88.

In April this year the Department published a series of booklets aimed at encouraging graduates into the small firms sector by either starting up their own business or taking up employment in an existing small firm. The Department has continued its support for the Shell technology enterprise programme, placing undergraduates with small firms during the summer holidays.

Inner Cities

As part of the Government's action for cities programme announced on 7 March, new initiatives have been introduced to extend the wide range of help available to new and existing small businesses in inner-city areas and to make services to small firms more accessible.

New offices for the small firms service are planned in Sheffield, Middlesbrough, Blackburn, Wolverhampton, Leicester and Derby; those in Sheffield and Middlesbrough are now open. A new local enterprise agency project scheme commenced on 1 July, establishing a fund of £0·6 million to support local enterprise agency projects to provide special help to inner-city businesses. On 22 June, a raised Government guarantee of 85 per cent. on loans to firms in the 16 inner-city task forces became available under the loan guarantee scheme. New initiatives are also being introduced to promote self-employment and provide extra training and advice for participants on the enterprise allowance scheme.

ACAS

The Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service produced a guide for small businesses entitled "Employing People" which received a Plain English award in 1987.

Health and Safety

The Health and Safety Commission's small firms working group has special responsibility for the interests of small firms. A number of publications aimed specifically at small firms have been produced and distributed by the Health and Safety Executive. The most recent is "Essentials of Health and Safety at Work" a handbook giving practical advice on health and safety problems.

Purchasing from Small Firms

There are regular contacts with other Departments at ministerial and official level to encourage purchasing from small firms. My Department has agreed to fund a post in the central unit on purchasing to promote the opportunities available for small firms. We publish a booklet "Tendering for Government Contracts" which gives guidance on what Government Departments seek to buy and the names and addresses of the relevant contact. My Department also produces its own leaflet "Selling to the Department of Employment" which is widely distributed through DE's small firms centres and regional enterprise units.

YTS (London)

Mr. Cox To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the number of *(a)* men and *(b)* women living in the Greater London area, up to the age of 18 years, who are on YTS.

Mr. Cope: On 30 June 1988, there were 7,743 males and 4,820 females under the age of 18 years participating in YTS in Greater London.

Apprenticeships

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the number of industrial apprenticeships taken up in 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: Information from the youth cohort study indicates that some 94,000 young people in England and Wales who reached minimum school-leaving age in the academic year 1985-86 were undertaking an apprenticeship in spring 1987. This is probably an under-estimate, as those who were unsure of their apprenticeship status have not been included. YTS is now the normal route into work for over two thirds of 16 year old school leavers in Great Britain, and is the basis for many modernised apprenticeships. About 393,000 young people are currently benefiting from the structured, quality training programmes offered under YTS.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Grocott: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment using the same definitions as in the 1981 census, what proportion of men aged 60 to 64 years are economically active, retired and permanently sick, respectively; and what proportion of those economically active are unemployed according to the latest figures which are available.

Mr. Lee: Estimates from the 1987 labour force survey, using as far as is possible the same definitions as in the 1981 census of population, are shown in the table:

Men aged 60-64 years
Great Britain Spring 1987

	Per cent.	Per cent.
All persons	100·0	—
of which:		
economically active	54·6	100·0
retired from paid work[1]	18·4	—
long-term sick or disabled[1]	18·3	—
unemployed[2]	—	10·3

[1]Main reason given for not looking for work in the reference week.
[2]Great Britain labour force definition.

Mr. Grocott: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what, according to the latest estimates, will be the size of the labour force in each of the next 10 years in absolute numbers and as a proportion of the total population.

Mr. Lee: My Department's latest projections of the civilian labour force were published in an article in the March 1988 edition of "Employment Gazette" (pages 117-129), a copy of which is in the Library. This contains projections up to 1995 of the size of the labour force in different age groups, in absolute numbers and as a percentage of the population (the activity rates). Projections beyond 1995 are not available.

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) how many people aged 50 to 54 years, inclusive, have been unemployed for longer than six months *(a)* nationally, *(b)* in the north-east region and *(c)* in the Durham, North-West constituency;

(2) how many people over 55 years have been unemployed for longer than six months *(a)* nationally, *(b)* in the north-east, and *(c)* in the Durham, North-West constituency.

Mr. Lee: The following information is in the Library. The table shows the number of unemployed claimants in the requested age groups who had been unemployed more than six months in the United Kingdom, the north-east (the counties of Cleveland, Northumberland and Tyne and Wear) and the parliamentary constituency of Durham, North-West on 14 April 1988.

Claimants unemployed six months and over—14 April 1988

	Aged 50-54 years	Aged 55 years and over
United Kingdom	149,767	236,578
North-East	10,996	16,156
Durham, North-West constituency	325	519

Mr. Knapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many young people aged 18 to 25 are currently unemployed; what were the comparable figures in January 1986; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: The following information is in the Library. On 14 April 1988 (the latest available date) the number of unemployed claimants aged 18 to 25 years in the United Kingdom was 697,718. The corresponding figure for January 1986 was 1,060,136. This comparison will be affected by seasonal factors. Unemployment among 18 to 25-year-olds has fallen by 30 per cent. over the past two years since April 1986.

Family Statistics

Mr. Squire: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many children aged *(a)* under 16 years and *(b)* under 19 years lived in families where the head of the household was long-term unemployed in 1979 and at the latest date available.

Mr. Lee: Information from the labour force survey indicates that in spring 1987 there were an estimated 723,000 dependent children under 16 and 766,000 under 19 in Great Britain in households whose head was unemployed and had been seeking work for at least a year. In spring 1981, the earliest date for which the corresponding information is available, there were an estimated 330,000 dependent children under 16 and 343,000 under 19 in such households.

Dock Workers

Mr. Jacques Arnold: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the ratio between the number of staff employed by the National Dock Labour Board and the number of registered dock workers in the *(a)* Cumbrian, *(b)* Fleetwood, *(c)* Hull and Goole, *(d)* Bristol and Severn, *(e)* Aberdeen, *(f)* west Scotland, *(g)* east Scotland, *(h)* London, *(i)* south coast, *(j)* Cornwall, *(k)* Plymouth, *(l)* Liverpool, *(m)* Manchester, *(n)* south Wales, *(o)* Middlesbrough and Hartlepool, *(p)* Grimsby and Immingham, *(q)* East Anglia, *(r)* Tyne and Wear and *(s)* Wash ports board areas for each year since 1979.

Mr. Nicholls: I regret the information requested is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Jobcentres and Benefit Offices

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if there are any plans to reduce the number of jobcentres and unemployment benefit offices in towns and rural areas.

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what plans he has to close jobcentres and unemployment benefit offices; how many he expects to close in each of the next five years; what criteria he uses to decide on closure; and what will be the staffing consequences.

Mr. Lee *[holding answer 25 July]:* The network of offices is kept under continuous review. Any proposal to close an office or change the level of service provided in an individual office is put to the Minister responsible for the employment service for approval. In these cases, the Member of Parliament and local interests are given the opportunity to comment.

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give the total number of staff employed in jobcentres and unemployment benefit offices in each of the standard economic regions.

Mr. Lee *[holding answer 25 July]:* The information is available only on the basis of employment services regions, which are not the same as standard economic regions. Details of the actual numbers of permanent staff employed in local offices at 1 July 1988 in each ES region are given in the table.

Region	Full time	Part-time
Northern	1,811	330
Yorkshire and Humberside	2,741	389
East Midlands and Eastern	2,555	391
London and South East	7,052	850
South-West	1,880	250
Wales	1,551	283
West Midlands	2,660	314
North West	4,278	564
Scotland	3,490	441

Note: These figures include some specialist staff not engaged in local office work.

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give the total number of jobcentres and unemployment benefit offices in *(a)* June 1979 and *(b)* now, for each standard economic regon of the United Kingdom; and if he will give the total number of job-centres and unemployment benefit offices opened in each standard economic region in each of the years 1979 to June 1988, inclusive.

Mr. Lee *[holding answer 25 July]:* The information required is not available by standard economic region. However, the numbers of jobcentres and unemployment benefit offices by employment service region on 1 April 1988 are as follows:

Region	Jobcentres	Unemployment benefit offices
Northern	60	66
Yorkshire and Humberside	84	99
East Midlands and Eastern	100	105
London and South-East	255	253
South-West	103	116
Office for Wales	99	120
West Midlands	78	90
North-West	133	156
Office for Scotland	121	153
	1,033	1,158

The information for 1979 is not available.

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has any plans for the closure of jobcentres and unemployment benefit offices; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee *[holding answer 25 July 1988]:* The network of offices is kept under continuous review. Any proposal to close an office or change the level of service provided in an individual office is put to the Minister responsible for the Employment Service for approval. Where a closure or reduced level of service is proposed the Member of Parliament and local interests are given the opportunity to comment.

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether consideration of the future of jobcentres and unemployment benefit offices will involve consultation with local right hon. and hon. Members.

Mr. Lee *[holding answer 25 July 1988]:* It is normal practice in the case of a proposal to close a particular jobcentre or unemployment benefit office or to alter the level of service provided there to give local right hon. and hon. Members the opportunity to comment.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give details of those jobcentres in the Greater Manchester area which are presently being considered for closure; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee *[holding answer 25 July 1988]:* The network of offices is kept under continuous review; any proposals to close an office or change the level of service provided in an individual office are put to the Minister responsible for the employment service for approval. In these cases the Member of Parliament and local interests are given the opportunity to comment. I have no proposals to put to the hon. Member at present.

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has any plans to seek additional funds to keep existing jobcentres open.

Mr. Lee *[holding answer 25 July 1988]:* My right hon. Friend will continue to ensure that all the activities which this Department needs to carry out are adequately funded.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Police Vehicles (Unleaded Petrol)

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list for each police authority for which he has authority the number of motor vehicles held by each, and the number that have been converted to run on unleaded petrol.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The total number of vehicles, excluding launches and aircraft, held by each force in England and Wales at 31 December 1987 was as follows:

Force	Number of vehicles
Avon and Somerset	668
Bedfordshire	198
Cambridgeshire	283
Cheshire	428
City of London	68
Cleveland	217
Cumbria	283
Derbyshire	264
Devon and Cornwall	609
Dorset	236
Durham	278
Dyfed-Powys	197
Essex	578
Gloucestershire	254
Greater Manchester	1,138
Gwent	160
Hampshire	805
Hertfordshire	381
Humberside	409
Kent	715
Lancashire	520
Leicestershire	354
Lincolnshire	258
Merseyside	704
Norfolk	289
Northamptonshire	262
Northumbria	561
North Wales	295
North Yorkshire	325
Nottinghamshire	371
South Wales	564
South Yorkshire	520
Staffordshire	338
Suffolk	253
Surrey	342

Force	Number of vehicles
Sussex	637
Warwickshire	222
West Mercia	510
West Midlands	1,057
West Yorkshire	937
Wiltshire	240
Metropolitan[1]	3,972
Total	21,700

[1] As at 31 March 1988.

Records of police vehicles using unleaded fuel are not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Equal Opportunities

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many and what percentage of the part-time members of staff and 21 sets of job sharers employed in his Department are women; and how many and what percentage are from ethnic minorities.

Mr. Hurd: There are 1,213 part-time members of staff in the Home Office, of whom 953 (78·6 per cent.) are women. All 21 sets of job sharers are women. Of the part-time staff who responded to the ethnic surveys, 26 (3 per cent.) described themselves as members of an ethnic minority.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many and what percentage of the members of staff in his Department who are on flexible working hours are women and from ethnic minorities, respectively.

Mr. Hurd: The information requested is not available centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what details of his equal opportunities policies related to staff were given to the National Association of Community Relations Councils and when; and whether he will place a copy of the document containing such details in the Library.

Mr. Hurd: Information about the equal opportunities policy was given orally to the National Association of Community Relations Councils at a meeting at the Immigration and Nationality Department in January. A representative of the NACRC has since visited IND and has discussed a number of subjects, including our equal opportunities policy.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which members of ethnic minorities have addressed internal training courses in his Department; and when.

Mr. Hurd: Records of individuals who have addressed training events are not kept in a way which identifies their ethnic origins. However, over the past 12 months, more than 20 courses or seminars are believed to have been addressed by ethnic minority speakers from outside the Department. More than that have been addressed by ethnic minority members of staff but only a minority of them in connection with equal opportunities.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in what quasi-governmental bodies or other organisations he has authority to request or require the carrying out of ethnic monitoring exercises in accordance with the code of the Commission for Racial Equality; and what ethnic monitoring exercises have been carried out by each such department.

Mr. Hurd: Those non-departmental public bodies and other organisations sponsored by the Home Office which are responsible for the recruitment and personnel management of the staff they employ are encouraged to be equal opportunities employers, and to pursue practices in accordance with the codes promulgated by the Commission for Racial Equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission. No central records are held of ethnic monitoring and equal opportunities exercises carried out by them. Those bodies which are staffed by Home Office personnel have been included in the Civil Service regional surveys.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the equal opportunities officer for the prison service and for the rest of his Department, respectively, is female or a member of an ethnic minority or both.

Mr. Hurd: The equal opportunities officer for the prison service is male; the others, for the rest of the Department, female. Both are white.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which advertisements have been placed by his Department in the ethnic or local press; and when.

Mr. Hurd: Over the past few years my Department has placed a range of advertisements, seeking clerical and specialist staff, immigration officers and prison officers, in papers likely to have a high ethnic minority readership.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department by whom the continuous examination of recruitment, training and promotion is being carried out to see what further steps might usefully be taken to ensure equal opportunities; when formal meetings have been held in respect thereof; and where and with whom.

Mr. Hurd: Staff in the establishment department and prison department directorate of personnel and finance will continue to assess the results of the monitoring exercises and to consider, with others responsible for recruitment, the scope for further action. Meetings within the Home Office on the monitoring exercises have included discussion in the equal opportunities sub-committee of the departmental Whitley Council. Monitoring methods, the use of data, and action likely to promote equal opportunities, have also been discussed with other Departments, and at the joint working party on race relations.

Ethnic Monitoring

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what meetings have been held with ethnic minority community and church leaders in connection with his efforts to promote greater racial equality employment within his Department; and when.

Mr. Hurd: Members of staff with responsibility for race relations have continuing contacts with black-led

Churches and other ethnic minority communities. These provide occasions for discussion about employment in the Civil Service. The prison department has had meetings in 1986 and 1987 with Church and community leaders.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many and what percentage of the respondents to his monitoring exercises who stated that they were of ethnic minority origin were in grades 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7, respectively.

Mr. Hurd: Thirty members of staff in these or equivalent grades, mainly at the lower end of the range, described themselves as of ethnic minority origin. This is nearly 2 per cent. of the respondents in these grades.

Recruitment

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what were the results of each of his Department's recruitment schemes since October 1987; by whom these are being assessed; when he expects to reach firm conclusions; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: We aim to reach initial conclusions on the basis of the first year's experience on monitoring recruitment schemes by the end of the year.

Prisons

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take action to ensure that prisoners at Durham prison get clean underwear more than once every four weeks.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: At Durham prison prisoners are issued with two sets of clean underwear each week. I understand that difficulties with supplies have occasionally resulted in clean underwear not being available immediately after bathing, but in that event prisoners have been able to collect a change of underwear within a few days.

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many long-term prisoners are there in Durham prison; and what is the maximum number laid down in the relevant regulation.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: On Friday 22 July Durham prison held 149 adult male prisoners who had been sentenced to over four years' imprisonment and 36 female prisoners and 20 young offenders who had been sentenced to over three years' imprisonment. The number of long-term prisoners held in the prison is not governed by regulation.

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many toilets are there in the prison wings at Durham; how many prisoners and staff they cater for; how many toilets there are in the new administration block; and how many they cater for.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The information requested is as follows:

Wing facilities

	WCs	*Urinals*
For inmates	47	47
For staff	8	5

As at 22 July 1988, there were 1,138 inmates in Durham prison and 200 members of staff were engaged on wing duties.

Administration unit facilities

	WCs	*Urinals*
Female	3	—
Male	3	3

As at 22 July 1988, there were 41 staff employed in the administration unit.

Mr. Irving: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many baths, showers, toilets and urinals are available for inmates at Bedford prison.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The information requested is as follows:

Facilities	*Numbers available to inmates and in use*
Baths	9
Showers	18
WCs	37
Urinals	31

Forensic Science Service

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will give details of his proposals for restructuring the Home Office forensic science service, including *(a)* the grading of director posts, *(b)* the number of senior scientists at grade seven level, *(c)* the average grade of assistant court going officers, and *(d)* whether there are likely to be any compulsory redundancies; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Department is discussing with the Institution of Professional Civil Servants a wide range of proposals for enhancing the effectiveness of the forensic science service and improving its efficiency. We expect to receive these proposals shortly and my noble Friend will write to the hon. and learned Member when we have considered them.

Citizenship

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the average time between the arrival of an application for British citizenship at Lunar house, Croydon, and its being opened.

Mr. Renton: Applications for citizenship are currently being opened within three working days of receipt. On 25 July there were 90 packages containing applications for citizenship waiting to be opened which had been received since 22 July.

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the average time taken to deal with applications for British citizenship made to his Department.

Mr. Renton: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to a question from the hon. Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden) on 20 July 1988 at column *650*.

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications for British citizenship have been received by his Department; how many applications were outstanding as at 30 June; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: I refer the hon. Member to my replies to the hon. Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden) on 20 July, at column *650*, and to the hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) on 25 July.

Immigration (Edinburgh Airport)

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many immigration cases were dealt with at Edinburgh airport in each year from 1981 to 1987.

Mr. Renton: The information is not available in the form requested.

Immigration Officers

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the numbers of immigration officers employed at each point of entry into the United Kingdom.

Mr. Renton: The number of immigration officers, including management grades, employed at each point of entry into the United Kingdom as at 1 July 1988 was as follows:

District and Port	*Assistant Chief Inspector*	*Inspector*	*Chief Immigration Officer*	*Immigration Officers*
Heathrow				
Terminal 1	1	4	17	81·50
Terminal 2	—	4	20	128
Terminal 3	1	6	30	199
Terminal 4	1	5	20	111
Luton	—	1	3	18
Gatwick				
South Terminal	1	4	18	130·50
North Terminal	—	2	11	64
Metropolitan				
London City Airport	—	—	1	6
Gravesend	—	—	1	7
Scotland and Northern Ireland				
Aberdeen	—	—	1	5
Belfast	—	—	1	5
Edinburgh	—	—	1	5
Glasgow	—	1	2	16
Prestwick	—	—	1	6
North East				
Hull	—	—	2	12
Immingham	—	—	—	3
North Shields	—	—	1	8
Newcastle	—	—	1	7
Leeds/Bradford Airport	—	1	1	7
Stockton	—	—	—	6
North West				
Manchester	—	1	4	31
Liverpool	—	—	2	11
Preston	—	—	—	1
Midlands				
Birmingham	—	1	5	24
East Midlands Airport	—	—	2	10
East Anglia				
Harwich	—	1	4	32
Great Yarmouth	—	—	2	2
Felixstowe	—	—	—	12
Norwich	—	—	—	4
Southend	—	—	—	4
Stansted	—	—	1	8
South East 1				
Folkstone	—	—	5	26
South East 2				
Dover East	1	2	15	112·50
South East 3				
Dover West	—	2	6	39·50
Ramsgate	—	—	2	14
Dover Hoverport	—	—	3	16
Sheerness	—	—	3	10
Southern				
Southampton	—	1	2	13

District and Port	Assistant Chief Inspector	Inspector	Chief Immigration Officer	Immigration Officers
Portsmouth	—	—	4	25
Hurn	—	—	—	3
Newhaven	—	—	4	19
South West				
Cardiff	—	1	1	5
Cardiff Airport	—	—	—	4
Bristol	—	—	—	4
Avonmouth	—	—	1	4
Plymouth	—	—	1	6
Swansea	—	—	—	2
Milford Haven	—	—	—	1
Falmouth	—	—	—	1
TOTAL	5	37	199	1,269

Incident (Kensal Green)

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to what steps have been taken to identify the owners and whereabouts of the cars referred to in the article by Jonathan Taylor on page 27 of the issue of *The Independent* dated 21 July; and whether those concerned in the affair have been apprehended.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that at the time of the incident the victims were unable to provide descriptions of the alleged assailants or registration numbers of their cars. However, the police are contacting Mr. Taylor to see whether he has information which might assist the investigation.

Pentonville Prison

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many unconvicted prisoners have been held in Pentonville prison for more than two years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: On 31 March 1988 one unconvicted prisoner in Pentonville prison had been held there for more than two years.

Hong Kong (Death Penalty)

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make it his policy, before approving the extradition of any person to Hong Kong, to seek an assurance from the Governor of Hong Kong that the death penalty will not be carried out on that person; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: Section(4) of the Fugitive Offenders Act 1967 provides discretion to refuse the surrender of a fugitive accused or convicted of an offence not punishable with the death penalty in Great Britain, if the death penalty could be imposed in the requesting Commonwealth country or dependency. It is the policy in such cases to seek an assurance, before surrendering the fugitive, that the death penalty will not be carried out. In the case of the return of a fugitive to Hong Kong such an assurance would be sought from the Governor.

Broadcasting Standards Council

Mr. Oppenheim: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he plans to announce the appointment of the deputy chairman and members of the Broadcasting Standards Council.

Mr. Hurd: I am pleased to be able to confirm that Miss Jocelyn Barrow, OBE, has agreed to become the deputy chairman of the Broadcasting Standards Council. She will take up the appointment later in the year, following her departure from the BBC board of governors.

I am also pleased to confirm that Dr. Jean Curtis-Raleigh, the Rt. Rev. W. J. Westwood, Bishop of Peterborough, Mr. Richard Baker, OBE, Mr. Alf Dubs and Dr. R. Brinley Jones have all agreed to become members of the council.

I shall announce details of the complete membership of the council as soon as possible.

Hungerford (Shootings)

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether he has received the report of Her Majesty's inspector of constabulary on the Hungerford incident; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: I have received the report of Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary and I have today placed in the Library a summary of it which includes all his conclusions and recommendations. Most of these are for chief officers to consider and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary will be bringing them to the attention of the Association of Chief Police Officers for this purpose. Some of the recommendations in relation to communications will be pursued by the Home Office police department science and technology group. Recommendations concerning firearms law are being considered in the context of the legislative changes proposed in the Firearms (Amendment) Bill. The recommendations which touch on the police use of firearms and in particular the use of armed response units will be considered by the Home Office working party on police use of firearms.

Civil Defence College

Mr. Sayeed: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has reached any conclusions on the review of the Civil Defence College.

Mr. Hurd: Yes. A document has today been placed in the Library setting out the ground covered by the review and the decisions which I have taken as a result.

The college will have a greater analytical and developmental role in civil defence policy, within the framework of Home Office policy objectives. It will concentrate on training at senior level. The numbers of general courses will be reduced and replaced by workshops for civil defence planners. The college will continue to advise and assist local authorities with their training at local level. Some limited development in planning for peacetime emergencies within the framework established by the Civil Protection in Peacetime Act 1986 will be initiated. There will be new arrangements for liaison and advisory groups on which the local authorities and their staff will be represented. The co-ordination of volunteer effort in civil defence will be further examined.

The work of implementing these changes will now be taken forward by my officials. There will be full discussions with the local authority associations, the professional organisations and the trade union side of the Home Office departmental Whitley council as the work progresses.

WALES

Housing

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish in the *Official Report* a summarised housing revenue account consistent with table 17.1 of Cm. 288-II, for each of the years 1982-83 to 1990-91 for *(a)* Welsh local authorities, *(b)* new town development corporations in Wales and *(c)* housing corporation-financed housing in Wales.

Mr. Grist: For Welsh local authorities for the years 1982-83 to 1985-86 the requested information can be found at table 63 of "Welsh Housing Statistics 1987", a copy of which can be found in the Library of the House. Revised figures for 1986-87 and provisional figures for 1987-88 on the same basis are as follows. Figures for later years are not available.

The information for new town development corporations and the Housing Corporation for the same years can be found at table 64 of the same publication which shows expenditure from 1982-83 to 1985-86. Revised figures for 1986-87 and provisional figures for 1987-88 are also shown in the following table:

Housing Revenue Account: Income and Expenditure

(£ thousands)

	1986-87	*[1]1987-88*
Income		
Unrebated rent of dwellings	227,098	232,744
Net rent of land and building other than dwellings	2,314	2,376
Government subsidy	8,698	11,762
Contributions from other local authorities	239	250
Mortgage interest from former tenants	13,311	12,426
Interest from unapplied capital receipts	19,205	18,843
Contributions from the General Rate Fund	2,318	2,369
Administration of rent rebates scheme	2,998	3,970
Other (excluding rent rebates)	11,815	11,823
Other income—Total	287,996	296,563
Expenditure		
Supervision and management:		
General	25,385	28,083
Special	15,999	17,844
Repairs and maintenance	88,213	92,754
Debt charges:		
Repayment of principal	23,481	25,452
Interest on outstanding loan debt	122,578	132,638
Capital expenditure met from revenue:		
Revenue contributions to capital outlay / Other	4,453	4,016
Transfers to General Rate Fund	1,448	1,516
Other Expenditure	4,405	5,135
Total	285,962	307,438
Dwelling in HRA at end of March	253,000	248,000

[1] Provisional.

Public expenditure on housing

(£ million)

	1986-87	*[1]1987-88*
Housing corporation:		
Gross loans and grants to housing associations	51·5	64·5
Receipts	−5·1	−7·1
Total net Housing Corporation expenditure	46·4	57·4
New towns:		
Gross expenditure:		
Land	—	—
New dwellings	0·6	0·1
Renovations	—	—
Total new towns gross expenditure	0·6	0·1
Receipts:		
Sales	−1·4	−5·5
Repayment of sums outstanding on sales of dwellings	−0·5	−0·2
Total new towns receipts	−1·9	−5·7
Total new towns expenditure	−1·3	−5·6

[1] Provisional.

Lliw Valley Borough Council

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give consideration to the designation of part or the whole of the area of Lliw valley borough council as an inner urban area.

Mr. Grist: The status of all Welsh districts is kept under regular review. At present, however, there is not sufficient justification to designate Lliw valley.

Hospices

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list hospices for the terminally ill in Wales, by county, indicating the amount of public money paid to these in the last five years.

Mr. Grist: This information is not held centrally.

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make further funds available to health authorities in Wales for the provision of hospices for the terminally ill; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: Within their overall financial allocations it is for individual health authorities to decide on the resourcing of services in the light of specific local need.

Social Science Research

Mr. George To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much has been spent by his Department in each of the

past five years on social science research; what percentage this constitutes of total departmental expenditure and of the Department's research budget; and how much of the research has been undertaken *(a)* within his Department, *(b)* by universities and polytechnics and *(c)* by independent research organisations.

Mr. Peter Walker: I shall write to the hon. Gentleman and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Nurses' Pay

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) if he will allocate more funds to Clwyd health authority to enable the authority to meet the nurses' wages awards; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will publish his latest estimate of the likely full percentage overall pay increase for the nurses' pay award for each of the health authorities in Wales; and if he will make a statement;

(3) if he will meet Clwyd area health authority to discuss the financial implications of the nurses' pay award; if he will grant the Welsh area health authorities £10 million extra cash to meet the nurses' pay award; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: Responsibility for implementing the new nurses' clinical grading structure rests with health authorities; until the outcome of that exercise is completed the percentage increase for each authority cannot be known for certain. The review body estimated that the overall effect would be to add 14·5 per cent. to the pay bill. This, together with the costs of implementing the other review bodies' awards (for doctors, dentists and professions allied to medicine) is estimated to be £33·366 million—after taking account of the allowance for pay and price inflation already in health authorities' allocations for this year.

I cannot comment on the need for additional funds until the implementation of the new grading structures has been completed.

Airey and Unity Houses

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) how many *(a)* Airey type and *(b)* Unity type houses exist in Alyn and Deeside District council area; what is the estimated cost of reconstituting each of them by type; and if he will make a statement as to when he expects these houses to be repaired;

(2) if he will increase grants to local authorities in Wales to ensure the priority repair of Unity and Airey type houses; and if he will make a statement;

(3) if he will increase the amount of grants to Alyn and Deeside council to enable the housing authority to meet its commitment to repair Airey houses and Unity type houses under part XVI of the Housing Act 1985; how much has already been granted for the years 1987-88, 1988-89 and 1989-90; and if he will make a statement;

(4) what is the average grant given to reconstitute Airey type houses in Alyn and Deeside; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: I understand that there is a total of 54 Unity and 39 Airey dwellings in the public and private sectors in Alyn and Deeside. For those dwellings in the private sector the provisions of part XVI of the Housing Act 1985 makes assistance available for eligible owners by way of reinstatement grant or repurchase. Such assistance will be available for eligible owners of Airey and Unity dwellings until 30 November 1994. Average costs for the repair of such dwellings are not held centrally but national expense limits for eligible owners have recently been reviewed and are currently set at:

	£
Unity one storey	17,000
Unity two storey	23,000
Airey	27,000

For those dwellings in the public sector we have agreed with the local authorities that it should be for them to determine the priority and form of treatment they think most appropriate.

For the private sector we have to date made available more than £30 million to assist local authorities with their obligations under part XVI of the Housing Act 1985.

For the financial years 1985-86 and 1986-87 all bids for such resources were met in full. For 1987-88 one half of such bids were met. This represented £50,000 for Alyn and Deeside district council. A reserve was, however, held against which further bids could be made by those local authorities which could demonstrate contractual commitments. For the current financial year authorities facing exceptional difficulties have again been able to take advantage of a reserve held, over and above main allocations. Alyn and Deeside district council has not made any bids against these resources. In common with all other Welsh local authorities, Alyn and Deeside district council will shortly be submitting its 1989-90 housing strategy and investment programme to the Department, which will be considered in the light of resources available. I cannot at this stage anticipate what allocation will be made for next year.

Small Businesses

Mr. David Shaw: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the achievements of his Department and his policies in helping small businesses over the last 12 months compared with the previous 12 months; and if he will publish the performance indicators by which his Department monitors those achievements and the statistical results of such monitoring.

Mr. Peter Walker *[holding answer 19 July 1988]:* This Department attaches high priority to the promotion of enterprise and to helping small businesses; a number of specific local initiatives have been directed at this. Both the Department and its sponsored bodies monitor and evaluate their programmes in order to assess their effectiveness. Performance indicators contribute to this process and some of these appear in the public expenditure White Paper and the annual reports of sponsored bodies:

Number of clients other than those attending start up courses provided with assistance

	Number
Start-Up Clients	
1986-87	1,600
1987-88	1,900
Drive Projects	
1986-87	[1]28
1987-88	[2]48

	Number
Mid Wales development grants	
1986-87	[3][4]29
1987-88	[3][5]34

[1] Total assistance offered £215,000.
[2] Total assistance offered £278,000.
[3] Mostly small businesses.
[4] Total grants offered £641,337.
[5] Total grants offered £1,102,180.

Training Commission

The Training Commission in Wales continues to focus its adult training programme to take account of small firms training needs. In 1987-88 financial year the commission spent £1,026,399 in Wales in assisting 6,816 people from September this year. Employment training, which is shortly to absorb the present training programmes for unemployed adults, will provide a comprehensive and flexible training programme aimed at providing the skills unemployed people need and employers want.

Advice and Information

We have made it a priority to improve the help available to small businesses and the self-employed through the small firms service, local enterprise agencies, jobcentres, and the many other public and private-sector sources of advice. Last October we launched the Gateway Network as a means of bringing together all these bodies to work co-operatively; last month we announced that the major banks in Wales had joined the Network. Work is in hand to establish a pilot "one-stop shop" in the Merthyr Tydfil area to facilitate the dealings that new businesses have to undertake because of regulatory requirements.

Small Firms Service

The Welsh Development Agency (WDA) administers the small firms service in Wales, which has continued to respond to a high level of inquiries. The figures for the latest two financial years are:

	1986-87	*1987-88*
(i) Enquiries	38,808	42,869
(ii) Business counselling—first interviews	7,698	8,365
(iii) Business counselling—total interviews	8,689	9,924

Local Enterprise Agencies

The Department takes an active role in encouraging the development of local enterprise agencies and provides funding via the WDA for core activities and special projects. As part of my recently announced programme to revitalise the South Wales valleys, the Department will seek to strengthen the network of enterprise agencies and to provide for all parts of the area to be served by one. Moreover, the intention is to ensure that these agencies are of the highest quality and constitute the best enterprise agency system in the United Kingdom.

Local Link: Local Investment Initiative

We have just launched this new experimental scheme in the Bridgend area. It aims to increase the links between small firms looking for investment and investors who are willing to put money into business ventures in their own community.

Regional Enterprise Grant

This scheme, launched in April 1988, aims to encourage very small firms employing fewer than 25 people to invest and innovate. It has been generally well received. Despite a slow start the number of applications has picked up and is now showing an encouraging upward trend. The total number of applications received to date is 63 and they have a total value of approximately £710,000.

The Business Improvement Services Scheme

This was launched in 1984 and is directed at smaller companies—those employing 200 or less. It aims to encourage the development of new and existing businesses in those areas of Wales affected by the rundown in the steel industry. The scheme is a European regional development fund initiative with a total of about £9·2 million being allocated to Wales (of which £2·4 million is from the United Kingdom Government) for the period between December 1984 and December 1988. The scheme provides grants of between 55 per cent. and 70 per cent. to encourage eligible firms (which may be involved in most manufacturing and some service sector activities) to obtain specialist consultancy advice, develop new products and processes or research new markets. Over 850 offers of grant totalling nearly £3 million were made in the 12 months to 30 June 1988. This compares with just under 600 offers totalling £1·5 million in the 12 months to June 1987.

Enterprise Initiative Consultancy Scheme

Small businesses are the main target of the enterprise initiative consultancy scheme (administered by the Welsh Development Agency) which was launched in January of this year. There has been a very healthy response to the scheme in Wales. By 8 July, 472 applications had been received, of which 243 had been referred to the scheme contractors for allocation to consultants. There are of course no directly comparable figures for last year. The progress of the consultancy scheme is carefully monitored according to the guidelines established by the Department of Trade and Industry.

Regional Selective Assistance, Regional Development Grant

Small businesses have also taken advantage of the help available under more general industrial support schemes, principally regional selective assistance and regional development grants (applications for which ceased to be accepted after 31 March 1988). Between 1 July 1987 and 30 June 1988, 86 offers of assistance worth £6,248,000 were made to businesses and organisations employing fewer than 200 under the regional selective assistance scheme, compared to 78 offers worth £5,719,000 during the previous 12 months. For regional development grants, the equivalent figures were 1,088 offers worth £27,831,000 for 1 July 1987 to 30 June 1988 and 900 offers worth £26,167,000 for the previous 12 months.

The Valleys: A Programme for the People

The new programme for the South Wales valleys launched on 14 June 1988 includes a 15-point programme designed to encourage new and small businesses in the area. This covers additional investment support including two new loan schemes introduced by the WDA for small and very small businesses, the provision of more small factories and workshops, strengthened provision for enterprise training, improved advisory services and action to improve the standard of retailing.

The Craft Initiative

This initiative is designed to provide a comprehensive, professional and effective means of promoting the Welsh craft industry and its products and ensuring that

craft-oriented businesses, both large and small, play their full part in the economic regeneration of Wales. The new co-ordinated package of assistance now available to Welsh craft businesses is head and shoulders above that available elsewhere.

Wales Tourist Board

In 1987-88 the Wales Tourist Board offered some £2·5 million of assistance towards 114 projects, estimated to generate £17·1 million private sector investment and create 417 new jobs. The greater part of such assistance was offered to small businesses, with the board offering streamlined processing for small projects. This facility is of particular value to small and new businesses, as are the advisory and marketing support offered by the board within the Principality.

The board has recently launched its framework development strategy highlighting opportunities for development for businesses of all sizes within the Principality, and further extending special schemes of assistance of particular value to small businesses.

Mid Wales Development (MWD)

MWD provides assistance to small businesses within its area; achievement for the years 1986-87 and 1987-88 are as follows:

Start-up courses—Number attending

Year	*Number*
1986-87	339
1987-88	631

Enterprise Allowance Scheme

The enterprise allowance scheme in Wales continues to be a success. The number of entrants in the last two financial years were as follows:

Year	*Number*
1986-87	5,639
1987-88	6,500

It is estimated that some 7,000 people will enter the scheme in the 1988-89 financial year. The results of a survey in March 1988 showed that of those that received an allowance for a full year, 74 per cent. were still trading 18 months after start-up, and for every 100 of these businesses, 71 additional jobs have been created.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Borrowing

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each year since 1970 the public sector borrowing requirement, the increase in the private sector borrowing requirement and the amount of new money created by the lending institutions and the public sector, respectively.

Mr. Lilley: Figures for the public sector borrowing requirement (PSBR) are published in *Financial Statistics*, table 2.6. Chart 2.3 of the Financial Statement and Budget Report shows private borrowing as a percentage of GDP since 1974-75, where private borrowing is defined along similar lines to the PSBR. Recent figures for bank and building society lending, and public sector counterparts to broad money, are available in table 11.7 of *Financial Statistics*. Figures for earlier years are available from the Bank of England on request.

Rents

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his forcast of *(a)* the increase in rent income in 1989-90 as a result of the relaxation of rent controls, *(b)* the amount which will be subject to tax and the expected yield and *(c)* the extra amount which the Exchequer will pay out to tenants by way of rent relief.

Mr. Trippier: I have been asked to reply.

What the difference will be between rents of lettings to which rent regulation no longer applies and rents for lettings on regulated tenancies is too uncertain at this stage for worthwhile forecasts to be made of the additional tax yield and additional expenditure on housing benefit.

Life Insurance and Pensions

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* figures for each year since 1979 the net increase in the amounts available for investment of life assurance and pension schemes to the nearest £ million; and if he will provide a forecast for 1987 and for 1988.

Mr. Maude: I have been asked to reply.

Figures for total net investment by the long-term funds of insurance companies and self-administered pension funds (excluding net investment by pension funds in insurance-managed funds) are as follows for the years 1979 to 1987:

	£ million
1979	10,100
1980	11,744
1981	13,533
1982	15,201
1983	15,957
1984	17,668
1985	18,089
1986	20,027
1987	21,086

Note: There are some breaks in the series due to definitional changes. The main ones are between 1983 and 1984 and between 1984 and 1985.

A forecast for 1988 is not available.

Credit Control

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will make it his policy to impose selective controls on credit by requiring banks and other lending institutions to deposit non-interest bearing cash into the Bank of England as a proportion of their advances for specified purposes or for other than specified purposes.

Mr. Lilley: No.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

British Steel Corporation

Mr. Fallon: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when the Monopolies and Mergers Commission report on the British Steel Corporation will be published.

Mr. Maude: The report is published today.

The Monopolies and Mergers Commission was asked to investigate and report whether the British Steel Corporation could improve its efficiency and reduce its costs, except in so far as that question related to, or might involve consideration of, strategy decisions agreed with Her Majesty's Government in relation to the corporation.

The commission concentrated its investigation on the corporation's two largest operating groups, Strip Products Group and General Steels Group, which together contain the five integrated steelworks where the bulk of the corporation's steel production takes place.

The commission noted that the corporation had moved from a net loss of over £1 billion in 1980-81 to a profit of £38 million in 1985-86. In commending this very considerable achievement, the commission said that it had been secured partly by reductions in capacity and manpower but more significantly by more than doubling manpower productivity over that period. The corporation had re-established its position in the world steel industry, with a range of products which for the most part compared well with that of its competitors. The commission found that the corporation was thus in a new situation. Furthermore, the European Commission ended state aid for steel on 31 December 1985, with the result that all future financial requirements carried interest at market rates. While observing that this had to be seen in the context of the strategy decisions which inevitably affected the corporation's capacity utilisation and hence its efficiency, the commission noted that the strategy still left the corporation with a wide discretion to improve its efficiency. Stock control, maintenance and monitoring of quality performance were identified in particular by the commission as subjects meriting closer attention.

The commission made 48 recommendations for improving the corporation's performance and attached priority to those concerning the determination of the investment programme; the review of stocks; the study of maintenance procedures; quality standards and delivery performances. Notwithstanding its other comments and proposals, the commission observed that the corporation was right to be proud of the efforts of its work force and management in moving from the period of massive losses to the profitabilty achieved in 1985-86, and sensed a determination at all levels in the corporation to continue to improve performance.

In view of the delay in publication I am asking the corporation to respond to the commission's findings as quickly as possible.

Military Exports

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many applications have been made for the export of military equipment for each year from 1979; and how many of these have been *(a)* granted and *(b)* refused.

Mr. Alan Clark: The following are the numbers of licence applications received for exports of military equipment controlled under the Export of Goods (Control) Order:

Export licence applications received

Year	*Number*
1979	8,668
1980	6,882
1981	6,968
1982	6,851
1983	6,931
1984	6,871
1985	9,350
1986	9,406
1987	11,222

Records of the numbers of export licences granted and refused could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Software Industries

Mr. Simon Coombs: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what studies his Department has undertaken into the ability of the United Kingdom software industry to compete with the French, West German and Italian software industries after 1992; and if he will arrange for copies of such studies to be placed in the Library.

Mr. Forth: The Department commissioned a report entitled "Computing Services Industry 1986-1996 a decade of opportunity" from Coopers and Lybrand Associates which was published in April 1987. The study predicts future trends in the industry and includes a comparison of the United Kingdom industry with those of its major competitors—France, West Germany, the United States of America and Japan.

Copies of the report are available from the Library.

Copyright

Mr. Neale: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what information he has received from the Government of Indonesia relating to their intentions to grant equal status to copyright works of United Kingdom citizens to those granted to citizens of the United States; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Forth: Her Majesty's Government are currently negotiating an agreement with the Government of Indonesia for the mutual protection of copyright works. This will enlarge on the protection which is already available for sound recordings. I understand that a United States-Indonesia agreement is also being negotiated.

Mr. Neale: To ask the Chancellor for the Duchy of Lancaster (1) what information he has received from the Government of Korea relating to their intentions to grant equal status to copyright works of United Kingdom citizens to those granted to citizens of the United States of America; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what representations he has made to the Republic of Korea about British books being pirated there on a large scale; and if he will make a statement;

(3) what representations have been made to him by Macmillan publishers relating to the pirating in the Republic of Korea of the multi-volume work of reference published under the title "The New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics"; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Forth: Since the accession of the Republic of Korea to the universal copyright convention in October 1987, British books published have been protected in that

country. It is, therefore, open to publishers to take action in Korea in respect of the piracy of such works, for example, the Palgrave dictionary. The Community negotiated with Korea to obtain protection for older works and to obtain certain benefits in respect of patents; all of these rights had been granted to the United States and the Community was therefore seeking parity of treatment. The negotiations broke down and as a result the Community suspended Korea's benefits under the generalised system of preferences, where the matter now stands.

English Estates

Mr. Page: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he envisages any changes in the activities of English Estates; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: As the White Paper, "DTI—the department for Enterprise", Cm. 278, made clear, the activities of English Estates are an important instrument of our policies which seek to support economic development and encourage enterprise in the regions and inner cities. The recently launched programme aimed at increasing the supply of managed workspace in the inner cities has added an important new dimension to its role.

In the assisted areas the essential role of English Estates is to seek to ensure that suitable premises and sites are available to meet the needs of new and growing businesses, which would not otherwise be met. It does this in a variety of ways including the development of factories, workshops and offices either in advance of demand or to meet the needs of specific customers. It also actively facilitates provision by private sector developers, investors and owner occupiers.

Improving economic conditions have enabled English Estates in recent years to achieve successive annual improvements in the amount of floorspace let and sold. There is, nevertheless, an unsatisfied demand for premises which, combined with rising rental levels and the prospects of continuing economic growth, is leading to renewed interest by the private sector in providing industrial and commercial floorspace in some parts of the assisted areas. If the property needs of industry and commerce are to be met it is essential that this interest should be further encouraged. This requires a suitable response on the part of English Estates. We have, therefore, been considering with the board of the corporation how the planning and execution of its assisted areas programmes should be developed.

On the basis of advice from the board we have concluded that in order to reinforce existing market trends English Estates should adopt fresh approaches designed to secure increased private sector activity wherever possible.

This will affect English Estates' policies towards rental levels and sale prices. Hitherto, the general requirement has been that these should be set at the maximum level the market would bear. For the future, English Estates will have the specific objectives of endeavouring to increase rents and sale prices to levels which will make equivalent developments attractive to the private sector.

The emphasis of English Estates' development strategy will also change substantially with the aim of securing increased private sector activity. Thus, English Estates role as a facilitator will assume much greater significance through the marketing of development opportunities, the preparation and disposal of serviced sites, joint ventures and the sale of completed schemes to investors. English Estates will use its own development funding only in the areas and for the products where private sector provision remains inadequate and where it will not impede the return to a properly functioning property market.

Thus in considering the shape of its future programme in the assisted area, English Estates will have regard to three categories of area and types of property. In the first, the presumption will be that the private sector will be meeting demand without the involvement of English Estates. In the second, it is likely that English Estates will need to participate in some form of joint venture in some types of development if private sector involvement is to be triggered. We shall consider with English Estates the cost-effectiveness of particular arrangements which may be necessary to encourage appropriate private sector provision. In the third, where there is no immediate prospect of private sector provision, English Estates will continue to act as a funder and developer, but on the basis of the rentals and sales policy outlined above.

In future I shall be determining the size of English Estates' annual development programme on the basis of advice from the board about market demand, the likely level of private sector provision and the availability of public sector resources. I shall also take into account the need to balance the demand for resources between the assisted areas programme and the new inner-city managed workspace programme as the latter develops. Decisions about which developments are to be undertaken will remain the responsibility of the board acting within the framework I have just described. I have asked the board to take steps to publish regularly a programme describing the projects planned to be pursued in each region in particular financial years. I shall expect the geographical boundaries of that programme to narrow significantly over time as they take full account of changing rental levels and development costs.

Disabled Persons (Accessibility)

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) what information he has as to which areas and buildings in recently revitalised inner-city areas remain inaccessible for people in wheelchairs, following redevelopments;

(2) whether he will set up a consultative body to monitor the extent to which the access needs of disabled people are being met in the revitalisation of the inner cities; and if he will make a statement;

(3) what consultations he has had with national and local disability organisations on the subject of disabled people's access needs in the revitalisation of the inner cities;

(4) what consultations he has had with the Access Committee for England, the Centre for the Environment for the Handicapped, and Business in the Community on the subject of disabled people's access needs in the revitalisation of the inner cities; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: We have had no consultations on these lines, but seek to ensure that the representations we have received from RADAR, and any others we may receive, are appropriately reflected in the development or redevelopment of the inner cities.

I am not convinced that further formal consultation machinery would contribute materially to this aim, or that it would be practicable to gather systematic information about the accessibility of buildings in inner-city areas. I would, however, expect city action teams and inner-city task forces to give positive consideration to the needs of the disabled people in their work, and of course to conform to the provisions on access for disabled people contained in building regulations. Equally, I hope that organisations of and for disabled people, and in particular local access groups, will ensure that their views and suggestions are made known to the teams and task forces.

"Disabled People and The Inner Cities"

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what response he has had from the local task forces and city action teams to the paper written by the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation, RADAR, "Disabled People and The Inner Cities".

Mr. Newton: The city action teams and inner city task forces continue to take account of the needs of the disabled as set out in the recent paper by the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation, "Disabled People and the Inner Cities". In particular, the task forces have supported a range of inner-city projects which specifically benefit the disabled. Projects include:

Middlesbrough: support through task force and community programme for project converting cars for the disabled.

Handsworth: support for community glass business to enable it to take on disabled workers.

Spitalfields: installation of a lift for the disabled in Toynbee hall, Gunthorpe street workshops to enable disabled people to have access to facilities, including job club.

Nottingham: support for 80 place computer training project for the disabled.

Coventry: requirement that conversion projects supported by task force should make provision for disabled access.

Leeds: disabled care service project, in conjunction with New Testament Church.

Rochdale: support for disabled places in woodcraft and needlework training.

North Peckham, Southwark: support for 30 place community industry sewing workshop which makes clothes specially tailored for the disabled; support for Southwark environment trust conversion of old stables into workshops, including one made available to the Southwark association for the disabled.

Doncaster: support to Concorde centre for development of training places for the disabled; support for residential course for disadvantaged Youth Training Scheme trainees, including disabled.

In addition, the interdepartmental urban programme supports some 200 projects worth about £6·5 million per annum, which directly benefit the disabled.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will issue a White Paper on how the access needs of disabled people will be met in the revitalisation of the inner cities; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: We have no plans to do so.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will outline the interdepartmental co-ordination that exists to ensure that access needs for disabled people in the inner cities are not overlooked.

Mr. Newton: The main instruments for interdepartmental co-ordination are the city action teams, which include the regional directors of my Department, the Department of the Environment and the Department of Employment. They are based in Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool, the inner-city partnership areas of London, Manchester-Salford, Newcastle-Gateshead and Nottingham. Outside city action team areas there are similar but less formal links between Departments. The city action teams are responsible for co-ordinating and focusing major Government programmes in inner city areas, including the urban programme, city grant, the enterprise initiative and employment programmes, working with local authorities, the private sector and other local organisations. These programmes already take account of the needs of the disabled inner-city areas, and the valuable contribution which they can make to inner-city regeneration, and further advice has recently been issued to the city action teams on these lines, drawing on useful background material provided by the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation.

European Community (Gaseous Fuel Appliances)

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what representations he has received on the draft directive on the harmonisation of the laws of member states relating to appliances burning gaseous fuels; and what representations he has made to the European Commission on this subject.

Mr. Forth: We have received a number of written representations on this subject from member companies of the Society of British Gas Industries and my hon. Friend the Member for Coventry South-West, (Mr. Butcher) the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Industry and Consumer Affairs, recently met a delegation drawn from its membership. In addition, views have been canvassed more widely from the gas supply and manufacturing industry as part of the normal consultation process.

Detailed representations to the Commission which reflect to a large extent the technical concerns expressed by industry have been made through the participation of officials in the Commission working party of experts set up to examine this draft directive.

Financial Services Act 1986

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will review the provision of the Financial Services Act 1986 and other related legislation and regulation on small investors and independent intermediaries, with regard to compliance cost assessment.

Mr. Maude: The Secretary of State and the chairman of the Securities and Investments Board have agreed to take stock on a regular basis to assess the development of the new regulatory regime and its impact on investment businesses.

Import-Export Statistics

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) what was the value of imports from and exports to Malaysia in each of the years 1979 to 1988; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what was the value of imports from and exports to the Republic of Liberia in each of the years 1979 to 1988; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: The information is as follows:

United Kingdom trade with Malaysia and the Republic of Liberia 1979—May 1988

Value in £ millions

	Imports	*Exports*
Malaysia		
1979	221·7	187·6
1980	186·9	223·9
1981	188·3	196·2
1982	185·2	210·6
1983	222·5	248·3
1984	319·5	283·1
1985	383·9	281·7
1986	349·9	226·9
1987	397·1	258·0
[1]1988	197·6	122·4
Liberia		
1979	14·3	84·3
1980	8·7	46·4
1981	6·0	24·3
1982	8·2	14·1
1983	7·2	13·9
1984	7·2	31·0
1985	6·0	16·0
1986	7·6	22·1
1987	7·3	13·5
[1]1988	6·4	5·0

[1] January to May.
Source: Overseas Trade Statistics
Note: Figures for 1987 and January—May 1988 are provisional

Figures for 1988 should be treated with more than the usual caution because of major changes to customs procedures introduced in January 1988, details of which were given in a reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Hertfordshire, South-West (Mr. Page) on 7 December 1987 at column *34-35*.

Malaysia

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will give details of all meetings between the chairman of the British Overseas Trade Board, and the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia since April 1983 concerning Malaysia's policy towards imports from the United Kingdom and Malaysia's relations with Hong Kong.

Mr. Alan Clark: Irrespective of whether such meetings have taken place it is not normally the practice to disclose details of confidential discussions.

National Engineering Laboratory, East Kilbride

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if the experimental nuclear reactor at the National Engineering Laboratory, East Kilbride will remain on Crown property following the privatisation of the laboratory.

Mr. Forth: The position of the land on which the experimental nuclear reactor is built will be determined by an agreement that is signed between the Department and a purchaser of the East Kilbride site.

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster who will have the responsibility for decommissioning the experimental nuclear reactor on site at the National Engineering Laboratory, East Kilbride; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Forth: The responsibility for any decommissioning of the reactor would lie with the operator, taking account of any requirement of the relevant regulatory bodies, namely the Scottish Development Department and the nuclear installations inspectorate.

Ivory Imports

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what information he has on imports into the United Kingdom of worked ivory, by weight and value, in each year since 1979.

Mr. Alan Clark: The information is given in the table:

United Kingdom Imports of Worked Ivory 1979-1987

	m/tonnes	*£000*
1979	22·8	382
1980	17·2	487
1981	3·0	238
1982	4·6	263
1983	4·7	311
1984	2·9	455
1985	1·1	267
1986	1·8	252
1987	0·8	241

Source: Overseas Trade Statistics.
Note: 1987 figures provisional.

House Prices

Mr. Michael: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what proposals he has under consideration to slow house price rises; what consultations he intends to undertake; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 26 July 1988]:* I have been asked to reply.

I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, my hon. Friend the Member for Broxbourne (Mrs. Roe) to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Strang) on 4 November at column *736*.

Members' Correspondence

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is the average length of time taken by his Department to respond to right hon. and hon. Members' correspondence during the summer recess.

Mr. Maude *[holding answer 26 July 1988]:* The information is only available at a disproportionate cost. However, my Department always aims to answer right hon. and hon. Members' correspondence as soon as possible, although some delays may occur during a recess.

James Ferguson (Holdings) plc

Mr. Neil Hamilton: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many interviews the inspectors appointed to inquire into the affairs of James Ferguson (Holdings) plc have given to the press since their appointment.

Mr. Maude *[holding answer 26 July 1988]:* None.

ENERGY

Oil Rigs (Safety)

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if, further to his answer of 14 July, *Official Report*, column *368*, he will now supply the figures on safety inspections of gas and oil rig installations which are available as near as possible to the form originally requested.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The figures requested could be supplied only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list the inspections and accident investigations carried out since 1 January 1987 into the safety of North Sea oil and gas installations; what were they, respectively, minor and major recommendations for action in each case; and which have so far been carried out and which have not.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The figures requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Piper Alpha Platform

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy why, further to his reply of 14 July, *Official Report*, column 366, he will not make the inquiry into the explosion of the Piper Alpha platform in 1984 available to Parliament now.

Mr. Peter Robinson: The 1984 report will form only part of my Department's evidence to the inquiry. It will be for Lord Cullen, as chairman of the inquiry, to decide how much, if any, of the evidence submitted should be released. It would be wrong for me to pre-empt his decision.

Mr. Doran: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will meet the costs of legal representation of survivors and the relatives of those who died in the Piper Alpha tragedy at the forthcoming public inquiry to be chaired by Lord Cullen.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I have nothing to add to my right hon. Friend's reply to the hon. Member on 25 July 1988 at column 7.

Mr. Doran: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will extend the terms of reference of the public inquiry into the Piper Alpha tragedy to consider the establishment of a no-fault liability compensation scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Morrison: It will be for Lord Cullen to decide, if requested, whether the establishment of a no-fault liability compensation scheme should be considered at the public inquiry.

Public Expenditure

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will publish a table in the *Official Report*, in the same format as his written reply of 7 July, *Official Report*, columns *664-66*, on receipts classified as charges in respect of his programme expenditure over the years 1982-83 to 1990-91, on a basis consistent with the reply of 27 May, *Official Report*, Volume 134, columns *375-76*, indicating the receipts in respect of running costs expenditure together with a supplementary analysis indicating, separately, the amounts of receipts in respect of programme expenditure and of running costs expenditure estimated to have been met from other public expenditure programmes.

Mr. Parkinson: Receipts in respect of my Department's running cost expenditure over the years 1982-83 to 1990-91 are as follows:

	£ million
1982-83 outturn	−3·2
1983-84 outturn	−3·2
1984-85 outturn	−4·0
1985-86 outturn	−4·0
1986-87 outturn	−4·0
1987-88 estimated outturn	−4·3
1988-89 plans	−4·3
1989-90 plans	−4·4
1990-91 plans	−4·6

The amounts of receipts in respect of programme expenditure and running costs expenditure estimated to have been met from other public expenditure programmes are as follows:

£ million

	Programme	*Running costs*	*Total*
1982-83 outturn	−59·8	−2·0	−61·8
1983-84 outturn	−70·4	−1·7	−72·1
1984-85 outturn	−56·1	−2·1	−58·2
1985-86 outturn	−64·8	−2·1	−66·9
1986-87 outturn	−3·7	−2·3	−6·0
1987-88 estimated outturn	−5·1	−1·7	−6·8
1988-89 plans	−4·7	−1·6	−6·3
1989-90 plans	−4·3	−1·7	−6·0
1990-91 plans	−4·3	−1·7	−6·0

Acid Rain

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what recent communication he has had with the Forestry Commission concerning environmental surveys conducted in Hertsmere in Hertfordshire, evaluating the effects of acid rain pollution on the *(a)* arboreal and *(b)* aquatic environment in the area; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Following receipt of a tree health survey which was undertaken in April by Greenpeace and which identified a number of individual damaged trees in the constituency of Hertsmere, my right hon. Friend sought the Forestry Commission's professional advice. Two scientists from the commission's research division visited the constituency on 1 June and examined a number of the sites recorded by Greenpeace. They confirmed the existence of damaged trees. However many were at sites with local problems, including soil disturbance and waterlogging. The commission pointed out that damage can be influenced by a wide variety of factors of which air pollution is only one. Air pollution can also derive from a number of different sources: neither the commission nor Greenpeace were able to determine the precise cause of the damage in this area.

Magnox Reactors (Decommissioning)

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will set out the details of the economic appraisal developed by his Department to calculate the likely cost of decommissioning of each of the Magnox reactors.

Mr. Michael Spicer: This is a matter for the Central Electricity Generating Board, and I have asked the chairman to write to the hon. Member.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make it his policy during the first phase of decommissioning the Central Electricity Generating Board's Berkeley-Magnox nuclear reactors, to ensure that when bundles of fuel rods are withdrawn from the core containing low burn-up spent fuel, these are appropriately labelled for a special reprocessing regime at Sellafield to retain the high purity of the plutonium content in the spent fuel discharged in a separate plutonium store account.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The Central Electricity Generating Board and British Nuclear Fuels plc plan to manage the dispatch and reprocessing of the final cores of the Berkeley reactors no differently from the fuel from other CEGB magnox power stations. The fuel and the extracted uranium and plutonium will at all times be subject to Euratom safeguards and to the terms of the UK/Euratom/IAEA safeguards agreement.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how the decommissioning costs of *(a)* Berkeley and *(b)* other commercial Magnox reactors will be apportioned after privatisation of the electricity supply industry.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Decommissioning provisions for Magnox stations are made throughout their operating lives and are reflected in the prices charged to customers at the time.

Nuclear Waste

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if the mixed oxide nuclear fuel pin discovered at the Drigg nuclear waste dump site on 11 July was accounted for under the nuclear fuel pin material accountancy arrangement set out by the then Minister of State for Energy, the hon. Member for Eddisbury (Mr. Goodlad) in reply to the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes), *Official Report*, 4 March 1987, column *596*.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I await the report mentioned in my reply to the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) on 15 July 1988 at column *430*.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if, pursuant to the reply to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy, *Official Report*, 14 June, column *101*, on nuclear waste safeguards, he will state when the discussions to which he makes reference began; how many meetings have taken place; how many departmental officials have been involved; and when he expects agreement on arrangements for safeguarding nuclear wastes bearing civil fissile materials to be reached.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Discussions have been continuing for some months. It is not yet possible to estimate the completion date.

Sellafield

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) what changes and extensions to current emergency evacuation plans for British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. at Sellafield nuclear complex will be necessitated by the plan announced by British Nuclear Fuels plc, on 13 July, to make Sellafield a package tour centre;

(2) whether the plans announced by British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. on 13 July to encourage a further influx of tourists to Sellafield have any implications for advice given by his Department on coping with evacuations under civil emergencies, particularly regarding accidents at nuclear installations.

Mr. Michael Spicer: It is for the operator of a nuclear site to satisfy the Health and Safety Executive's nuclear installations inspectorate of the adequacy of its emergency arrangements, as part of the licensing procedures. Such plans take account of the population densities and distribution within the detailed planning zone.

Atomic Energy Safeguards

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if, pursuant to the reply to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy, *Official Report*, 14 June, column *101*, on atomic energy safeguards, he will set out the basis for his conclusion that there is not likely to be any significant difference between the general conclusions of the 1986 International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards implementation report (SIR) and the 1987 United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority safeguards implementation report.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The draft 1987 report has been discussed by the IAEA board of governors of which the United Kingdom is a member. A summary of the report's findings will be published in the agency's annual report in September.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy on atomic energy safeguards, *Official Report*, 14 June, column *100*, he will set out details of the specific United Kingdom funded substantial safeguards support programme to which he makes reference; with what organisations contracts are lodged to carry out this programme; and if the results of this research support programme are published in publicly available literature.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The safeguards R and D support programme funded by the Department of Energy is carried out by the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority. A summary of this programme, amongst others, was placed in the Library on 23 July 1987.

Uranium Imports

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what policy considerations underlie *(a)* his willingness to reply in full to questions on coal imports, by amount and country of source and *(b)* his unwillingness to give details of amounts and country of source for uranium imports.

Mr. Michael Spicer: In replying to questions about imports, it is my policy to be as open as possible subject to considerations of commercial sensitivity.

Magnox Reactors, Dungeness

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what are the financial and future safety implications of the discovery of corrosion faults during the recent statutory annual safety overhaul of the Central Electricity Generating Board Magnox reactors at Dungeness.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The statutory inspection of reactor 2 at Dungeness A station is still in progress and has revealed some corrosion damage in the reactor and boilers. The full extent of these problems and their safety significance are being assessed. It is too early to estimate the financial implications from the loss of generation but every effort is being made to return the reactor to service as soon as possible, subject to the agreement of the station's nuclear safety committee and the consent of the Health and Safety Executive's nuclear installations inspectorate.

Magnox Reactors

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will update to 31 March *(a)* the information on thermal energy generated and spent fuel discharged and *(b)* the information on the allocation of plutonium produced in each of the Central Electricity Generating Board Magnox reactors as given in his reply to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy, 24 July 1987, *Official Report*, columns *515-16*.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I refer the hon. Member to the reply which I gave him on 20 July 1988 at column 666.

UKAEA (Energy Technology Support Unit)

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make it his policy to institute management arrangements to separate the energy technology support unit from the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I am satisfied with the current management arrangements for the energy technology support unit, which ensure its impartiality, and I have no plans to change these arrangements.

Nuclear Materials (Exports)

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if, pursuant to the reply to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy, 14 June, *Official Report*, column 99, on nuclear materials exports, he will set out the reasons why information on the dates and quantities of exports to which he makes reference are confidential.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Information on the dates and quantities of exports of nuclear materials is commercially confidential to the parties involved. Additionally, there may be security considerations.

Nuclear Power Stations (Report)

Mr. Strang: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how many organisations and individuals have submitted comments on the draft document "The Tolerability of Risk from Nuclear Power Stations"; and when he expects a response to be made to these comments.

Mr. Parkinson: Twenty four organisations and individuals have sent comments to the Health and Safety Commission. The commission has also received advice from the advisory committee on the safety of nuclear installations. The chairman of the commission wrote to my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland and to me on 26 July setting out the commission's response, and a copy of this letter has been placed in the Library of the House. The commission agrees with ACSNI's view that the levels of risk proposed for new power stations should be tolerable for the present and proposed PWR programme, provided that strict and comprehensive systems of regulation continue in force. I understand that the commission is arranging for publication of all comments in due course.

Offshore Oil and Gas Safety

Mr. Doran: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) if he will list those establishments which are authorised to issue safety certificates to employees in the offshore oil and gas industry;

(2) what instructions or guidance his Department gives with regard to offshore safety certificates;

(3) how many employees on Piper Alpha on 7 July held full and valid offshore safety certificates; and if he will make a statement;

(4) what is his Department's policy with regard to the issue of offshore safety certificates for employees in the offshore oil and gas industries.

Mr. Peter Morrison: Safety certificates for personnel working offshore are not required, although some specialists require certificates of competence for the work on which they are employed. Regulations require the operator to appoint competent persons to be responsible for the control and safety of the installation and its equipment.

Mr. Doran: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list the guidance notes and instructions issued by his Department in respect of all aspects of the offshore oil and gas industry, with dates and details of any supplementary or additional guidance notes or instructions.

Mr. Peter Morrison: My Department issues guidance on a number of subjects including the following:

Design and Construction
Life-Saving Appliances
Fire-Fighting Equipment
Continental Shelf Operation Notices
Safety Memoranda
Training and Survival
Crane Operators
Ballast Control Operators
Radio Telephone Operators
Helicopter Landing Officers
Submarine Pipelines Guidance Notes
Guidelines for the specification and operation of dynamically positioned diving support vessels and drilling vessels
Emergency Shut-Down Systems
Guidelines for air range diving support vessels

In addition, video training guides have also been issued and numerous technology reports have been published by HMSO on behalf of my Department.

Mr. Doran: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his Department's policy with regard to fire training for employees in the offshore oil and gas industry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The Offshore Installations (Fire-Fighting Equipment) Regulations 1978 (SI 1978/611) require offshore operators to provide approved fire-fighting equipment. Training in the use of this equipment is a matter for the operator in accordance with section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 which places a duty on employers to provide such training as necessary to ensure as far as practicable, the health and safety of their employees.

Mr. Doran: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his policy with regard to the issue of immersion suits for employees in the offshore oil and gas industry *(a)* as regards the employees of platform operators and *(b)* as regards the employees of subcontractors of platform operators.

Mr. Peter Morrison: Operators are required to supply employees with protective clothing on every offshore installation.

Mr. Doran: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what guidance or instruction is issued by his Department to those establishments providing offshore safety training and issuing offshore safety certificates.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The guidance notes listed in my reply to the hon. Member today are available to estalishments providing offshore safety training.

Mr. Doran: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) what is the relationship between his Department and those establishments providing offshore safety training and issuing offshore safety certificates;

(2) whether those establishments providing offshore safety training and issuing offshore safety certificates are subject to approval, licence or supervision by him or any other Government or public agency.

Mr. Peter Morrison: There is no statutory relationship between my Department and those establishments providing offshore safety training. By agreement, one of my officials has a seat on the board of the offshore petroleum industry training board. I have had regular meetings with the chairman of the offshore petroleum industry training board to discuss matters of mutual interest.

Mr. Doran: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how many staff in his Department are employed in supervising the work of the certifying authorities appointed by him in terms of the Offshore Installation (Construction and Survey) Regulations 1974; and what are their qualifications.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The certifying authorities are internationally recognised independent bodies. My Department does not supervise their work, although the authorities' method of working is monitored by my Department. Three inspectors, who are either chartered engineers or graduates with at least five years' experience of the oil industry, are assigned to this task. In addition all my inspectors, as part of their enforcement duties, observe the work of the certifying authorities and liaise with them as necessary.

Mr. Doran: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will introduce legislation to extend the provisions of the Occupiers Liability Act 1960 to offshore oil and gas installations.

Mr. Peter Morrison: No.

National Nuclear Corporation

Mr. Hind: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make an announcement on the future of the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority shareholding in the National Nuclear Corporation.

Mr. Parkinson: An understanding has been concluded today for the General Electric Company plc to purchase the UKAEA's 35 per cent. minority shareholding in the National Nuclear Corporation. The Government, on whose behalf the UKAEA has owned these shares, has agreed to a purchase price of £14 million. It is the intention to sign a contract for sale in the near future.

I believe this development, which will give GEC a majority shareholding, will remove uncertainty about the Corporation's future.

Amersham International

Mr. Michael Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether he intends to exercise his option, under the articles of association, to require Amersham International plc to redeem on 31 March his special rights preference share in the company.

Mr. Parkinson *[pursuant to his reply, 29 March 1988]:* The special rights preference share has offered Amersham International plc protection against take-over during adjustment to the private sector following privatisation in February 1982. Under the articles of associaton I have been able to require redemption of the special share at any time on or after 31 March 1988.

I think it no longer necessary for the protection to continue and have therefore decided to exercise the option open to me and to redeem the special share forthwith.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Short Brothers plc

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what representations he has had concerning the possible sell-off of Short Brothers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Viggers: I refer the hon. Member to the statement I made to the House on 21 July at columns 1298-306. I will carefully consider any representations which may be made to me.

Anglo-Irish Agreement

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on any planned renegotiations of the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

Mr. Tom King: We have no plans for any negotiations. However, the two Governments will be reviewing the working of the Intergovernmental Conference, under the terms of article 11 of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, later this year.

Members' Correspondence

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the average length of time taken by his Department to respond to right hon. and hon. Members' correspondence during the summer recess.

Mr Tom King *[holding answer 26 July 1988]:* The average length of time taken by my Department to respond to Members' correspondence during the summer recess is 10 working days.

Migration

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what are the most recent figures on the out-migration of young people from Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 21 July 1988]:* The most recent figures are those derived from the 1987 mid-year estimates of population. These show that in the period 1 July 1986 to 30 June 1987 around 10,500 persons between the ages of 15 and 24 migrated from Northern Ireland.

Harland and Wolff

Mr Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what representations he has received on the takeover of Harland and Wolff; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Viggers *[holding answer 21 July 1988]:* My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has received a letter from the hon. Member for Leicester, South (Mr. Marshall) seeking information about the Government's intention to privatise Harland and Wolff.

Radiotherapy Staff

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the number of physicists and technicians in the radiotherapy department in Belvoir park hospital, Purdysburn on 30 June 1987 and 30 June 1988.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 22 July 1988]:* The information is as follows:

Year	*Physicists*	*Technicians*
June 1987	6	15
June 1988	6	12

Planning

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he proposes to amend article 31/7 of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1972 to provide adequate protection to objects and structures within the curtilage of listed buildings; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 25 July 1988]:* No. For the reasons set out in my previous answer I am satisfied that the provisions of article 31(7) of the Planning (NI) Order 1972 provide the protection required.

Animal Carcases (Residues)

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will introduce legislation to control the presence of residues in animal carcases at the point of retail sale or at point of manufacture into meat products and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Viggers *[holding answer 25 July 1988]:* United Kingdom-wide legislation introduced on 7 June 1988 provides a statutory framework for the monitoring and control of residues in animals and meat. The Animals and Fresh Meat (Examination for Residues) Regulations 1988 provide for mandatory sampling of animals and fresh meat, the detention of suspect animals and the prevention of sale for human and, in some cases, animal consumption of contaminated farm animals or carcases. The Animals and Fresh Meat (Hormonal Substances) Regulations 1988 contain specific provisions in relation to the control of hormones. Legislation to provide controls on other substances will be introduced in accordance with EC requirements. These regulations provide a means of control at the farm and at the slaughterhouse and so prevent carcases with residues from entering the animal or human food chain. Controls on meat and meat products at the point of retail sale in Northern Ireland are imposed under the Food and Drugs Act (NI) 1958 which, inter alia, requires that food should be fit for human consumption and not rendered injurious to health and should be of the nature, substance and quality demanded by the consumer. Consultations have taken place about the introduction of maximum residue levels for certain pesticides in food, including meat and preparations of meat and regulations are in the process of being made.

Planning

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how objects and structures referred to in article 31/7 of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1972, are protected when they are not included in the charge registered in the stututory charges register as outlined in red on the statutory charges map; and how protection is enforced when the listing encumbrance is not recognisable as being registered.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* The fact that objects and structures referred to in article 31(7) of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1972 are not included in the charge registered in the statutory charges register as outlined in red on the statutory charges map does not lessen their protection under the order.

The entry in the statutory charges register which indicates that a building has been entered on a list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest compiled under article 31 of the order draws the attention of the public to the provisions of article 31 including paragraph 7.

In order to make the position as clear as possible, two changes were made in listing documentation some 18 months ago. The first was a specific note referring to the purport of article 31(7) of the order which is available for public inspection. Secondly, a similar note was added to the notice of listing sent to each owner.

The operation of the listed building enforcement procedures contained in the 1972 order falls to the Department as the listing authority to form a judgment whether specific objects or stuctures fall within the ambit of article 31(7).

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

BSE-infected Cattle

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) how many compensation payments he has made to farmers with BSE-infected cattle; how many claims he has received; and how much has been paid in total so far;

(2) if he will introduce a scheme of full compensation to farmers with BSE-infected cattle; and if he will make a statement;

(3) what evidence he has as to whether existing compensation levels for farmers with BSE-infected cattle could be failing to encourage farmers to await diagnosis of BSE and encouraging premature submission of cattle for slaughter;

(4) what steps he is taking to prevent the products of BSE-infected cattle entering the food chain;

(5) if he will give details of the method by which his Department is calculating the compensation due to farmers with BSE-infected cattle.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) was made a notifiable disease on 21 June. Compensation is not yet payable for affected cattle. However, as the Government announced on 7 July, compulsory slaughter with compensation will be introduced very shortly. The carcases of affected animals will be destroyed. Compensation for an affected animal will be at 50 per cent. of market value of the animal, valued as if healthy, up to a ceiling.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will give the numbers of BSE-infected cattle notified thus far by *(a)* county and *(b)* region in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Since BSE was first identified the number of confirmed cases in Great Britain as at 22 July is as follows. BSE has not occurred in Northern Ireland.

	Number
Eastern	
Bedfordshire	4
Cambridge	6
Essex	1
Lincolnshire	8
Norfolk	11
Northamptonshire	4
Suffolk	6
	40
Midland and Western	
Cheshire	11
Derbyshire	3
Hereford and Worcestershire	14
Lancashire	6
Leicestershire	5
Nottingham	5
Salop	20
Staffordshire	10
Warwickshire	7
West Midlands	1
	82
Northern	
Cumbria	11
Durham	1
North Yorkshire	16
West Yorkshire	1
Northumberland	1
	30
South Eastern	
Isle of Wight	1
Kent	36
Oxford	8
Surrey	7
East Sussex	7
West Sussex	10
Berkshire	13
Buckinghamshire	12
Hampshire	20
	114
South Western	
Avon	12
Cornwall	106
Devon	134
Dorset	41
Gloucestershire	26
Somerset	45
Wiltshire	20
	384
Wales	
Clwyd	5
Dyfed	31
Mid Glamorgan	2
South Glamorgan	2
West Glamorgan	1
Gwent	5
Gwynedd	4
Powys	4
	54
Scotland	
Borders region	1
Dumfries and Galloway	5
Highlands	1
Lothian	1
Shetland Isles	1
Tayside	2
	11

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has figures to show the number of slaughtered BSE-infected cattle, the products of which entered the food chain.

Mr. Donald Thompson: No, but since the disease was made notifiable on 21 June all the heads of affected animals entering a slaughterhouse have been compulsorily retained by the Ministry in order to examine brain tissue for a definitive diagnosis.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what advice he is giving farmers on early recognition of the symptoms of the disease bovine spongiform encephelopathy.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Advice to farmers, based on the current state of knowledge about the disease, is being provided through the local animal health offices and veterinary investigation centres of the Ministry's state veterinary service. There have also been a number of Ministry scientific presentations, publications and general articles on the subject including in particular one in the *Farmers Weekly* of 15 July.

Water Pollution

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what steps he is taking to reduce water pollution from farm sources; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ryder: My Department offers free initial advice to farmers on pollution avoidance, and now provides free of charge the code of good agricultural practice. Capital grants are available at high rates to farmers investing in new waste storage or treatment facilities. Research is being carried out into improved construction and management of these facilities. We have fully backed water authorities in stepping up prosecutions.

Civil Defence

Mr. Thorne: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will set out his plans for emergency feeding arrangements in time of war and/or national emergency; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Under the Civil Defence (General Local Authority Functions) Regulations 1983 (SI 1983 No. 1634) it is local authorities' responsibility to plan for emergency feeding in their areas in the event of a hostile attack. MAFF holds stocks of basic food and of emergency feeding equipment for release to local authorities as necessary. The Ministry has issued advice on planning emergency feeding to local authorities in "Emergency Planning Guidance Handbook 3—Emergency Feeding," copies of which are held in the Library of the House.

Fishing Vessels (Licensing)

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he has any plans to significantly alter the system of licensing of fishing vessels engaged in catching pressure stock species; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I hope shortly to announce a major consultation with the fishing industry which will review the existing licensing arrangements.

Research and Development

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received regarding agricultural research and development funded by his Ministry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I have received a number of representations from interested individuals and organisations about agricultural research and development funded by my Ministry, and consultations about transfer of near market work to industry funding are now taking place with the sectors concerned following the recent internal review of expenditure by the Agriculture Departments on R and D. No conclusions have yet been reached.

Anglers Co-operative Association

Mr. Onslow: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if his Department has considered an application for an exhibition relating to the Anglers Co-operative Association to be displayed in the Upper Waiting Hall.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I understand that arrangements have been made with the authorities of the House for the exhibition to be held in the Upper Waiting Hall from 12 December 1988 to 16 December 1988.

Bass Fishery

Miss Emma Nicholson: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he has yet reached any decision on measures for the long-term management and conservation of the Bass fishery following his proposals announced on 29 February, *Official Report*, columns *476-77*; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: On 29 February 1988, at column *476*, my right hon. Friend the then Minister of State, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, announced that he and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales planned to introduce measures for the long-term management and conservation of the bass fishery. The proposed measures, on which comments from interested parties were invited by 31 May, provided for an increase from 1 January 1989 in the national minimum landing size for bass from 32 to 36 cm; a prohibition from 1 January 1990 on the use of gill and other specified nets with a mesh size between 60 and 99 mm; and the establishment of some 24 nursery areas in inshore waters where restrictions on certain forms of fishing would protect juvenile bass stocks.

After careful consideration of the many responses to these proposals, we have decided to proceed with these measures subject to certain changes to take account of points that have arisen out of the consultations with interested parties. We shall soon be introducing regulations to increase the national minimum landing size for bass throughout Great Britain from 32 to 36 cm and to prohibit the carriage of bass under 36 cm by British vessels but delaying the operation of these measures until 1 January 1990 to coincide with the introduction of mesh size controls and to allow fishermen a further year in which to adjust their fishing practices. The prohibition from the same date on the use of gill and other specified nets will now be limited to those nets with a mesh size between 65 and 89 mm to limit the impact of this measure on the fishery for other species such as grey mullet, sole, red mullet, herring and other pelagic species. The restrictions will apply to nets used by British fishing vessels within British fishery limits, south of lines of latitude drawn through Donna Nook in Lincolnshire and Haverigg Point in Cumbria. Within this area there will also be a ban on the carriage of such nets unless properly lashed and stowed in such a way that they cannot readily be used. An exception will, however, be made for the carriage use of attended drift nets, beach seines and ring nets along the south coast within the three-mile limit between Rame Head in Cornwall and Beachy Head in Sussex. The mesh size controls will not apply to the waters off Scotland, north-east England, Cumbria and Northern Ireland where the numbers of bass taken are negligible.

The principle of establishing nursery areas has met with much support but it is clear from the response that we have received that further consideration has to be given to the extent of these areas and the restrictions on fishing to operate within them. We have therefore asked officials to

undertake further and detailed consultations with local interests before decisions on establishing individual nursery areas are taken.

The measures outlined above, and those we envisage for nursery areas, are designed to safeguard the bass fishery by protecting juvenile bass. While we are aware of the concerns over the exploitation of adult bass in the offshore fishery, we have no evidence at present to support the introduction of conservation or management controls. This, however, is a matter that we are continuing to keep under review. Finally, as announced last February, we shall be seeking a corresponding increase in the EC minimum landing size for bass.

Fishing Capacity

Mr. Mans: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he is able to announce the results of the study of measures of effective fishing capacity, foreshadowed in his announcement of 30 April 1987.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The Fisheries Departments have completed their study and copies of it are being circulated to representative organisations today. We are also circulating proposals for further changes to the restrictive licensing scheme which would tighten up arrangements for the transfer of licences between vessels with a view to containing the total capacity of the fleet. This is necessary in order to curb the pressure on the fishing opportunities available to our fleet and to meet the reductions in fleet size set out in the multi-annual guidance programme agreed with the European Commission in December 1987.

The consultation paper puts forward for comment by the industry four basic options for changes to the licensing scheme;

(i) the introduction of additional length bands at the top end of the vessel size range;
(ii) the introduction of smaller length bands throughout the size ranges;
(iii) a restriction on capacity using a new "capacity" formula which takes into account the size of vessel and its engine; and
(iv) a simple restriction on any increase in gross registered tonnage and engine size.

Comments on these proposals are being invited by not later than 21 September 1988. Copies of both documents have been placed in the Library.

In order to avoid the balance between our fleet's capacity and its fishing opportunities deteriorating while the consultations are being completed, we are also as from today introducing, in addition to existing rules on licence transfers, a temporary ban on transfers of licences except where the applicants satisfy us that the transfer will not lead to an increase in tonnage or engine power. This ban includes a ban on increasing the tonnage or engine power of a currently licensed vessel. Special consideration will be given to cases where the immediate application of this ban would cause hardship as a result of enforceable financial commitments already entered into.

Detailed arrangements for administering the extra restrictions on licence transfers have been placed in the Library of the House.

Farm Diversification Grant Scheme

Mr. Butler: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what progress there has been in processing applications for the farm diversification grant scheme.

Mr. Ryder: Since the farm diversification grant scheme was introduced on 1 January this year, a total of 649 applications have been received in England. Of these, 530 have been acknowledged, which means a farmer can, if he wishes, make a start on the proposed work before approval of his application is given; 303 applications have so far been approved and 66 rejected or withdrawn.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Public Expenditure Survey

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish a table in the *Official Report*, in the same format as the reply of 7 July, *Official Report*, columns *683-84*, on receipts classified as charges in respect of his programme expenditure over the years 1982-83 to 1990-91, but consistent with the reply of 27 May, *Official Report*, Volume 134, columns *375-76*, indicating the receipts in respect of running costs expenditure together with a supplementary analysis indicating, separately, the amounts of receipts in respect of programme expenditure and of running costs expenditure estimated to have been met from other public expenditure programmes.

Mrs. Chalker: The breakdown of receipts in respect of running costs expenditure for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is set out in the table. Receipts in respect of programme expenditure were given in the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State's written answer of 7 July 1988, at columns *683-84*.

	1982-83 outturn	*1983-84 outturn*	*1984-85 outturn*	*1985-86 outturn*	*[1]1986-87 outturn*	*1987-88 outturn*	*1988-89 plans*	*1990-91 plans*	*£ million 1991-92 plans*
Receipts in respect of running costs included in other public expenditure programmes	1·45	2·40	2·62	2·67	7·24	7·47	8·26	7·56	7·75
Other running cost receipts	10·65	13·22	12·15	17·32	23·95	34·18	33·47	35·78	36·67
TOTAL	12·10	15·62	14·77	19·99	31·19	41·65	41·73	43·34	44·42

[1] With effect 1986 total includes receipts from ODA for services of DS officers and locally engaged staff administrating full-time aid work overseas.

Katyn Massacre

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on his progress of his Department's studies of Soviet involvement in the Katyn massacre.

Mrs. Chalker: Successive British Governments have made clear their shock and repugnance at the Katyn massacre. There is substantial circumstantial evidence pointing to Soviet responsibility for the killings. We look to the Polish-Soviet commission which is studying Katyn to settle the question once and for all.

South Africa

Mr. Allen McKay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will give details on the representations he or his Department have received relating to Her Majesty's Government's action and policy towards The Promotion of Orderly Internal Politics Bill in South Africa.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend met a delegation of South African Church leaders on 23 May. My hon. Friend the Minister of State, Home Department met representatives of the South African Catholic Bishops' Conference on 13 April and I met British charitable organisations active in South Africa on 21 April. Officials received a delegation from the British Council of Churches on 18 May. In addition we have received letters from MPs, charities, political organisations, Churches, trades unions and members of the public.

Mr. Allen McKay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action he proposes to take in the light of the South African Government's proposed legislation restricting the activities and funding of peaceful opposition groups in South Africa; and if he will make it his policy to support the EEC special programme for the victims of apartheid.

Mrs. Chalker: We support wholeheartedly the European Community's special programme for the victims of apartheid and are committed to its future success. As a consequence of our repeated representations, both bilaterally and jointly with our European partners, the South African Government are in no doubt as to our opposition to the draft "Promotion of Orderly Internal Politics" Bill.

Saudi Arabia (Social Insurance Contributions)

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what developments he can report towards the refunding of contributions to British citizens by the General Organisation for Social Insurance in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia following the March 1987 Saudi royal decree removing expatriates from the social insurance system; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: The refund of the General Organisation for Social Insurance (GOSI) contributions is a matter for the Saudi Arabian authorities. HM ambassador in Saudi Arabia is doing everything he properly can to hasten the refund of these contributions. He (and other ambassadors there) call periodically on the Saudi Minister responsible for the GOSI matters to underline our wish to see that these claims are settled as soon as possible.

Nuclear Safety

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the reply to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy, *Official Report*, 14 June, columns *122-123* whether the European Commission report to which he makes reference has now been published; what was the basis on which he came to the understanding that no breach of the ECC safeguards regime had taken place; and what steps he took to reach the conclusion that the investigation was thorough.

Mrs. Chalker: The European Commission report has not yet been published. On the question of lack of breach of EEC safeguards I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Putney (Mr. Mellor), gave to the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) on 10 February 1988 at column *234*.

The commission investigation has involved numerous visits by a team of experts to nuclear installations, site inspections, round table discussions and examination of records. We see no reason to doubt its thoroughness.

Prisoners (China)

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action he has taken in the light of the recent all-party parliamentary report on ill-treatment of prisoners in Chinese prisons, a copy of which has been sent to him; whether he has made special representations on behalf of prisoners to be transferred to China in 1997 from Hong Kong; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: We have not received a copy of the document described. But as for Hong Kong, the Sino-British joint declaration and the draft Basic Law both make clear that the legal and judicial systems in the future Hong Kong special administrative region will be separate from those of the People's Republic of China; and that the laws currently in force in Hong Kong will remain basically unchanged, save for any that contravene the Basic Law.

Any prisoners held in Hong Kong gaols in 1997 will become the responsibility of the Hong Kong special administrative region, not of China.

Diplomats (Removal)

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is his policy with regard to seeking the removal from the United Kingdom of diplomats detained by the United Kingdom authorities and who have been appointed to permanent missions in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: Where it is alleged that a member of the staff of a diplomatic mission has committed a criminal offence, we follow the policy laid down in paragraphs 57 to 73 of the White Paper "Diplomatic Immunities and Privileges" (April 1985; Cmnd. 9497).

Diplomatic Immunity

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what guidance is issued to members of the diplomatic corps with regard to the precise point at which their diplomatic immunity takes effect in relation to a particular posting.

Mrs. Chalker: None. The point at which immunity takes effect is covered by the provisions of article 39 of the Vienna convention on diplomatic relations, which will be known to the sending state.

Malaysia

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list all meetings which Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia, or his staff, have had with officials of his Department, since March 1983 together with the persons attending and the substance thereof; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend's most recent meetings with Dr. Mahathir were in July 1987 (during Dr. Mahathir's visit to the United Kingdom) and in April 1988 (during my right hon. and learned Friend's visit to Malaysia). I met Dr. Mahathir during the September 1987 CPA conference in Malaysia.

We have regular contact with the Malaysian Government on a wide range of issues, both in London and through our high commission in Kuala Lumpur. It is not our practice to give details of confidential exchanges with foreign Governments.

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list all representations since January 1981 of Her Majesty's Government to the Government of Malaysia concerning the Malaysian Government's "Buy British Last" policy; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: We took all suitable opportunities to impress on the Malaysians our concern about the "Buy British Last" policy. We were delighted when Dr. Mahathir ended the policy in April 1983, and have been gratified by the subsequent development of bilateral trade and all-round improvement in our relations.

Diplomatic Relations

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what guidance is issued to members of the diplomatic corps with regard to the application of article 39 of the 1961 Vienna convention on diplomatic relations; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: None. The provisions of article 39 of the Vienna convention on diplomatic relations will be known to sending states.

China (Extradition)

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what stage his consultations have reached with the Government of the People's Republic of China about an extradition treaty; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: Officials have discussed the possibility of an agreement on judicial assistance to cover civil and commercial matters, with Chinese officials. We have not for the time being considered an agreement on extradition, or discussed this with the Chinese Government.

China (Death Penalty)

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has sought any assurances from the Government of the People's Republic of China that the death penalty will not be carried out after 1 July 1997 on any fugitive returned to Hong Kong prior to 30 June 1997; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: The Sino-British joint declaration and the draft Basic Law both make clear that the legal and judicial systems in the future Hong Kong special administrative region will be separate from those of the People's Republic of China; and that the laws currently in force in Hong Kong will remain basically unchanged, save for any that contravene the Basic Law. Under Hong Kong's laws the commutation of a death sentence is irrevocable. This applies to all death sentences passed in Hong Kong prior to 1997, but commuted by the Governor of Hong Kong. After 1997, these matters will fall within the high degree of autonomy to be enjoyed by the Hong Kong special administrative region government under the joint declaration and the Basic Law.

Endangered Species (Hong Kong)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what additional measures aimed at educating the public are currently being considered by the Hong Kong authorities in respect of responsibilities under the convention on international trade in endangered species.

Mrs. Chalker: The Hong Kong Government, in conjunction with the World Wild Life Fund for Nature (Hong Kong), are intensifying their publicity and educational efforts by displaying more posters at entry points—for example, train stations and the airport—and other public places; by distributing more leaflets to schools, travel agents and the general public; by issuing more press releases and making more radio and television announcements; by organising more exhibitions and seminars; and by producing an audio-slide programme for presentation in all country park visitors' centres.

Ivory Products (Hong Kong)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will seek to establish a ban by the Hong Kong authorities on the import of all ivory products; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: Ivory trade is permissible under CITES and the CITES secretariat has set up an ivory unit to co-ordinate the trade. It is not necessary to ban the import of ivory into Hong Kong. The Hong Kong authorities will only permit imports of ivory products from legal and CITES approved sources.

Animals and Animal Products (Hong Kong)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many prosecutions have been initiated by the Hong Kong authorities arising from the seizure of illegally imported animals and animal products in each year since 1979.

Mrs. Chalker: The Hong Kong authorities do not maintain separate statistics relating to prosecutions for illegal imports of animals and animal products. The following statistics include prosecutions in respect of

illegal imports, illegal exports and illegal possession of endangered species since 1979. Relevant statistics for 1988 are not yet available.

	Number
1979	109
1980	170
1981	154
1982	248
1983	58
1984	103
1985	294
1986	192
1987	366

Ivory Sales (Hong Kong)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has about the ultimate destination and use of *(a)* the 638 pieces of elephant ivory tusk. *(b)* the 239·2 kg of elephant ivory cut pieces and *(c)* the 81·2 kg of elephant ivory scraps sold at auction in Hong Kong on 26 February.

Mrs. Chalker: None.

Illegal Animal Products (Hong Kong)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will seek to establish a policy in Hong Kong that in future all seized items of illegally imported animal tusks, skins and antler are burned.

Mrs. Chalker: The Hong Kong authorities dispose of confiscated specimens in accordance with the convention on international trade in endangered species (CITES) guidelines. Under these guidelines the Hong Kong authorites normaly dispose of animal tusks, skins and antlers by auction (in the case of the less endangered species listed in CITES appendix II) or for educational or scientific purposes (in the case of the most endangered species listed in CITES appendix I). We see no reason to alter these arrangements.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what was the total amount raised at the auction in Hong Kong on 26 February of illegally imported animals tusks, skins and antlers seized by the authorities; to what purpose the revenue raised has been put; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: The total amount raised at the auction was HK $2,022,103. The proceeds have been credited to the general revenue of the Hong Kong Government, who provide the funds to the Agriculture and Fisheries Department, which is the management authority responsible for the enforcement and administration of CITES.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if any auctions are impending in Hong Kong of illegally imported animal tusks, skins and antlers which have beeen confiscated.

Mrs. Chalker: The Hong Kong authorities have no plans for any such auctions at present.

Tristan da Cunha

Dr. Marek: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether his Department requires to be furnished with information or has received information on *(a)* the beneficial interest and ownership of companies trading in or with Tristan da Cunha and *(b)* the beneficial interest of shares held by directors of those companies; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: My Department has been given the following information by companies trading in or with Tristan da Cunha:

(a) Tristan Investments (Pty) Ltd., responsible for operating the fishing concession at Tristan da Cunha, is a South African registered wholly owned subsidiary of the Bermuda registered company South Atlantic Islands Development Corporation Ltd. The Bank of Butterfield and Son Ltd., Bermuda, holds 75 per cent. of the Corporation's issued shares to the order of financial institutions. Of these shares, a British/Swiss Financial institution, SG Warburg Bank AG, holds 7000 of the Corporation's shares (equivalent to 70 per cent. of the issued capital).

(b) Table Bay Marine (Pty) Ltd., which acts as a buying agent for general merchandise for the Islands, is a wholly owned subsidiary of Palinauris Investments Ltd., a Bermuda registered trading company. The majority shareholding in Palinauris Investments is held by Field Nominees Ltd. of Bermuda.

SCOTLAND

Convention of Scottish Local Authorities

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he next expects to meet representatives of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities; and what subjects he expects to discuss.

Mr. Rifkind: I hope next to meet representatives of COSLA around mid-November, to discuss the distribution of revenue support grant for 1989-90.

Denominational Single Sex Schools, Strathclyde

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received concerning the future of denominational single sex schools in Strathclyde region; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: We received over 400 letters about the proposed closure of Our Lady and St. Francis school and over 3,000 about the proposed closure of Notre Dame high school, Glasgow. Both are denominational girls' schools. In the case of Notre Dame the Secretary of State refused consent to the proposal; but the proposal to close Our Lady and St. Francis was not one which required his consent.

Gaelic Language (Television Programmes)

17. **Sir Russell Johnston:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with BBC Scotland and the independent television companies on the role of television in the field of Gaelic language learning; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: My right hon. and learned Friend meets representatives of the broadcasting authorities from

time to time to discuss Scottish broadcasting matters in general, including Gaelic television broadcasting. The most recent occasion was in January this year, when he met the senior management of Scottish Television and the topics covered included Gaelic television. We have consistently encouraged the broadcasting authorities to provide a reasonable range of Gaelic programmes.

24. **Mrs. Ray Michie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on his policy on the level of Gaelic programming, including educational programming, on television in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: My right hon. and learned Friend has encouraged the BBC and the IBA to provide a reasonable level of television broadcasting in the Gaelic language and we will continue to do so. The content of Gaelic programmes is, however, a matter for the broadcasting authorities in discussion with those representing the Gaelic community. We understand that Grampian Television is preparing a series of programmes for standard grade Gaelic courses which are to be introduced in the next session.

26. **Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his policy towards the encouragement of Gaelic language programming on television.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: As indicated in my reply to the hon. Gentleman on 10 May, at column *94*, we appreciate the contribution which television can make to encouraging the preservation of the Gaelic language. Our support for a reasonable level of Gaelic programmes has been made known to the television companies and we have encouraged the organisations representing the Gaelic community to discuss their needs with the broadcasters. The amount of programming time devoted to such programmes is, however, for the companies to decide, taking account of demand and available resources.

Housing (Scotland) Bill

18. **Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will seek to amend the Housing (Scotland) Bill so as to protect the rights of public sector housing tenants to remain in the public sector if they so choose; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Amendments to the Housing Bill will be brought forward to ensure that adequate consultation with tenants is undertaken where transfer to a private sector landlord is proposed by the local authority and to require my right hon. and learned Friend to withhold his consent to such a disposal if it appears to him that a majority of tenants involved do not wish the disposal to proceed.

Nurses (Pay)

19. **Mr. Ernie Ross:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give for each health board the cost of funding the recent nurses' pay award.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The overall increase in the nurses' pay bill as a result of this year's pay award was estimated by the review body to be 15·3 per cent. It is this estimate that has been used in determining the amount of additional funding to be provided to meet the costs of the award. Details of the total allocations provided to individual health boards were given in my answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) on 5 July.

54. **Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects to know the final cost of the recent nurses' pay award.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: When the new clinical grading structure is in place. It is expected to be completed by the end of October.

Rating Reform

20. **Mr. Canavan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what recent communications he has had with poll tax registration officers about progress with the registration process; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: There have been no formal discussions. Informal contacts with registration officers indicate that the registration process is going smoothly.

Scottish Council

21. **Mr. Salmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he next expects to meet representatives of the Scottish Council (Development and Industry); and what subjects are expected to be discussed.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend has accepted an invitation to address the council's international forum at Aviemore in October, which will focus on Scotland's future in Europe and the implications of the single European market.

Ravenscraig Steelworks

22. **Mr. Foulkes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what assessment his Department has made of the effect of closure of the Ravenscraig steelworks on employment in other areas of the Scottish economy.

38. **Mrs. Fyfe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what calculation has been made of the loss of non-steel industry jobs in the short term and in the long term, consequent upon Ravenscraig being closed.

Mr. Lang: The British Steel Corporation has given an assurance, based on commercial judgment, that there will be a requirement for steel making at Ravenscraig for at least seven years from last December. I see, therefore, no need at present for such an assessment.

25. **Dr. Bray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he will pay an official visit to the Ravenscraig hot strip mill; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend has no immediate plans to visit Ravenscraig. The chairman of the British Steel Corporation has recently confirmed to my right hon. and learned Friend that there is no reason for the corporation at present to make plans to close the Ravenscraig hot strip mill.

31. **Mr. Harry Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will meet the Scottish Trades Union Congress to discuss the future of Ravenscraig hot strip mill.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend has not received any request from the Scottish Trades Union Congress for such a meeting. If a meeting is sought, consideration will be given to the request at the time.

47. **Dr. Reid:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what specific steps he proposes to take to ensure that his undertakings in respect of the future of the hot strip mill at Ravenscraig are fulfilled; and if he will list the references in the *Official Report* where such undertakings were made.

Mr. Rifkind: The undertakings referred to are assurances given by the British Steel Corporation based on its own commercial judgment and are reflected in the statement made by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on 3 December 1987, at column 1107.

This statement, that there would be a continued need for steel-making at all of the integrated plants, including Ravenscraig, for a period of at least seven years, subject to market conditions, and that there would be continued operation of the hot strip mill at Ravenscraig until at least 1989, has been referred to many times during the passage of the British Steel Bill and in other proceedings. The references could be listed only at disproportionate cost.

Power Station Coalburn

23. **Mr. Eadie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on coalburn in power stations, in the light of meetings he has had with representatives of the South of Scotland Electricity Board and British Coal.

Mr. Lang: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas) on 13 June, at column *37*.

I have been advised by the South of Scotland Electricity Board that, as part of its coal supply arrangements for the financial year 1988-89, it has now agreed with British Coal to take deliveries at a rate which will result in a total for the year of up to 3·5 million tonnes.

This agreement has been reached on the basis of commercial negotiations between the parties and there is no question of the Government having intervened in the discussions.

"The Scottish Office and its Activities"

27. **Mr. McTaggart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the cost to his Department of preparing the booklet, "The Scottish Office and its Activities."

Mr. Rifkind: The cost to my Department of preparing the booklet was £321.

Electricity Privatisation

28. **Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has made an assessment of the likely demand for shares in a privatised electricity industry from *(a)* private individuals resident in Scotland and *(b)* institutional and corporate investors.

Mr. Lang: We are giving careful consideration to this aspect of the privatisation, and are confident that individual and institutional investors in Scotland will take up a significant proportion of the shares.

Rate Support Grant Clawback

30. **Mr. Dunnachie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will take steps to ensure that no Scottish local authority is penalised by rate support grant clawback in the year 1989-90; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: There will be no grant penalties in respect of authorities' budgeted expenditure in 1989-90.

Single Market (Electronics Industry)

32. **Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement about the employment implications for the electronics industry in Scotland of the European single market.

Mr. Lang: The removal of the remaining barriers to trade between member states is expected to offer considerable new business opportunities to electronics companies. In particular the harmonisation of technical standards will provide new export opportunities in markets where previously they have represented constraints.

Committee on the Constitution (Report)

33. **Mr. Steel:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received on the report of the committee on the constitution, "Claim of Right for Scotland."

Mr. Rifkind: None.

Average Earnings

34. **Mr. Favell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what position Scotland held in the United Kingdom in terms of average earnings in 1979; and what position it now occupies.

Mr. Lang: Information from the new earnings surveys shows Scotland ranking fifth among the United Kingdom standard regions in 1979, and third in 1987.

44. **Mr. Riddick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what are the latest average male earnings figures available; and what were the comparable figures in 1986 and 1979.

Mr. Lang: The following information comes from the Department of Employment's new earnings survey.

Average gross weekly earnings of full-time male employees whose earnings were not affected by absence—Scotland

April	*On adult rates*[1] *£ per week*	*Aged 21 or over*[2] *£ per week*
1979	n/a	101·2
1986	201·3	204·2
1987	214·6	218·2

[1] This is the basis currently used in the new earnings survey reports.
[2] This is the basis used previously.

Employment Opportunities (Glasgow)

35. **Mr. Michael J. Martin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the recent steps he has taken to increase employment opportunities in the Glasgow area.

Mr. Lang: Government policies aimed at controlling inflation and stimulating economic growth offer the best prospect for creating permanent new employment opportunities in the Glasgow area. However, a number of Government measures have been aimed specifically at

improving the city's infrastructure and stimulating new enterprise and development. These measures include assistance made available through the Scottish Development Agency and its support for local projects such as the Glasgow garden festival, Glasgow opportunities and the east end executive.

Home Improvement Grants

36. **Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what plans he has for the future of home improvement grants; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: In May, my right hon. and learned Friend issued the consultation paper, "Private Housing Renewal: The Government's Proposals for Scotland." The paper explains and expands on the reform proposals which were outlined in the Scottish housing White Paper, published last November. The Government are confident that the proposals for streamlining the private home improvement system and targeting grant on those who need it most will make a major contribution to improving the condition of the private sector housing stock throughout Scotland.

Gaelic Language

37. **Mr. Bowis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he is contemplating any further measures to secure the future of the Gaelic language.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: In the current financial year some £198,000 will be provided as grant aid under the provisions of the National Heritage (Scotland) Act 1985 to bodies which support Gaelic; £500,000 will be spent to bring forward projects under the specific grant scheme for Gaelic education. The Scottish Arts Council has allocated approximately £120,000 and the Highlands and Islands Development Board some £195,000 in support of Gaelic projects.

Education (Scotland) Act 1981

39. **Mr. Michael Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many parents have exercised their right under the Education (Scotand) Act 1981 to choose which school their child attends.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Between 15 February 1982 and 31 July 1987 116,409 placing requests were made under the terms of the Education (Scotland) Act 1981, of which 109,213 (93·8) per cent. were granted.

Industrial Progress

40. **Sir Hector Monro :** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any plans to meet the Confederation of British Industry in Scotland to discuss industrial progress.

49. **Mr. Cran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he next intends to meet the chairman of the Confederation of British Industry in Scotland; and what matters he proposes to discuss.

Mr. Rifkind: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply by my hon. Friend the Minister of State to the hon. Member for Angus, East (Mr. Walsh) on 27 June, at column 79.

Privatisation

41. **Mr. Gerald Howarth :** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list all those concerns in Scotland which have been privatised since 1979; and if he will estimate the consequent increase in share ownership in Scotland.

Mr. Lang: No public sector body which had a separate Scottish existence in 1979 has been transferred to private ownership since then.

The privatisations of the South of Scotland Electricity Board, the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board and the Scottish Bus Group are in preparation.

No separate estimates have been made of the increase in share ownership in Scotland due to the privatisation of Great Britain bodies.

Steel Industry

42. **Mr. Tom Clarke:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he next expects to meet Strathclyde regional council and the district councils in Lanarkshire, to discuss the future of the Scottish steel industry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang My right hon. and learned Friend has no immediate plans to do so.

Devolution

43. **Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his policy towards devolution for Scotland, in the light of the report entitled "A Claim of Right for Scotland" published by the Campaign for a Scottish Assembly, a copy of which has been sent to him; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Rifkind: In this House, and elsewhere, I have made my views on devolution very clear. These views are not changed by this report, and I have no plans to make a statement.

50. **Mr. Malcolm Bruce** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received from the Campaign for a Scottish Assembly seeking a meeting to discuss its recent report entitled "A Claim of Right for Scotland".

Mr. Rifkind: I have received no request for a meeting from the Campaign for a Scottish Assembly since its report, "A Claim of Right for Scotland", was published.

Labour Statistics

45. **Mr. Ron Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many people are currently unemployed in Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: On 9 June 1988 there were 288,792 unemployed claimants in Scotland.

This is the lowest level of unemployment since 1981 and is further evidence of the success of the Government's economic policies.

Confederation of British Industry

46. **Mr. Oppenheim:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last met representatives of the Confederation of British Industry (Scotland); and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Lang: I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) on 27 April, at column *188*.

Civil Service Relocation

51. **Mr. Ingram:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps he has taken to encourage the relocation of the Civil Service posts from London-based departments to Scotland.

Mr. Rifkind: My right hon. and learned Friend and I are keen to encourage further relocation of Government offices from London and the south-east to Scotland. Some 2,000 posts have been moved to Scotland since 1979, including over 400 in the move of the Overseas Development Administration to East Kilbride. I have arranged for the recent report on the Overseas Development Administration dispersal, which provides clear evidence of the benefits of such moves to the national and local economies, to be brought to the attention of Departments which are currently reviewing their location of work under arrangements announced by my right hon. Friend the Paymaster General on 31 March, at columns *610-11*.

Tourists (Air Traffic Control Delays)

52. **Mr. David Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what effect air traffic control delays are having on the numbers of tourists arriving at Scottish airports from abroad; and whether he has prepared any estimate of the likely impact of reduced tourist arrivals on consumer spending in Scotland.

Mr. Lang: Recent air traffic control difficulties are unlikely to have had any significant impact on the number of foreign visitors to Scotland this year. Expenditure by these visitors is also unlikely to have been affected.

Forestry Policy

53. **Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps the Forestry Commission takes to co-ordinate forestry policy as between its own plantations and military land; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: It is the Forestry Commission's practice to co-operate with the military authorities wherever possible to meet their training requirements. Extensive use is made of commission land for this purpose, the most recent notable example being exercise Purple Warrior in south-west Scotland.

Public Spending

55. **Mr. Marlow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the level of public spending per capita per annum for Scotland at the latest available date.

Mr. Rifkind: The latest available figures are in the reply which my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury gave on 23 October 1987, at columns 901-2.

Scottish Development Agency

56. **Mrs. Margaret Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he next expects to meet representatives of the Scottish Development Agency; and what subjects are expected to be discussed.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend and I meet the chairman, board and chief executive of the agency as necessary to discuss issues of mutual interest. There are, however, no plans at present for such a meeting in the immediate future.

Economic Growth (Report)

57. **Mr. Watts:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what action he proposes to take in the light of the recent Fraser of Allander Institute quarterly economic commentary, a copy of which has been sent to him, concerning the relative growth of the Scottish economy vis-à-vis the rest of the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: The "Fraser of Allander Institute Quarterly Commentary" concludes that

"both short-term and long-term prospects for the Scottish economy continue to be favourable".

I wholeheartedly agree with the commentary that growth in the Scottish economy this year and in the years ahead is likely to match that of the United Kingdom as a whole.

Health Boards

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list, by health board, the people appointed to area health boards in Scotland, together with the date and source of nomination of their appointment for every year since 1983.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: This information is not readily available in the precise format requested. Listed are (1) details of the present members of health boards together with their original date of appointment and source of nomination and (2) details of those members appointed since 1983 who are no longer serving members together with their original date of appointment, date of termination and source of nomination.

Argyll and Clyde health board
Present members

Name	*Date of first appointment*	*Nominated by*
Members appointed to 31 March 1989		
Mrs. E. M. Cockburn, OBE	1 April 1981	Mr. Russell Fairgrieve MP
Dr. R. Erskine	1 April 1977	British Medical Association
Mrs. M. A. Foggie	1 April 1985	Inverclyde Local Health Council
Mr. J. H. Gillougley	1 April 1981	Paisley Chamber of Commerce
Dr. Anne M. Kelly	1 April 1985	Association of Clinical Biochemists
Mrs. J. C. Le Roux	1 April 1981	Cancer Research Committee: Chief Whip
Dr. J. Moffat	1 April 1981	Royal College of Psychiatrists
Rev. J. Young	1 April 1985	Renfrew Local Health Council

Name	Date of first appointment	Nominated by
Members appointed to 31 March 1991		
Mr. J. D. Barnett	1 April 1987	Scottish Episcopal Church, Diocese of Argyll and the Isles
Mr. A. H. Brabender	1 April 1983	Scottish Conservative Party and Chief Whip
Mr. J. Campbell	1 April 1983	Paisley and District Branch of Confederation of Health Service Workers
Mr. L. Capaldi	12 January 1978	Mr. Harry Ewing MP
Mr. J. Cattanach	25 January 1978	Haemophilia Society
Mr. George M. Deuchars	1 April 1987	Bank of Scotland
Dr. S. G. McAlpine	1 April 1983	Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons
Mrs. Leila C. McKichan	1 April 1987	British Red Cross Society
Mr. G. McMillan	1 April 1987	Regional Council
Mr. R. R. Reid	1 April 1983	Argyll and Bute District Council and Argyll and Bute Local Health Council
Mrs. E. W. Riddell	1 April 1987	Inverclyde District Council

Members retired since 1983

Name	Date of first appointment	Date terminated	Nominated by
Mr. I. D. F. Halligan	1 April 1983	31 March 1987	Confederation of British Industry
Mr. J. M. McCorkindale	12 November 1979	31 March 1987	Strathclyde Regional Council
Miss P. McGowan	1 April 1979	31 March 1987	Society of Radiographers
Miss M. Macleod	1 April 1983	13 March 1986	Scottish Association of Nurse Administrators
Mr. C. J. Needle	1 April 1985	2 April 1986	Inverclyde District Council
Mr. E. T. F. Spence	1 April 1983	May 1988	Ministerial
Mr. T. A. Stewart	1 April 1975	31 March 1985	Scottish Trade Union Congress

Ayrshire and Arran health board
Present members

Name	Date of first appointment	Nominated by
Members appointed to 31 March 1989		
Mr. J. Cahill	1 April 1977	Cunningham District Council
Mrs. A. M. Campbell	1 April 1985	Scottish Society for the Mentally Handicapped
Mr. T. Dickie	1 April 1985	Health Board
Mr. J. W. G. Donaldson	1 April 1985	Health Board
Mrs. M. W. Gallie	1 April 1985	Mr. John Corrie MP
Dr. J. J. Morrow	1 April 1981	British Medical Association
Mr. I. B. Valentine	1 April 1981	Ayr Constituency Conservative Association
Mrs. A. B. Wilson	1 April 1981	Ministerial
Dr. W. M. Wilson	1 April 1981	British Medical Association
Members appointed to 31 March 1991		
Mr. K. Blair	6 May 1987	Cumnock and Doon Valley District Council: Health Board
Mr. J. D. Brown	1 April 1987	Health Board
Mr. R. Campbell JP	1 April 1987	Strathclyde Regional Council
Mrs. A. Dunbar	1 April 1979	Cunninghâm District Council
Mr. P. Hunter	1 April 1975	Scottish Trade Union Congress
Mrs. N. M. Lambie	1 April 1979	Cunningham District Council
Mr. J. T. Sinclair	1 April 1987	Society Radiographers
Mr. B. A. Murphy	1 April 1983	Law Society of Scotland
Mr. D. Watts-Russell	1 April 1987	Chief Whip's Office
Dr. J. P. Wiltshire	1 April 1983	Confederation of British Industry
Mr. J. McNally	7 July 1988	Health Board

Members retired since 1983

Name	Date of first appointment	Date Terminated	Nominated by
Mrs. M. M. Bicker	1 April 1975	31 March 1987	Royal College of Midwives
Dr. H. Cameron	1 April 1979	31 March 1985	British Medical Association, Glasgow University
Mr. F. J. McCafferty	1 April 1981	31 March 1987	Council for Professions Supplementary to Medicine
Mr. W. S. McConnell	1 April 1983	31 March 1987	Pharmaceutical Society
Mrs. M. MacDonald	1 April 1983	31 March 1987	Ministerial
Mr. D. M. McMillan	1 April 1979	31 March 1987	Strathclyde Regional Council
Mr. G. M. Pettitt	1 April 1979	31 March 1985	Scottish Trade Union Congress
Miss J. Ross	1 April 1987	31 December 1987	Royal College of Midwives
Mr. D. Shankland	1 April 1979	31 March 1987	Cumnock and Doon Valley District Council

Borders health board
Present members

Name	*Date of first appointment*	*Nominated by*
Members appointed to 31 March 1989		
Dr. W. B. Aitken	1 April 1981	British Medical Assocation: Health Board
Mr. P. S. Elliot	1 April 1975	Scottish Trade Union Congress: Health Board
Mr. R. W. Jack	1 April 1981	Roxburgh District Council: Health Board
Mr. A. C. Purves, MBE	13 April 1973	Confederation of British Industry: British Medical Association: Health Board
Lady F. E. Sanderson	1 April 1985	Borders Local Health Council
Mr. R. A. Stewart	13 April 1973	British Medical Association: Scottish Trade Union Congress: Health Board
Members appointed to 31 March 1991		
Mr. A. P. Dorward	1 April 1979	British Medical Association: Health Board
Mrs. M. Forster	1 April 1987	Chief Whip's Office
Dr. I. G. Houston	1 April 1987	British Medical Association: Royal College of Surgeons
Mrs. M. Millican	1 April 1983	Berwickshire District Council: Borders Local Health Council
Mrs. F. M. Nisbet	1 April 1983	Scottish Health Visitors Association: Scottish Association of Nurse Administrators
Mr. W. Scott, CBE	1 April 1983	Scottish Conservative Party and Chief Whip's Office
Mr. W. M. S. Thom	1 April 1987	British Dental Association
Mr. A. S. Watt	1 April 1979	Borders Regional Council

Members retired since 1983

Name	*Date of first appointment*	*Date terminated*	*Nominated by*
Mr. A. G. Rennie	1 April 1979	31 March 1987	Health Board: British Dental Association

Dumfries and Galloway health board
Present members

Name	*Date of first appointment*	*Nominated by*
Members appointed to 31 March 1989		
Mr. W. D. Beck	1 April 1977	Co-op Union Ltd.
Mr. I. S. F. Brown	1 April 1985	Mr. Ian Lang MP
Mrs. M. D. Dick-Smith	15 April 1986	Dumfries and Galloway Regional Council
Miss A. C. Kelly	1 April 1985	Chief Administrative Nursing Officer of Health Board
Mrs. A. R. Murdoch	16 January 1986	Stewarty District Council
Mr. M. J. Pumphry	15 April 1986	Health Board
Dr. T. S. R. Train	1 April 1985	Health Board
Mr. G. Willacy	1 April 1977	Annandale and Eskdale District Council
Mr. W. I. Wilson	18 May 1973	British Medical Association: Wigtown District Council
Members appointed to 31 March 1991		
Mrs. M. H. Bonn	1 April 1983	Health Board
Mrs. A. U. G. Harper	1 April 1979	Scottish Society for Mentally Handicapped
Mr. J. S. Kerr	1 April 1987	Confederation of Health Service Employees
Mr. H. S. McFadzean	1 April 1983	Health Board
Mr. W. Seright	1 April 1983	Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh: Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons, Glasgow: British Medical Association
Mr. W. Service	18 December 1973	British Medical Association, Western Joint Ophthalmic Committee, Wigtown District Council
Mrs. J. D. Tulloch	1 April 1983	Health Board: Western Joint Ophthalmic Committee
Dr. A. P. D. Wilkinson	1 April 1987	British Medical Association

Members retired since 1983

Name	*Date of first appointment*	*Date terminated*	*Nominated by*
Mr. W. H. J. Campbell	1 April 1981	17 October 1985 (Died)	Law Society of Scotland
Dr. J. A. Clark	1 April 1981	22 October 1983 (Died)	Royal College of Psychiatrists
Mr. R. R. Goudie	1 April 1975	31 March 1987	Scottish Trade Union Congress: Health Board
Mrs. J. D. Jack	1 April 1983	31 March 1987	Ministerial
Mr. J. A. McIntyre	May 1973	31 March 1987	British Medical Association: Health Board
Miss I. A. Stewart	1 April 1985	September 1987	Council for Professions Supplementary to Medicine
Mr. M. Webb	1 April 1981	17 October 1985	Dumfries and Galloway Regional Council
Dr. J. B. Wilson	7 September 1976	31 March 1987	British Medical Association: Health Board

Fife health board
Present members

Name	*Date of first appointment*	*Nominated by*
Members appointed to 31 March 1989		
Mr. J. I. M. Burns	1 April 1985	Health Board
Mr. J. S. Edmiston	1 April 1981	Health Board
Mr. H. C. Forwell	1 April 1981	Scottish Association of Master Bakers: Kirkcaldy Chamber of Commerce
Dr. J. B. Gallacher	1 April 1981	St. Andrews Ambulance Association: West Fife Local Health Council: British Medical Association: Dunfermline Medical Committee
Dr. A. A. H.Lawson	1 April 1981	West Fife Local Health Council: Royal College of Physicians: British Medical Association: Dunfermline Medical Committee: St. Andrews Ambulance Association
Mr. G. H. D. Mackie, OBE	1 April 1985	Confederation of British Industry
Mr. J. Marshall	1 April 1985	British Medical Association: Royal College of General Practitioners
Miss M. M. Nelson	1 April 1985	Royal College of Midwives
Mr. G. Reid	30 June 1978	Mr. Harry Ewing MP
Members appointed to 31 March 1991		
Mrs. S. L. Aitken	1 April 1987	Mr. Barry Henderson, MP
Mr. W. Clarke	1 April 1987	Scottish Trade Union Congress
Mrs. C. Haddow	3 May 1973	Scottish Trade Union Congress: British Medical Association: Mr. Harry Gouriay, MP
Mr. J. H. Henderson	1 April 1979	Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain: West Fife Local Health Council
Dr. C. G. Ingram	1 April 1987	University of St. Andrews
Dr. A. A. Marr	1 April 1987	Rotary Club of Cupar
Mr. I. A. McCrone	1 April 1983	Health Board: Kirkcaldy County Conservative Association
Mr. J. McMurdo	1 April 1987	Fife Regional Council
Mr. C. Whitlock	1 April 1983	Dunfermline and West Fife Chamber of Commerce
Mrs. E. A. Young	1 April 1987	Society of Radiographers: Council for Professions Supplementary to Medicine

Members retired since 1983

Name	*Date of first appointment*	*Date terminated*	*Nominated by*
Mrs. J. H. P. Buchanan	12 November 1979	31 March 1987	Health Board
Mr. D. L. Fulton	18 December 1973	31 March 1987	Health Board: Scottish Trade Union Congress
Dr. M. L. Graeme	1 April 1983	31 March 1987	North East Fife District Council
Mr. K. R. Hayward	12 November 1979	31 March 1987	Health Board
Mr. J. H. B. Ivers	1 April 1983	31 March 1987	Society of Chiropodists
Mr. D. Stoddart	1 April 1979	31 March 1987	Health Board: Scottish Trade Union Congress
Mr. R. P. Strugnell	1 April 1987	31 March 1988	Mr. Barry Henderson, MP

Forth Valley health board
Present members

Name	*Date of first appointment*	*Nominated by*
Members appointed to 31 March 1989		
Mr. J. Cross	1 April 1977	British Medical Association: Health Board
Mr. A. B. Cruickshank	1 April 1977	Health Board: Clackmannan District Council
Mr. T. Downs	1 April 1985	Clackmannan District Council
Mrs. J. Isbister	1 April 1985	Chief Whip's Office
Mrs. W. J. A. Macfarlane	1 April 1985	Scottish Trade Union Congress
Professor P. McEwen	1 April 1985	University of Stirling
Mr. A. D. McNeill	1 April 1985	British Medical Association
Mrs. J. S. Young	1 April 1983	College of Speech Therapists
Members appointed to 31 March 1991		
Mr. J. F. C. Armstrong	1 April 1983	Confederation of British Industry
Mr. F. J. Bell	1 April 1987	Health Board
Mr. E. T. M. Bell-Scott	1 April 1987	Health Board
Mrs. M. R. Ferguson	26 April 1983	Scottish Health Visitors Association: Scottish Association of Nurse Administrators
Mr. H. M. Garland	1 April 1987	Association of Directors of Social Work
Mr. K. Harding	1 April 1987	Mr Michael Forsyth, MP
Mrs. E. D. Kennedy	1 April 1987	Central Regional Council
Mr. W. D. M. Leithhead	1 April 1983	Confederation of British Industry
Mr. I. M. Mullen	1 April 1987	Pharmaceutical General Council for Scotland

Members retired since 1983

Name	*Date of first appointment*	*Date terminated*	*Nominated by*
Mr. L. Dunbar	1 April 1981	February 1988	Health Board, British Medical Association
Mrs. M. C. Lambie	1 June 1980	31 March 1987	Central Regional Council
Mr. J. G. Lees	1 April 1983	31 March 1987	British Medical Association

Name	Date of first appointment	Date terminated	Nominated by
Mr. I. A. Peattie	1 April 1987	26 March 1984	Falkirk District Council
Mrs. R. M. Scott	1 April 1983	31 March 1987	Central Regional Council
Mr. J. W. Shoolbread	22 June 1981	30 July 1984	Health Board
Dr. W. J. Thomson	1 April 1979	31 March 1987	University of Glasgow

Grampian health board
Present members

Name	Date of first appointment	Nominated by
Members appointed to 31 March 1989		
Mr. P. S. Cook	1 April 1985	Grampian Regional Council
Captain C. A. Farquharson	1 April 1981	Gordon Local Health Council
Dr. J. G. Henderson	1 April 1977	Royal College of Psychiatrists: British Medical Association: Grampian Area Committee for Hospital Medical Services
Mrs. C. Farquharson	12 August 1982	Ministerial
Professor M. C. Meston	1 April 1985	Health Board
Mr. G. S. Peterkin, JP	1 April 1983	Scottish Trade Union Congress
Mr. J. Ramage	1 April 1985	Scottish Trade Union Congress
Miss E. A. Sheldon, MBE	1 April 1981	Aberdeen Association for Mental Health: Society for Mentally Handicapped Muscular Dystrophy Society: Robert Gordons Institute of Technology
Mrs. V. A. Stevenson	1 April 1985	British Dental Association: Area Dental Committee
Dr. A. J. Taylor	1 April 1985	British Medical Association
Members appointed to 31 March 1991		
Professor A. G. M. Campbell	1 April 1983	University of Aberdeen
Mr. H. D. Cochran	1 April 1983	General Synod of Scottish Episcopal Church and Diocese of Aberdeen
Mr. D. Davidson	1 April 1979	Society of Radiographers (Scottish Branch): Confederation for Professions Supplementary to Medicine
Mr. N. Donald	1 April 1983	Gordon District Council: Gordon Local Health Council
Mrs. R. Kemp	1 April 1987	Grampian Regional Council
Mr. J. Murison	1 April 1975	Scottish Health Visitors Association: Royal College of Nursing
Dr. E. A. Smith, CBE	1 April 1983	Scottish Conservative Party: Chief Whip's Office
Mr. J. Sorrie	1 April 1987	Chief Whip's Office
Professor E. A. Tait	1 April 1983	Mr. John MacKay, MP
Mrs. J. G. A. Wisely, JP	1 April 1987	Women into Public Life Campaign

Members retired since 1983

Name	Date of first appointment	Date terminated	Nominated by
Mrs. J. R. Lamond	1 April 1975	31 March 1987	Grampian Regional Council
Professor W. Walker	1 April 1979	18 December 1984 (Died)	University of Aberdeen
Professor R. D. Weir, OBE	13 April 1973	13 January 1987	University of Aberdeen

Greater Glasgow health board
Present members

Name	Date of first appointment	Nominated by
Members appointed to 31 March 1989		
Lady Goold	1 April 1981	British Dental Association
Mr. J. Jackson	1 April 1983	Scottish Trade Union Congress
Mrs. A. Jarvis	1 April 1985	Strathkelvin District Council
Prof. A. C. Kennedy	1 April 1985	Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons: University of Glasgow
Rev. J. T. Lang	1 April 1985	Church of Scotland
Mr. B. A. Maan	1 April 1981	Glasgow District Council: South West Local Health Council
Dr. J. MacKay, OBE	7 May 1973	British Medical Association: Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons: British Dental Association: Royal College of Surgeons
Mr. L. Turpie	1 April 1985	Chief Whip's Ofice
Mr. C. Williams	1 April 1981	British Medical Association: British Association of Social Workers
Members appointed to 31 March 1991		
Mrs. J. E. Cameron, JP	1 April 1987	Bearsden and Milngavie District Council
Miss E. Donnachie	1 April 1979	British Medical Association: Scottish Association of Nurse Administrators: Royal College of Midwives
Prof. A. T. Florence	1 April 1987	Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain
Mr. A. D. Garland	1 April 1983	Confederation of British Industry
Mrs. A. Gilchirst	1 April 1987	Chief Whip's Office
Mr. P. W. Holst	1 April 1983	British Medical Association: Western Joint Opthalmic Committee
Mr. A. J. Mack	1 April 1987	Ministerial
Mrs. M. McGarry	1 April 1983	Clydebank District Council
Prof. R. M. Mackie	1 April 1987	University of Glasgow
Mr. J. A. Peel	1 April 1987	British Medical Association: Institute of Medical Laboratory Sciences

Members retired since 1983

Name	*Date of first appointment*	*Date terminated*	*Nominated by*
Mr. F. S. Berkley	1 April 1987	17 February 1988	Professor J. Ross-Harper
Mr. D. R. Berridge	11 June 1982	31 May 1983	Confederation of British Industry
Mr. J. F. Dunnachie	1 April 1983	30 June 1987	Strathclyde Regional Council
Mrs. I. D. Kerr	1 April 1983	31 March 1987	Scottish Conservatives: Chief Whip
Professor E. M. McGirr, CBE	1 April 1979	31 March 1985	Glasgow University
Mr. C. C. NcNicol	1 April 1977	17 October 1983	Strathclyde Regional Council
Miss D. B. Rigg	1 April 1979	31 March 1987	Council for Professions Supplementary to Medicine
Mr. J. Ross-Harper	1 April 1981	31 March 1987	Chief Whip
Mr. H. Sheriff	17 May 1978	June 1987	Scottish Trade Union Congress
Mr. D. S. Sinnott	1 April 1981	31 March 1987	Chief Whip
Professor G. S. Timbury	7 May 1973	8 February 1984	Health Board: British Medical Association

Highland health board
Present members

Name	*Date of first appointment*	*Nominated by*
Members appointed to 31 March 1989		
Mrs. H. E. Betts-Brown	1 April 1985	Health Board
Mr. R. J. B. Bryson, MBE	1 April 1985	Council for Professions Supplementary to Medicine: Chartered Society of Physiotherapy
Dr. R. S. C. Ferguson	1 April 1985	British Medical Association: Local Medical Committee
Miss M. T. Hadden	1 April 1981	Royal College of Midwives: Royal College of Nursing: Scottish Health Visitors Association of Nurse Administrators
The right hon. Lord Macdonald of Sleat	1 April 1981	Skye and Lochalsh District Council
Mr. A. I. MacDonald	7 May 1986	Health Board: Caithness District Council
Mr. B. A. Merchant	22 June 1981	Health Board
Dr. W. D. Murray	1 April 1985	Royal College of Physicians: Royal College of Surgeons: Hospital Medical Staff Association
Mrs. S. M. C. South	1 April 1985	Health Board
Members appointed to 31 March 1991		
Mr. G. Bruce	1 April 1987	Caithness Local Health Council
Mr. M. Cumming	1 April 1987	Scottish Trade Union Congress
Mrs. C. B. Fraser	1 April 1987	Ross and Cromarty District Council: Council of Voluntary Service
Dr. C. A. S. Galloway	1 April 1987	British Medical Association: Royal College of Surgeons
Mr. W. G. Johnston	1 April 1983	Sutherland Local Health Council
Mrs. V. MacIver	1 April 1987	Ross and Cromarty District Council
Mr. A. K. Robertson	1 April 1987	Area Dental Committee of Highland Health Board
Mrs. C. Thomson	1 April 1987	Ross and Cromarty Local Health Council
Mrs. R. M. Tulloch	26 April 1983	Scottish Society for Mentally Handicapped: Nairn Local Health Council

Members retired since 1983

Name	*Date of first appointment*	*Date terminated*	*Nominated by*
Mrs. M. Hinds	1 April 1979	31 December 1985	Scottish Trade Union Congress
Mrs. M. A. MacDougall	5 June 1973	31 March 1987	Mr. Hector Monro, MP
Dr. A. D. McIntosh	1 April 1981	31 March 1987	Health Board
Mr. A. A. MacKenzie	1 April 1983	31 March 1987	Health Board
Mrs. L. MacKenzie	1 April 1983	31 March 1987	Sutherland District Council
Mr. K. M. MacLeod	1 April 1973	20 July 1983	Ross and Cromarty District Council
Mr. W. Monahan	1 April 1975	31 March 1987	Scottish Trade Union Congress
Mrs. I. Munro, BEM	1 April 1981	31 March 1987	Mr. Hamish Gray, MP

Lanarkshire health board
Present members

Name	*Date of first appointment*	*Nominated by*
Members appointed to 31 March 1989		
Dr. G. A. Bell	1 April 1981	Ministerial
Mr. T. M. Bennet	16 January 1986	Health Board
Mrs. A. S. Hinshalwood	18 December 1973	Health Board: Mr. Hector Monro MP
Mrs. J. H. Holmes	1 April 1981	Ministerial
Mr. A. A. McIlwain, CBE	1 April 1981	Law Society of Scotland
Mrs. D. C. McGirr	1 April 1981	Royal College of Physicians: Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons
Mr. G. McIntosh	1 April 1985	Confederation of British Industry
Dr. A. Mathewson	1 April 1977	British Medical Association
Mr. J. Thomson	1 April 1985	Voluntary Association for Mental Welfare
Members appointed to 31 March 1991		
Miss J. E. Jarvie	1 April 1987	Lanarkshire Branch Royal College of Nursing
Mr. R. J. Logan	18 December 1973	Heath Board

Name	Date of first appointment	Nominated by
Mr. D. McClymont	1 April 1979	Society of Radiographers
Dr. P. K. Mukherjee	1 April 1987	British Medical Association
Mr. W. J. O'Brien, JP	1 April 1983	Cumbernauld and Kilsyth District Council
Mr. H. Porter OBE	1 April 1987	Confederation of British Industry
Mr. T. S. L. Reid	26 April 1983	Health Board
Mr. J. P. Robinson	1 April 1983	Strathclyde Regional Council
Miss J. Rutherford	1 April 1987	East Kilbride Local Health Council
Mr. W. Traynor	1 April 1983	Scottish Trade Union Congress: Western Joint Opthalmic Committee

Members retired since 1983

Name	Date of first appointment	Date terminated	Nominated by
Mrs. A. Agnew	1 April 1979	28 February 1984	Royal College of Nursing
Mr. W. Bertram, MBE	1 April 1979	8 April 1985	Institute of Medical Sciences
Mr. A. Braidwood	16 January 1986	January 1988	Health Board
Mr. F. Campbell	1 April 1983	9 January 1984	Confederation of British Industry
Mrs. N. Cochrane	1 April 1985	25 May 1988	Hamilton District Council
Dr. D. Datta	1 April 1981	31 March 1987	Overseas Doctors Association
Mrs. A. M. M[illegible]	1 April 1983	June 1984	East Kilbride District Council
Mr. J. B. Russell	1 April 1985	April 1987	Co-op Union Ltd.
Mr. S. Scott	1 April 1981	12 June 1986	Chief Whip

Lothian health board
Present members

Name	Date of first appointment	Nominated by
Members appointed to 31 March 1989		
Mrs. P. Bell	1 April 1981	Conservative and Unionist Party
Mr. I. Capperauld	1 April 1981	Ministerial
Mr. A. T. Clark, MBE, MVO	1 April 1981	Edinburgh District Council
Mrs. W. E. Donaldson	19 April 1973	Lothian Regional Council: British Medical Association
Sir J. D. Fraser	1 April 1985	British Medical Association
Mr. W. B. Herald	1 April 1985	Scottish Trade Union Congress
Dr. A. R. Milne	1 April 1981	Health Board: Royal College of General Practitioners
Mr. J. F. Wilson	1 April 1985	Bank of Scotland
Professor J. Williamson	1 April 1983	Edinburgh University
Members appointed to 31 March 1991		
Mrs. G. Barton	1 April 1979	Lothian Regional Council: Edinburgh District Council
Dr. J. W. Baynham	1 May 1987	Confederation of British Industry
Miss J. A. Brown	1 April 1987	Society of Radiographers: Council for Professions Supplementary to Medicine
Mrs. E. Burnett	1 April 1987	Royal College of Nursing
Mr. J. Campbell	1 April 1987	Chief Whips Office
Mr. A. B. Dunlop	26 April 1983	Scottish Conservative Party and Chief Whips Office
Mrs. J. Ferguson	1 April 1987	Health Board
Mr. D. R. Findlay	1 April 1987	The Faculty of Advocates
Dr. Jessie Gray	1 April 1987	West Lothian District Local Health Council
Dr. R. I. Kennedy	1 April 1987	Royal College of Psychiatrists
Mr. J. M. MacNeill, CBE	1 April 1983	Confederation of British Industry
Dr. M. McGregor	5 May 1988	Lord James Douglas-Hamilton
Mr. G. S. Millar	2 November 1984	Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain

Members retired since 1983

Name	Date of first appointment	Date Terminated	Nominated by
Mr. J. Dunning	12 August 1982	19 September 1984	Mr. Malcolm Rifkind MP
Mrs. E. S. Foy	19 April 1973	31 May 1984	East Lothian District Council
Miss B. Jamieson	2 November 1984	31 October 1986	Royal College of Midwives
Dr. R. J. Kellett	1 April 1983	31 March 1987	British Medical Association
Mr. E. A. Matthews	1 April 1983	31 March 1987	Midlothian Local Health Council
Mr. G. S. Millar	1 April 1985	26 February 1987	Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain
Mr. D. Molloy	1 April 1979	31 March 1987	Midlothian District Council
Mr. E. J. Rawlings	1 April 1983	31 March 1987	Council for Professions Supplementary to Medicine
Professor A. R. Rogers	1 April 1981	31 January 1984	Heriot Watt University
Mr. A. H. Russell	1 April 1979	31 March 1987	West Lothian District Council
Mr. A. G. Smart	1 April 1983	31 March 1987	Scottish Conservative Party
Mrs. W. Sutherland	1 April 1987	August 1987	Scottish Trade Union Congress
Mrs. M. H. Waterson	1 April 1981	31 March 1987	Ministerial

Orkney health board
Present members

Name	*Date of first appointment*	*Nominated by*
Members appointed to 31 March 1989		
Mr. B. M. Clark	30 October 1981	Health Board
Mr. F. J. Groundwater	1 April 1977	Scottish Trade Union Congress: British Medical Association
Mrs. J. Marwick	1 April 1985	Orkney Local Health Council: Health Board: Orkney Islands Council
Mr. J. W. R. Moar, MBE	1 April 1981	Ministerial
Mrs. M. Porteous	1 April 1985	Health Board
Dr. J. S. Walker	1 April 1981	British Medical Association
Members appointed to 31 March 1991		
Mr. A. H. Bevan	18 December 1973	Health Board
Mr. A. Bullen	1 April 1987	Health Board
Mrs. M. J. B. Crichton	1 April 1987	Orkney Local Health Council
Mr. J. Flett	18 December 1973	Health Board
Mr. J. M. F. Groat	1 April 1979	Health Board
Mrs. G. M. Leslie	1 April 1987	Orkney Local Health Council
Mr. J. Leslie	24 April 1987	Pharmaceutical General Council
Mrs. E. M. Street	18 June 1980	Royal College of Midwives

Members retired since 1983

Name	*Date of first appointment*	*Date terminated*	*Nominated by*
Mr. J. C. Bevan	13 November 1979	28 January 1987 (Died)	Health Board
Mr. J. Towrie	1 April 1983	31 March 1987	Orkney Islands Council
Mr. R. Tullock	1 April 1983	31 March 1987	Health Board

Shetland health board
Present members

Name	*Date of first appointment*	*Nominated by*
Members appointed to 31 March 1989		
Mr. A. G. Coutts	16 April 1986	Health Board
Dr. M. D. Hunter	1 April 1981	British Medical Association
Mr. R. Leask	1 April 1983	Confederation of Health Service Employees
Mr. D. M. Sinclair	1 April 1985	Royal College of Nursing: Scottish Health Visitors Association
Captain G. Walterson	1 April 1985	Chief Whip's Office
Mrs. M. Williamson	18 February 1982	Health Board
Mr. W. A. Smith, BEM	18 April 1973	Shetland Islands Council
Members appointed to 31 March 1991		
Mr. R. R. Bentley	18 December 1973	Health Board: Joint Ophthalmic Committee
Mr. C. A. Cumming	1 April 1987	Association of Scientific Technical and Managerial Staffs
Mr. A. G. Flaws	26 April 1983	Scottish Conservative Party
Mr. A. H. George	26 April 1983	British Petroleum (Sullom Voe)
Mrs. M. E. Irving	1 April 1987	Former Health Board Member
Mr. J. A. T. Leslie	1 April 1983	Area Pharmaceutical Committee
Mr. A. J. R. Tait	6 May 1987	Scottish Trade Union Congress

Members retired since 1983

Name	*Date of first appointment*	*Date terminated*	*Nominated by*
Mr. R. L. C. Manson	1 April 1979	31 March 1985	Health Board
Mrs. J. K. Sandison	18 December 1973	31 March 1987	Health Board
Mr. R. A. J. Smith	1 April 1985	30 January 1987	Health Board
Mr. S. A. Zaman	1 April 1983	31 July 1985	Health Board

Tayside health board
Present members

Name	*Date of first appointment*	*Nominated by*
Members appointed to 31 March 1989		
Mr. E. W. Cameron, OBE	12 August 1982	Ministerial
Mr. J. Campbell-Smith	1 April 1977	Perth and Kinross District Council
Mr. J. W. Duncan, MBE	8 August 1974	Co-op Union Ltd: Dundee District Council: Mr. P. Doig MP
Mrs. S. D. R. Kydd	1 April 1983	Angus Local Health Council
Dr. A. G. R. Law	1 April 1981	British Medical Association
Mr. E. C. Lowson, MBE	1 April 1977	Association of Scottish Chamber of Commerce
Prof. D. G. McDevitt	1 April 1985	University of Dundee

Name	Date of first appointment	Nominated by
Miss S. D. Moncur	1 April 1985	Council for Professions Supplementary to Medicine: Chartered Society of Physiotherapy
Mr. I. W. Stevenson	1 April 1985	Tayside Regional Council
Members appointed to 31 March 1991		
Miss A. Allen	31 March 1987	Royal College of Midwives
Dr. P. G. Aungle	27 July 1984	Royal College of Psychiatrists
Prof. J. S. Beck	1 April 1983	University of Dundee
Rev. K. Campbell	1 June 1987	Health Board
Mr. G. S. Cargill	31 March 1987	Health Board
Mr. J. S. Fair	27 July 1984	Ministerial
Mr. A. H. Lynch	31 March 1987	Dundee District Council: Dundee Local Health Council
Mr. J. C. MacFarlane, OBE	1 April 1983	Confederation of British Industry
Mrs. D. M. Munro	1 June 1987	Angus Local Health Council
Mr. W. Stewart	27 July 1984	Perth and Kinross Local Health Council

Members retired since 1983

Name	Date of first appointment	Date terminated	Nominated by
Mrs. R. J. T. Bolton	1 April 1971	31 March 1988	Scottish Trade Union Congress
Dr. H. C. Fowlie	1 April 1981	1 February 1984	Royal College of Psychiatrists
Mrs. L. V. Grewer	29 May 1975	31 March 1987	British Medical Association
Mrs. A. E. Grieve	11 December 1979	28 July 1983 (Died)	Chief Whip
Mr. M. B. Kerr	21 December 1977	31 March 1987	Scottish Trade Union Congress: Angus District Council
Mr. R. F. Menzies	1 April 1971	3 November 1983 (Died)	Scottish Trade Union Congress
Mr. J. T. Robb	1 April 1979	31 March 1987	Scottish Trade Union Congress
Mrs. A. W. Woore	1 April 1983	31 March 1987	Royal College of Nursing: Scottish Association of Nurse Administrators

Western Isles health board
Present members

Name	Date of first appointment	Nominated by
Members appointed to 31 March 1989		
Mr. D. A. Maclean	1 April 1985	Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons: British Medical Association
Mr. K. Maclennan	1 April 1985	Health Board
Mr. J. McIntyre	12 February 1982	Western Isles Islands Council
Mr. M. McLeod	1 April 1981	Health Board
Mr. A. D. Millar	16 January 1986	Health Board
Mr. I. D. Sutherland	1 April 1985	Health Board
Members appointed to 31 March 1991		
Dr. N. W. Beresford	1 April 1987	Health Board
Mr. J. H. Downie	1 April 1979	Lewis and Harris Local Health Council
Mr. A. Matheson	19 April 1973	Western Isles Islands Council
Rev. M. A. McLeod	1 April 1987	Health Board
Mrs. C. R. Macaskill	1 April 1987	Health Board
Mr. A. A. McDonald	1 April 1987	Western Isles Islands Council
Mrs. G. N. MacKillop	1 April 1987	Health Board

Members retired since 1983

Name	Date of first appointment	Date terminated	Nominated by
Mr. M. Campbell	19 April 1973	31 March 1987	Health Board: Scottish Trade Union Congress
Dr. M. R. Gillies	1 April 1979	31 March 1987	British Medical Association
Mr. D. N. Kesting	19 April 1973	31 March 1987	Law Society
Mrs. C. Maceachen	1 April 1979	31 March 1987	Health Board
Mr. D. W. MacLeod	18 December 1973	31 March 1987	Health Board
Mrs. M. F. MacNeil	27 September 1983	March 1984	Self
Mr. J. M. Morrison	1 April 1985	24 September 1987	Lewis and Harris Local Health Council

Cattle Semen

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps he proposes to take to protect the outlying areas, smaller herds, and minority breeds from increased costs as a result of the proposals to deregulate the system of licences for the supply of cattle semen.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The current consultation by the Agricultural Departments is designed to bring out and examine such concerns but there are no plans to discontinue the special arrangements under which holders of farm storage licences in the remote areas of Scotland obtain their supplies of semen. No final decisions will be made without thorough consideration of all the responses.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what steps will be taken to protect animal health in the suggested scheme to deregulate the system of licences to supply cattle semen;

(2) how he proposes to guarantee the quality of semen within a deregulated distribution when the system of licences to supply cattle semen is deregulated.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Our proposals for a more liberal approach to the number of suppliers of cattle semen and the zoning of supply areas do not imply any relaxation of the current licence conditions. Supply centres will remain under the day-to-day supervision of an approved veterinary surgeon in addition to inspections at regular intervals from the state veterinary service. There will be no reduction in the rigorous animal health standards which licence holders currently have to meet but the quality of their product, in respect of its genetic merit and viability, remains a matter for commercial judgment.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) how he intends to police the system of artificial insemination in his proposals to deregulate the system of licences to supply cattle semen;

(2) what proposals he has to guarantee the facility to trace and control the movement of semen for artificial insemination under his proposals to deregulate the system of licences to supply cattle semen;

(3) what proposals he has to guarantee veterinary and statistical security in his proposals to deregulate the system of licences to supply cattle semen.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Organisations currently holding licences for the supply of cattle semen do so under specific conditions designed to protect the health of the national herd under effective veterinary supervision. There is no proposal to change or dilute these arrangements.

It will continue to be a condition of licence that records are kept which allow the movement of semen to be traced and to provide veterinary and statistical security. If it is decided to allow farm storage licence holders to sell surplus straws to a similar licenceholder the proposed record keeping system will ensure the semen can be traced.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish in the *Official Report* a list of all parties responding to suggested changes in the deregulation of licences to supply cattle semen, indicating how many were favourable and how many adversely disposed to the proposals.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Seven interested organisations in Scotland have been invited to comment by the end of the month. Of the responses received so far AI Breeders Services Ltd. is in favour while the three Milk Marketing Boards have reservations concerning a possible risk to animal health and supplies to remote areas.

Scottish Chess Association

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) if he will make a statement regarding his Department's funding of the Scottish Chess Association;

(2) what was his Department's total grant to the Scottish Chess Association in each of the last five years; and what he expects it to be in the current financial year.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The Scottish Chess Association has received grant as follows:

	£
1983-84	[1]8,500
1984-85	[2]8,500
1985-86	[3]8,750
1986-87	[4]9,000
1987-88	4,730
1988-89	4,730

[1] Of which £6,550 was for travel costs.
[2] Of which £6,550 was for travel costs.
[3] Of which £5,775 was for travel costs.
[4] Of which £5,775 was for travel costs.

In the special circumstances pertaining in the current year my right hon. and learned Friend has offered the association an additional grant of up to £4,300 towards the cost of sending competitors to the World Olympiad and the World Junior Championship.

Health Authorities (Revenue)

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the health boards which, under the Scottish health authorities revenue equalisation formula, lose a proportion of their allocation annually because of revenue equalisation; if he will give details of the original percentage of overfunding of these health boards as defined by the Scottish health authorities revenue equalisation formula; and if he will give details for each of these health boards in percentage terms, of the amounts they lose annually; and how much, in percentage terms, each health board still has to lose.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The SHARE process for allocating revenue expenditure among health boards does not involve the best financed boards losing any of their allocations. In general, progress to revenue equalisation is achieved by giving the best financed boards smaller percentage increases in allocation each year than less well financed boards. When the SHARE formula was introduced the following boards were "overfinanced" against their objectively determined targets:

Board	*Percentage overfinanced*
Tayside	15·33
Lothian	3·52
Highland	2·14
Greater Glasgow	1·13

Highland health board is no longer overfinanced in SHARE, and the 1988-89 position of the other boards is as follows:

Board	*Percentage overfinanced*
Greater Glasgow	4·11
Tayside	2·36
Lothian	0·35

It is not possible to state with accuracy likely changes in boards' allocations in future years as allocations depend upon each board's SHARE target. Targets are recalculated afresh each year to take account of changes in the relative health care needs of each board.

School Meals

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish a table showing the comparative uptake

of school meals served to pupils, in percentage terms, in primary and secondary schools by each education authority for 1979-80.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information from the annual school meals census undertaken in January 1980 is as follows:

Region, division or island authority	*Total uptake of school meals as a percentage of pupils present*	
	Primary	*Secondary*
Border	57·5	35·5
Central	44·3	28·9
Dumfries and Galloway	66·1	43·8
Fife	45·5	39·4
Grampian	52·4	32·7
Highland	59·0	30·1
Lothian	48·3	34·6
Strathclyde	49·9	31·1
Argyll and Bute	66·6	38·3
Ayr	54·9	43·2
Dumbarton	48·5	23·6
Glasgow	50·8	28·8
Lanark	43·3	26·3
Renfrew	51·1	36·2
Tayside	50·5	28·0
Orkney	72·4	42·8
Shetland	83·3	33·9
Western Isles	71·8	21·4
Scotland	50·5	32·2

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish the price of school meals in primary and secondary schools in each region and division where appropriate, and island education authority as at 31 January; and what was the average amount spent on cafeteria meals in each case.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information taken from the 1988 annual school meal census is as follows:

Region division or Island authority	*Charge for fixed priced school meals (pence)*	*Average amount spent on cafeteria meals (pence)*
Borders	50	52
Central	58	42
Dumfries and Galloway	61	32
Fife	50	49
Grampian	[1]60	53
	[2]70	
Highland	65	62
Lothian	[1]50	44
	[2]55	
Strathclyde		
Argyll and Bute	63	50
Ayr	63	50
Dumbarton	63	41
Glasgow (City)	63	45
Lanark	63	57
Renfrew	63	50
Tayside	60	40
Orkney	60	60
Shetland	60	[3]
Western Isles	65	70

[1] Primary.
[2] Secondary.
[3] No cafeteria service.

Note:
Charges for fixed price meals are the same in primary and secondary schools in all regions except Grampian and Lothian.

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish a table showing *(a)* the total number of staff employed in the school meals service in January in each region or division or island authority in Scotland and *(b)* the number of staff employed for (i) 30 or more hours per week and (ii) less than 30 hours per week.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information taken from the 1988 annual school meals census is as follows:

Region division or island authority	*Number of Staff Employed*		
	More than 30 hpw	*Less than 30 hpw*	*Total*
Borders	30	176	206
Central	282	330	612
Dumfries and Galloway	112	387	499
Fife	176	608	784
Grampian	326	743	1,069
Highland	173	447	620
Lothian	534	1,166	1,700
Strathclyde	1,781	3,996	5,777
Argyll and Bute	58	168	226
Ayr	292	709	1,001
Dumbarton	100	607	707
Glasgow (City)	711	1,017	1,728
Lanark	374	709	1,083
Renfrew	246	786	1,032
Tayside	273	633	906
Orkney	31	40	71
Shetland	52	49	101
Western Isles	42	93	135
SCOTLAND	3,812	8,668	12,480

Mental Officers

Mr. Strang: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if the criteria used in the appointment procedures of mental officers has changed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The original guidance issued in March 1985 referred to formal assessment by the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work of training undergone by candidates for appointment as mental health officers. Revised guidance issued in December 1986 excluded reference to formal assessment and required local authorities to be satisfied as to the competence of candidates to be appointed before 1 April 1988. The same requirement was prescribed for subsequent appointments in a circular issued in March 1988, which also consolidated the earlier guidance. A copy is available in the Library.

Air Traffic Control

Mr. Allen Adams: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what estimate he makes of the effect of air traffic control difficulties on tourism in Scotland.

Mr. Lang: Recent air traffic control difficulties are unlikely to have any significant impact on Scottish tourism.

Companies (Local Taxation)

Mr. Maclennan: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what consultations he has had about the local taxation of companies; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: I refer the hon. Member to the reply which I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie (Mr. Worthington).

Forestry

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many *(a)* grant and *(b)* felling licence applications were referred to the regional advisory committee for each Forestry Commission conservancy in each year from 1984, and what were the results.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[pursuant to his reply, 8 March 1988, c. 148-50]:* The revised figures to year-end 31 March are as follows:

Conservancy	*Number referred to Regional Advisory Committees*	*Number resolved by voluntary withdrawal or amendment of application*	*Number referred by Regional Advisory Committees to Forestry Commissioners*
Grant Scheme Applications— Two years to 31 March 1985			
North West England	1	—	1
North East England	2	—	2
East England	—	—	—
South East England	—	—	—
South West England	—	—	—
North Scotland	1	—	1
East Scotland	1	1	—
South Scotland	4	1	3
West Scotland	6	1	5
North Wales	1	—	1
South Wales	5	—	5
Felling Licence Applications— Two years to 31 March 1985			
North West England	—	—	—
North East England	1	—	1
East England	1	1	—
South East England	3	—	3
South West England	1	—	1
North Scotland	—	—	—
East Scotland	—	—	—
South Scotland	1	—	1
West Scotland	—	—	—
North Wales	1	1	—
South Wales	—	—	—

Year (to 31 March)	*Number referred to Regional Advisory Committees*	*Number resolved by voluntary withdrawal or amendment of application*	*Number referred by Regional Advisory Committees to Forestry Commissioners*
Grant Scheme Applications— Two years to 31 March 1987			
North England Conservancy			
1986	—	—	—
1987	5	2	3
East England Conservancy			
1986	—	—	—
1987	1	—	1
West England Conservancy			
1986	—	—	—
1987	—	—	—
Wales Conservancy			
1986	1	—	1
1987	3	1	2
North Scotland Conservancy			
1986	1	1	—
1987	—	—	—
Mid Scotland Conservancy			
1986	5	—	5
1987	5	2	3
South Scotland Conservancy			
1986	2	1	1
1987	3	2	1

Year (to 31 March)	Number referred to Regional Advisory Committees	Number resolved by voluntary withdrawal or amendment of application	Number referred by Regional Advisory Committees to Forestry Commissioners
Felling Licence Applications—			
Two years to 31 March 1987			
North England Conservancy			
1986	—	—	—
1987	—	—	—
East England Conservancy			
1986	3	1	2
1987	—	—	—
West England Conservancy			
1986	—	—	—
1987	—	—	—
Wales Conservancy			
1986	2	—	2
1987	2	—	2
North Scotland Conservancy			
1986	—	—	—
1987	—	—	—
Mid Scotland Conservancy			
1986	—	—	—
1987	—	—	—
South Scotland Conservancy			
1986	—	—	—
1987	—	—	—

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many *(a)* grant and *(b)* felling licence applications were received by the Forestry Commission in each year from 1984; how many were referred to regional advisory committees; and what proportion of the annual total this represented.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[pursuant to his reply, 8 March 1988, c. 148]:* The revised figures to year-ended 31 March are as follows:

Year (to 31 March)	Number received	Number and percentage of cases referred to Regional Advisory Committees	
		Number	per cent.
Grant Scheme Applications			
1984	2,000	7	0·4
1985	2,296	14	0·6
1986	3,736	9	0·2
1987	5,362	17	0·3
Felling Licence Applications			
1984	1,923	3	0·2
1985	1,767	5	0·3
1986	2,078	5	0·2
1987	2,367	2	0·1

Crossroads (Scotland)

Mrs. Ray Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what consideration he has given to the provision of funding for Crossroads (Scotland) from a source other than the Manpower Services Commission.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 22 July 1988]:* I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie (Mr. Worthington) on 28 June, at column *177*. I understand that a number of Crossroads schemes are negotiated with the Training Commission about participation in employment training and I hope that others will follow suit.

Poll Tax

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has had from pensioners concerning the poll tax register; and if he will take steps to ensure that the register will not display birth dates for public inspection.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 25 April 1988]:* My right hon. and learned Friend has received a number of representations from pensioners and others on this subject. Under section 20(2)(a) of the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Act 1987, only the names, addresses and (in certain cases) the collective community charge multipliers contained in the community charges register are to be available for public inspection.

Dental Hospital, Edinburgh

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what estimate he has of the cost of building a dental hospital in Edinburgh in the event of the University Grants Committee working party's proposals for rationalising Edinburgh and Dundee dental schools going ahead.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 21 April 1988]:* Current plans are to build a replacement dental hospital in Edinburgh for about £5·5 million. No firm estimate has been prepared of the cost of expanding the proposed dental hospital to take account of the working party's proposals for a larger student intake to the Edinburgh dental school than that accommodated in the current hospital plans.

Tenants' Rights (Counsel's Opinion)

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will place in the Library a copy of the opinion of senior counsel concerning the right of tenants of public sector housing which may be transferred to private landlords which was referred to by the Minister of State, Scottish Office, *Official Report*, column 344 of the *Official Report* of the House of Lords debates for 6 July.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 26 July 1988]:* I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Dundee, East (Mr. McAllion) on 18 July at columns *511-12*.

ENVIRONMENT

Rating Reform

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the number and names of local authorities which have written to him objecting to the poll tax.

Mr. Howard: A summary of the 1,217 responses received by 31 October 1986, when the consultation period on the Green Paper ended, was placed in the Library on 15 December 1986. 124 of the local authorities who commented did not support the community charge. Taking respondents as a whole, those favouring abolition of domestic rates outnumbered those favouring retention by 21. A clear majority of them preferred the community charge to all other alternatives and six times as many respondents supported the community charge as supported a combination of rates and local income tax.

Since June 1987 my Department has received some 11,000 letters, the majority of which are from private individuals, containing a variety of comments on specific aspects of our proposals or requesting further information. The letters do not readily lend themselves to an analysis of correspondents' views.

Equal Opportunities

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he appointed equal opportunity officers; and how many and what percentage of these are women, from ethnic minority groups or both.

Mr. Ridley: My Department appointed two equal opportunity officers in 1984, one from central DOE and one from the PSA. Both posts are occupied by white, male staff.

Ethnic Monitoring

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment in what quasi-governmental bodies or other organisations under his aegis he has authority to request or require the carrying out of ethnic monitoring exercises in accordance with the code of the Commission for Racial Equality; and what ethnic monitoring and equal opportunities exercises have been carried out by each such Department.

Mr. Ridley: Non-departmental public bodies and other bodies sponsored by my Department are responsible for arrangements for recruitment and personnel management of staff they employ. Organisations are encouraged to be equal opportunities employers, and to pursue practices in the codes of the Commission for Racial Equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission. No central records are held of ethnic monitoring and equal opportunities exercises carried out by these bodies.

Warrington Runcorn (Factory Space)

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish figures available to him showing the progress of Warrington Runcorn new town development corporation is constructing, allocating and filling factory space.

Mr. Trippier: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Member for Broxbourne (Mrs. Roe) on 28 March at columns *299-300*. In addition, for the current financial year to date, 106,730 sq ft of factory floor space has been completed, and 450,540 sq ft occupied; 260,000 sq ft is at present under construction. I am considering the corporation's proposals for a very limited number of further schemes of advance factory building.

Heveningham Hall

Mr. Faulds: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement about the latest position on the developments concerning Heveningham hall.

Mr. Moynihan: I am glad to say that we understand that the owner intends to open Heveningham hall to the public daily between 31 July and 1 September this year. It remains my right hon. Friend's hope that the restoration of the fire-damaged wing will proceed. My right hon. Friend has also, in a decision issued on 25 July, upheld the recommendation of both his inspectors not to confirm the footpath diversion order made by the Suffolk Coastal district council relating to land at Heveningham.

Local Authority Tenants

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has any proposals to give guidance to local authorities on the organisations which are permitted to arrange ballots for local authority tenants being transferred to other organisations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley: No. My hon. Friend the then Minister for Housing and Planning made it clear that he expected authorities who are seeking to dispose of their tenanted housing to follow the procedures set out in section 6 and schedule 1 of the Housing and Planning Act 1986. Authorities themselves have the primary responsibility for ensuring that any ballot which is held is conducted, and is seen to be conducted, without any suggestion of impropriety.

Under our proposals for tenants' choice, it would be the applicant rather than the local authority who would have responsibility for arranging the ballot.

Local Authority Housing Transfers

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how the guidelines on the transfer of local authority housing drawn up in conjunction with clause 47

of the Housing Bill differ from the guidance given to local authorities proceeding with transfers under other legislation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley: In issuing guidelines on large scale voluntary transfers of local authority housing to private bodies to English local authorities on 8 June, I made it clear that I would apply the guidance issued in circular 6/88 "Consultation with Secure Tenants before Disposal to Private Sector Landlord: Commencement of Section 6 of the Housing and Planning Act 1986" in the case of all large-scale voluntary transfers to tenanted local authority housing.

No guidelines have been issued to local authorities on the transfer of their housing under parts III and IV of the Housing Bill.

Urban Development Corporations (Disability Adviser)

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will make it his policy that a local disability adviser is appointed to each urban development corporation; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will outline the measures that are being taken to ensure that urban development corporations are made aware of the access needs of disabled people in the revitalisation of the inner cities; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: As development control authorities, urban development corporations receive planning circulars and advice. This includes DOE circular 10/82 which draws attention to the Disabled Persons Act 1981 and reminds authorities of the importance of bearing in mind the needs of disabled people. As employers, the corporations receive and are expected to follow the Government's own code of practice "Employment of disabled people".

House Purchase Statistics

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what were the total numbers of *(a)* private home purchases and *(b)* purchases by first-time buyers, in each of the years 1976 to 1987, and what was the proportion represented by *(b)* of *(a)*.

Mr. Trippier: The available information is as follows:

Mortgage loans for house purhase: United Kingdom

	All[1]	*of which, to first time purchasers*	
	thousands	*thousands*	*percentage of all*
1976	739	373	50
1977	760	374	49
1978	829	404	49
1979	750	358	48
1980	691	332	48
1981	736	364	50
1982	861	468	54
1983	1,107	555	50
1984	1,187	596	50
1985	1,227	605	49
1986	1,446	666	46
1987	1,298	588	45

[1] Mortgage completions by building societies; from 1976 to 1980 by local authorities (excluding council house sales) in England and Wales; and from 1983 to 1987 mortgage approvals by banks.

The numbers of loans to first-time purchasers is not reported by insurance companies or, from 1981, by local authorities. The annual average number of loans for house purchase by insurance companies in 1976 to 1987 was 20,000. The numbers of loans by local authorities in Great Britain are as follows, including those for council house sales in England almost all of which are to sitting tenants.

	All	*For council house sales*
1981	73,000	70,000
1982	111,000	83,000
1983	47,000	40,000
1984	36,000	31,000
1985	23,000	20,000
1986	12,000	10,000
1987	10,000	8,000

Cornerstone Housing Association

Mr. McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received about the activities of the Cornerstone Housing Association Ltd. and Mr. Frans Robey.

Mr. Trippier: None.

Private Landlords (Property Maintenance)

Mr. McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what measures he proposes to take to ensure that private landlords carry out routine maintenance on properties in their ownership in a satisfactory way.

Mr. Trippier: Section 11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 implies into leases of seven years or less a convenant obliging a landlord to keep in repair the structure of a rented dwelling and certain installations in it. This provision will apply to assured and shorthold tenancies granted under the Housing Bill. The Bill extends section 11 to cover the structure and common parts of buildings containing flats. Also we have tabled amendments to the Bill to strengthen the powers of local authorities to require private landlords to carry out repairs and themselves to carry out the works where the landlord fails to do so and to recover the costs.

Private Tenants (Temporary Housing)

Mr. McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what measures he proposes to take to ensure proper protection for private tenants offered temporary rehousing while works are carried out to their homes.

Mr. Trippier: Under sections 214 and 215 of the Housing Act 1985 a local authority may not serve an improvement notice until it is satisfied that the housing arrangements for affected occupants are satisfactory. Otherwise, it is for private tenants who are offered temporary rehousing while works are carried out to their homes to negotiate with their landlords to preserve their rights. We have amended the Housing Bill so that existing protected tenants who are rehoused by their landlords will continue to have protected tenancies.

Subsidies and Benefits

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will publish in the *Official*

Report his estimate of the amount paid out in 1987-88 in *(a)* subsidies to local authorities and new town housing and *(b)* cost of housing benefit to, respectively, tenants of local authorities and private landlords, including rate rebates; and if he will add a forecast for the current and for the next financial year together with an estimate of the increase in a full year as a result of the abolition of rent control.

Mr. Trippier: Payments of housing subsidy to local authorities in 1987-88 amounted to £473,511,743 and to new towns £82,839,556. Questions on income support, including housing benefit, are for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Security.

Waste Control

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will prohibit the importation of United States waste into the United Kingdom under section 100 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974.

Mr. Moynihan: I am considering whether further controls on the import of waste are necessary.

United Nations Clean-up Campaign

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if, in the light of the problems imposed on Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Benin, Equatorial Guinea, Nigeria, Gabon and Congo by the disposal of toxic and hazardous wastes from EEC countries, he will make it his policy to secure additional United Kingdom donations to the United Nations environment programme special clean-up campaign.

Mr. Moynihan: The Government are increasing its financial support for UNEP by 25 per cent. For 1988 the United Kingdom's contribution to UNEP's environment fund will be £1·25 million.

Nuclear Waste

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) when his Department first learnt from British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. that a canister containing plutonium had been found at the Drigg dump site, as announced by British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. to the media on 13 July;

(2) pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy, 14 June, *Official Report*, columns *142-43*, whether the table included the radioactive content of the canister of plutonium bearing nuclear fuel found at the Drigg dump site as announced by British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. on 13 July.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy stated in his reply to a question by the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) on 15 July 1988, *Official Report*, column *430*, this matter is currently subject to a joint investigation by the Health and Safety Executive and Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution who will report their findings shortly.

Hazardous Waste

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his policy towards the United Nations environment programme project to establish a global convention on the regulation of international transfrontier shipment and disposal of toxic, hazardous and radiotoxic waste.

Mr. Moynihan: We shall continue to participate actively in the development of the UNEP global convention.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to the reply to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy, 14 June, *Official Report*, column *142*, on export of toxic wastes from the European Community, if he will make a statement on any initiatives taken at the EC Environment Council on the matter.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The subject of export of toxic waste from the Community to developing countries was discussed at the EC Environment Council on 16 and 28 June but no conclusion was reached. Further discussions are under way.

Access Land (Sales)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will introduce legislation to control the sale of random strips of land required by private house builders for access to services; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Howard: No. Depending upon the location of a particular site for development, a wide variety of matters relating to neighbouring land may need to be dealt with by those who propose to develop the site and it is for them to ensure that they have made any arrangements for land acquisition, easements, and so on, that may be necessary for development.

County Hall, London

Mr. Dykes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will hold discussions with the London residuary body on the case for holding a public exhibition and consultation over the plans for future use of county hall, after its eventual disposal from the public sector.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: No. This will be a matter for the new owners of country hall.

Mr. Dykes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will estimate the amount of delay incurred by the London residuary body in the possible disposal of county hall, to allow time for the abolition of the Inner London education authority.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: No delay attributable to the abolition of the Inner London education authority is expected in the disposal of county hall.

Mr. Dykes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will discuss with the London residuary body its sources of expert advice on the architectural and historical aspects of the proposal to convert county hall from public use to hotel use.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: No. Any development of county hall will be subject to the usual planning and listed building procedures. It is for the applicants themselves, whoever they may be, to take what expert advice they consider necessary in preparing their proposals.

Mr. Dykes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will take steps to ensure that full and leagthy public consultation will take place and that all the appropriate national and Greater London bodies and agencies will be fully consulted in regard to the disposal of county hall.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: There are no grounds for placing such an obligation on the London residuary body in view of its statutory duty to dispose of all surplus GLC property.

London Residuary Body

Mr. Dykes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the current full salary and total expenses, allowances and other emoluments and payments in kind of the chairman and all other board members, and the three senior non-board officials of the London residuary body.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The current salaries of the chairman and board members of the London residuary body are as follows:

	£ per annum[1]
Chairman (full-time appointment):	
Sir Godfrey Taylor	56,320
Members (part-time appointments):	
Mr. Alan Blakemore, CBE Mr. Jack Esling Mr. Jack Wolkind, CBE	13,608
Mr. Wallace Mackenzie, OBE	17,010
Mr. Michael Roberts	20,412
Councillor Sir Peter Bowness, CBE	6,804

[1] From 1 April 1988.

Remuneration is subject to abatement, if applicable, in respect of public sector pension received.

Information on the total expenses paid to the chairman and board members during 1986-87 is contained in the residuary body's annual report and accounts for that financial year, which were laid before Parliament on 27 January. No emoluments were paid otherwise than in cash. The salaries and expenses of officials are a matter for the LRB. The 1986-87 report and accounts indicate that the emoluments for that year of the three most senior officials were in the range £35,000 to £40,000.

Mr. Dykes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will estimate the amount of office space required by the London residuary body for its work between 1988 and 1990, and from 1990 onwards; and which locations have been selected provisionally or finally for these activities.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The London residuary body's requirements for office space in connection with winding up the affairs of the Greater London council will reduce progressively from its present floor space needs of about 30,000 sq m as its functions diminish before 31 March 1990. Accommodation in connection with winding up the residual affairs of the Inner London education authority will depend upon the number and complexity of the functions it may have to undertake.

Public House Tenants (Tenure)

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will introduce legislation to amend the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 to provide security of tenure for the tenants of public houses selling alcohol.

Mr. Trippier: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to my hon. Friend the Member for Romsey and Waterside (Mr. Colvin) on 6 May at column *613* by the then Minister for Housing and Planning, my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, West (Mr. Waldegrave).

Mineral Supplies

Sir Trevor Skeet: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the limitations imposed by the planning system on the supply of minerals from quarries.

Mr. Trippier: If the mineral operator has been granted a planning permission and does not subsequently contravene any planning conditions attached to that consent, the minerals may be worked and sold without further statutory constraint. It is not the Government's policy to intervene in these arrangements.

It is generally the case that purchasers of minerals may seek to obtain the supplies they need, from whatever source they so choose, without the need to consider any further statutory provision. However, public bodies do have a duty under section 11 of the Countryside Act, 1968, to have regard to the desirability of conserving the natural beauty and amenity of the countryside in exercising their functions relating to land.

Listed Buildings (Painting)

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to issue guidance on the extent to which painting or repainting of listed buildings requires listed building consent.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The Department of the Environment has today issued a new circular (DOE circular 18/88) drawing attention to a recent High Court judgment relating to the painting or repainting of listed buildings. The court held that painting or repainting is capable of being an alteration for which listed building consent is required. The critical question in each case is whether the character of the building is affected. Only where the character is affected will consent be needed. Whether consent is needed in any particular instance must therefore depend upon the facts of the individual case.

Landlord and Tenant Act 1987

Mr. David Martin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will now bring the remaining sections of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1987 into force.

Mr. Ridley: I and my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales have now made the third commencement order for the Landlord and Tenant Act 1987, covering all the sections not already covered by earlier orders. The provisions in sections 41, 43 and 44 dealing respectively with the strengthening of tenants' rights on variable service charges, insurance and consultation on the appointment of managing agents will

come into force on 1 September 1988. There are transitional provisions for section 41 to deal with situations where action is already in hand or where the accounting period has already started before 1 September 1988. Section 42, dealing with the handling of service charge contributions will come into force on 1 April 1989, together with an order under section 42(5) dealing with the investment of service charge funds held in trust.

Under a separate order, the prescribed amounts above which a landlord must consult his tenants about works will be raised on 1 September 1988 to £1,000 or £50 per dwelling whichever is the greater.

This completes the implementation of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1987, which has siginificantly strengthened the rights of people living in flats, and, as regards the payment of variable service charges and insurance, people living in houses and other dwellings also.

Local Authority Housing

Mr. Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he will publish his proposals for a new financial regime for local authority housing; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales and I are issuing a consultation document today on a new financial regime for local authority housing in England and Wales. The paper has been placed in the Library and is available in the Vote Office. Copies will be sent today to local authorities and their associations.

A pattern has developed of major inconsistencies between authorities in the contributions to housing costs made by rent, rate and tax payers, and subsidies are not always being directed towards those authorities and their tenants who most need them. Also, although many authorities have for years pursued sound policies, anomalies in the system of different sources of subsidy have given rise to distortions in the incentives to efficiency and good management. Subject to approval of proposed legislation by Parliament, the new arrangements will take effect from 1 April 1990. These will require authorities to maintain a new-style housing revenue account which will reinforce the distinction between the provision of housing and other local authority functions. A new housing revenue account subsidy will replace a number of existing central Government subsidies and also local rate fund contributions from that date.

We intend that the new financial regime will make council landlords more accountable to their tenants and put tenants themselves in a position of greater equity as compared to tenants in other authorities.

Rain Forests

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what relevant scientific conclusions his Department has accepted as a valid basis for a policy regarding the rain forests and their impact on the world environment; and if he will list the different measures which his Department considers should be taken at national and international level so as to protect the rain forests in the *(a)* short, *(b)* medium and *(c)* long term.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[holding answer 21 July 1988]:* We recognise that tropical forests are an important element in the global environment and we encourage the good management of their resources through the tropical forest action plan and by our support of the international tropical timber agreement.

Sporting Events (Ministerial Visits)

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what international sporting events the Minister with responsibility for sport, the hon. Member for Lewisham, East (Mr. Moynihan) intends to visit in the next 12 months; and what is the anticipated cost to public funds.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 25 July 1988]:* Listed in the table are the principal international sporting events overseas which I am at present planning to visit in the next 12 months and anticipated cost to public funds.

13 August—Moscow Marathon, Moscow. No cost to public funds.

16 September—3 October—Summer Olympics, Seoul, South Korea. Estimated cost to public funds, £5,080.

20-25 October—Paralympics, Seoul, South Korea. No cost to public funds.

Water Authorities (Prosecutions)

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make it his policy to use those statutory powers available to him to prosecute water authorities which do not comply with EEC directives.

Mr. Moynihan: The Government will use whatever means are necessary to ensure that European Community directives on water are complied with. As I said in reply to a question from the hon. Member on 11 July, *Official Report*, column *40* where the Government are aware that the obligations of directives are not currently being fully met, water authorities are instructed to take steps to remedy the position and, where necessary, to agree programmes with the Department.

DEFENCE

Military Lands Act 1892

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what inquiries of local authorities he made in relation to rights of way and rights of common for byelaws made under the Military Lands Act 1892 since 1979; and how many rights of way have been stopped-up since 1979 at each site covered by byelaws made under the Military Lands Act 1892.

Mr. Freeman: Before any byelaws are made, the Property Services Agency, acting on behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, undertakes inquiries with the relevant local authorities to establish the existence and extent of any rights of way and rights of common over the subject land.

It is not possible without disproportionate effort to identify how many rights of way have been stopped up since 1979 at those sites covered by byelaws made under the Military Lands Acts 1892.

Ministry Establishment, Shoeburyness

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he next intends to visit the Ministry of Defence establishment in Shoeburyness.

Mr. Sainsbury: My right hon. Friend has no plans at present to visit the MOD establishment at Shoeburyness.

Saudi Arabian Orders

Mr. Stern: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he next expects the detailed procurement aspects of the latest Saudi Arabian orders to be available.

Mr. Sainsbury: Precise requirements have still to be specified by the customer and discussed and agreed in detail. Some discussions are starting now but it is not yet possible to determine how long this process will take. In any event the wishes of the customer, in regard to commercial confidentiality, will need to be respected.

Trident Submarines (VSEL)

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the contract between his Department and VSEL for Trident submarines includes arrangements for compensation to be paid or penalty clauses to be exercised in case of industrial action at the VSEL plant.

Mr. Sainsbury: Normally, contractual arrangements between MOD and its supplier would be regarded as commercial-in-confidence. However, I can say that there are no penalty clauses in these Ministry of Defence contracts; nor do any arrangements exist in either of the two current Vanguard class SSBN contracts for compensation to be paid in the event of industrial action. However, contractors are expected to mitigate the effects of industrial action to the maximum extent possible.

There will also, of course, be a progressive impact on the company's cash flow as a result of their inability to claim payments under these contracts for scheduled work which is not being achieved.

RBS-70 Surface-to-air Missiles

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what order his Department has placed with Bofors of Sweden for the supply of RBS-70 surface-to-air missiles; for whose eventual use these missiles are intended; what provision has been made in his Department's estimates for this purchase; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: None.

Seabed Operations Vessel Challenger

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on problems which have arisen with the seabed operations vessel Challenger; by how much the work on this vessel has overrun in *(a)* time and *(b)* cost in relation to the original specification; and what claims and counter-claims for compensation have been made by his Department and the contractors, respectively.

Mr. Sainsbury: Reasons for the increases in cost to the sea bed operations vessel and delays to its operational date have been detailed in evidence given by the Ministry of Defence to the Public Accounts Committee and published in its 35th report 1984-85 Session and 31st report 1987-88 Session. The appraisal and cost implications of the further slippage mentioned in the latter report are still under consideration.

With regards to claims for compensation, whilst negotiations are continuing with contractors on these, details are commercially confidential.

Low Flying

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of complaints about low flying received in 1987 were made initially to RAF air bases and other military-installations as opposed to his Department.

Mr. Freeman: The information requested could not be provided without disproportionate effort.

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) during which hours of the day low flying at 100 ft above the ground is permitted in the Borders tactical training area;

(2) if flying at 100 ft is permitted in the vicinity of *(a)* Chapelton, *(b)* Caldermill, *(c)* Drumclog and *(d)* Auldhouse, Strathclyde;

(3) what consultations have been held with *(a)* East Kilbride district council and *(b)* Strathclyde regional council prior to the establishment of low flying at 100 ft in the constituency of East Kilbride;

(4) if the use of afterburners is permitted by aircraft flying at 100 ft above the ground;

Mr. Freeman: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what research is being conducted by his Department on the medical effects of exposure to the noise levels associated with military jet aircraft flying at 100 ft off the ground.

Mr. Freeman: The MOD is represented on the NATO working group and will also attend a major international meeting on aircraft noise in Stockholm this summer.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent representations he has received concerning low-flying military exercises in Wales.

Mr. Freeman: During June 1988 the Ministry of Defence received 86 inquiries or complaints from Wales about low-flying military aircraft.

Borders Tactical Training Area

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) on what date the expansion of the Borders tactical training area into the East Kilbride constituency took effect;

(2) if he will place in the Library a map showing the newly enlarged Borders tactical training area.

Mr. Freeman: I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Nuclear Materials Requirements

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy, *Official Report*, 14 June, column *119*, on uranium and plutonium, if he will set out the reasons relating to each set of nuclear materials requirements, a-e, why he will not make it his policy to publish them in subsequent defence estimates.

Mr. Sainsbury: The reason in each case is that it would not be in the national interest.

Sirius Hull Design

Mr. Woodcock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the inquiry into the Sirius hull design has been completed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Younger: In November 1986 I commissioned *Lloyd's Register of Shipping* to undertake a special inquiry into claims that the Sirius concept developed by Thornycroft, Giles and Associates could be the basis for destroyer and frigate designs offering cost and other advantages over conventional designs. Investigation of these claims had been urged by an unofficial committee chaired by Admiral of the Fleet Lord Hill-Norton.

I have today placed in the Library of the House copies of the report of the inquiry, which was led by Mr. R. H. MacLeod. The work has been professional, thorough and impartial, and especial care has been taken to give Thornycroft, Giles and Associates full opportunity both to give evidence and to comment on the report before publication. The report's main conclusion is that, for the Royal Navy's stated requirements in the destroyer and frigate roles, vessels based on the Sirius concept would cost more than conventional designs like the Type 23, without offering commensurate advantage in other ways. I accept this outcome.

The report was not required, and does not seek, to comment on the possible use of the Sirius concept in other applications.

Royal Ordnance plc (Agreement)

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when, pursuant to his answer of 28 June, *Official Report*, column *232*, he expects to announce his decision regarding the agreement between his Department and British Aerospace for the supply by Royal Ordnance of explosives and propellants; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) why he has not hitherto been prepared to implement the heads of agreement signed between his Department and British Aerospace in April 1987 concerning the establishment of an agreement with Royal Ordnance plc for the supply of explosives, propellants and related products;

(2) whether it remains his policy to invest £12 million in assisting Royal Ordnance plc with its productivity improvement programme, as envisaged in the heads of agreement for the supply of explosives, propellants and related products signed in April 1987.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on progress on negotiations between his Department and Royal Ordnance plc over an EP (REP) agreement to supply explosives and propellants.

Mr. Coombs: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he anticipates completing the explosives and propellants and related end product agreement with Royal Ordnance; and if he will make a statement on the progress of negotiations.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the position regarding the award to Royal Ordnance of an EP(REP) agreement.

Mr. Sainsbury *[pursuant to his replies, 28 June 1988, c. 105 and 7 July 1988, c. 703.]:* I can now advise the House that subject to final contract negotiations an agreement has been reached with Royal Ordnance plc under which the company will supply some 80 per cent. of the Ministry's requirements for specified explosives, propellants and ammunition at annually reducing prices for the period to 31 March 1993. The cumulative value of the contracts under the agreement is of the order of £400 million and represents something under 50 per cent. of the Ministry's anticipated requirements for ammunition, mines and explosives over the period concerned.

The undertaking to enter into discussion of a long-term contract of this nature was disclosed to the House by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on 2 April 1987 in relation to his announcement of the sale of Royal Ordnance plc to British Aerospace. We are satisfied that the prices negotiated under the arrangement, which also subsume the £12 million investment referred to by my hon. Friend the Member for Congleton (Mrs. Winterton) represent good value for money for the taxpayer as well as ensuring continuation of supply of these important stores to the armed services.

The new agreement, which will take effect from 1 April this year, will terminate the current agreement between the Ministry of Defence and Royal Ordanance plc for the exclusive supply of most explosives and propellants also referred to by my right hon. Friend on 2 April 1987. This measure, together with the substantial proportion of Ministry of Defence requirements not covered by the new agreement, should be of assistance to other companies seeking to develop their capabilities in this sector of the market.

Greenham Common

Mr. David Shaw: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a further statement on allegations of strip searching at Greenham Common.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: My predecessor wrote to the hon. Member for Stalybridge and Hyde (Mr. Pendry) on 19 July explaining the circumstances of the answer given to him by my right hon. Friend the Member for Tonbridge and Malling (Sir J. Stanley) on 24 May 1984. A copy of his letter was placed in the Library on 21 July; the text is as follows:

"John Wakeham promised on Thursday 7 July that a Defence Minister would be writing to you about the Point of Order that you raised on 6 July concerning the Answer 'no such strip searches have been carried out at RAF Greenham Common' given by my predecessor John Stanley on 24 May 1984.

Prior to 1 January 1986 (when the relevant provisions of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act came into effect), i.e. at the time of the alleged incident involving Ms. Mann-Cairns and at the time your original question was answered, there was no formal definition of a 'strip-search', personal searches being undertaken according to the judgment of the police officer concerned, as to what was reasonably necessary, and on the basis of common law and relevant statutory provisions. However, at that time, MOD would have taken the expression 'strip-search' to mean a requirement to remove all clothing including underclothing. A requirement to remove all clothing other than underclothing would not have been taken to constitute a 'strip-search'.

The Answer given by John Stanley to your original question was based on the outcome of an investigation by the MOD Police into a specific allegation that women had been strip-searched at RAF Greenham Common. That investigation had found no evidence to support the allegation and I

consider that, on the basis of the understanding of the term at that time and of all the available information, your question was properly and correctly answered.

I should add that the Crown's agreement to settle in Ms. Mann-Cairns' recent case in the Newbury Crown Court resulted from the fact that, due to the emigration of a key police witness, the defence was not in a position to bring evidence to refute evidence given on oath by the plaintiff of facts which were a possible indication of liability. We therefore agreed to a settlement by way of a "judgment by consent". That, however, does not amount to an admission by the Ministry of Defence of any of the allegations made against it and the settlement does not imply acceptance by the MOD that Ms. Mann-Cairns had been strip-searched.

I am sending a copy of this letter to John Wakeham and Frank Dobson."

As the letter explained, at the material time, so far as the Ministry of Defence was concerned, the term "strip search" meant a requirement to remove all clothing. To the best of our knowledge, the practice at the time did not include a requirement to remove underclothing and the inquiries of my right hon. Friend the Member for Tonbridge and Malling discovered no evidence that such strip searches had taken place. On the basis of the understanding of the term and all the available evidence, the hon. Member for Stalybridge and Hyde's question was correctly and properly answered.

In the case of Ms. Mann-Cairns, I have since received a copy of a letter from the hon. Member for Stalybridge and Hyde in which he says that he does not accept that the recent judgment at Newbury County Court means anything other than that his former constituent was strip-searched. I have today replied to him, and the following is the text of my letter:

"Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter of 26 July to John Wakeham. It falls to me to reply.

I cannot accept your view that the recent judgment at Newbury County Court means that your former constituent was strip searched. She herself did not claim that she was required to remove all her clothing, including underclothing, as would have constituted a strip search as the term was understood at the time, nor did the judgment of the Newbury County Court imply that this had been the case. We did take the view that there appeared to have been procedural errors during her arrest and that, on the basis of the evidence now available, the balance of probability lay in favour of Ms. Mann-Cairns having been required unlawfully to remove her clothing down to her underpants.

You say that the evidence of WPC Ford, who had emigrated between the time of the incident and the case coming to court, supported Ms. Mann-Cairns' contention that strip searches took place. In her statement given in December 1984, WPC Ford estimated that she had carried out about 750 personal searches. However, she stated that she would ask the women being searched to remove their clothing 'up to their underwear'. Nakedness was not, of course, required by the Ministry of Defence Police conducting the search. She could not recall the events of the night when Ms. Mann-Cairns was arrested, but she concluded that this particular duty was routine. She added that, as many did not wear underwear, they would be naked in the search room.

I should like to take this opportunity of offering your former constituent an apology for the treatment to which she was subjected and the distress which the circumstances of her arrest must have caused her. She has of course received damages consequent upon a Consent Order to that effect given in Newbury County Court.

I am copying this letter to John Wakeham, Ian Stewart, Sir John Stanley and Frank Dobson."

I should also make clear that the present practice of the Ministry of Defence Police in searching persons in police custody follows the same requirements as are imposed on other police forces in England and Wales by the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. Section 54(6) of the Act is the authority for searching a person in police custody "to the extent that the custody officer considers necessary". A "strip-search" is now defined in the Home Office codes for the detention, treatment and questioning of persons by police officers which were issued under section 66 of the Act, and which took effect on 1 January 1986, as a "search involving the removal of more than outer clothing". The custody officer, who will normally be a police sergeant, is required to inform the person of the reason for the search and to record the reason for all personal searches and their results in the custody record. Guidance is available to all MOD police officers who each have a personal copy of the Home Office codes of practice, and in detailed instructions based on the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 set out in force standing orders which are distributed to every MOD police station.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Child Health

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what plans he has to improve the information available on child health by computerising information about surveillance and preventive procedures on the lines of the standard child health system developed by the National Health Service computing committee; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what plans he has to ensure that systems of computerised information about child health surveillance and preventive procedures become compatible throughout the country within the next 10 years.

Mrs. Currie: Computer-based systems for child health have been available to health authorities in England since the late 1960s. The first such were provided by local authorities, but from the early to mid-1970s health authorities began to develop their own requirements. The main purpose is to provide call and recall systems for vaccination and immunisation, and statistical information useful for epidemiological research into population drift, epidemics and so on. Facilities more recently offered include provision of pre-school developmental assessment, full screening for school children, for example, rubella, sight, hearing, dental fitness and so on, and more sophisticated statistics packages for management and epidemiological purposes.

The main recent development has been the national child health computer system, originally funded by DHSS and Welsh Office, as one of the major elements in the standard systems programme. It is now administered by a consortium of user authorities and the development work is undertaken by the Welsh Health Computer Services Agency and the South Western regional health authority on behalf of the users in England and Wales.

It is in use in some 132 health districts in 11 English health regions, and in nine districts in Wales, with others indicating their interest. The cost to each health authority taking the system is around £3,500 per annum to include support and software updates. Although originally developed for use on ICL equipment (hence it has been limited to those health regions with a traditional ICL expertise), a recent development, in collaboration with South Western RHA, has been to produce some software to allow health authorities with DEC/MUMPS equipment to make use of the system. There are also facilities to allow a wider range of other computer equipment to be connected to the system, thus expanding its potential

marketability to virtually every health authority. The system has also attracted much interest from overseas health services.

Decisions about the introduction of computer systems are matters for individual health authorities to determine within their own priorities and resources, However, the Department is exploring with health authorities the best way to achieve integrated community health care information systems, using recently available computing technologies, but building on the infrastructure created via the national child health computer system. This may fairly be describe as a success story in the history of NHS computing development.

AIDS (Needle Exchange)

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what has been the effect of the 15 pilot needle exchange schemes set up in 1987 to counter the spread of AIDS; whether he intends to extend this scheme; and whether he intends to include the free supply of condoms to intravenous drug abusers.

Mrs. Currie: Our view of the benefits of the pilot needle exchange schemes was given in the reply of my right hon. Friend on 11 July to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, East (Mr. Strang) at column *57*. I understand that the majority of these schemes have condoms available for supply free of charge to injecting drug misusers.

Abortion

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what are the implications for his policy on abortion of the rise in the number of abortions shown in the 1987 abortion statistics.

Mrs. Currie: Like their predecessors of both parties this Government do not take a collective view about abortion beyond ensuring that the law is properly applied.

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will list the numbers of non-National Health Service abortions performed under agency arrangements on National Health Service patients resident in each regional health authority and in each district health authority in England and Wales in 1987, and the estimated numbers of women aged 15 to 44 years resident in each regional health authority and district health authority in England and Wales in mid-1987.

Mrs. Currie: The available information is given in the table. Population estimates for regional and district health authorities by sex and age have not yet been computed for mid-1987.

Number of notifications of abortions carried out under the Abortion Act 1967, non-National Health Service 'Agency'[1] by Regional Health Authority and District Health Authority of usual residence, residents of England and Wales
England and Wales 1987

	Of which non-National Health Service agency[1]
England and Wales	8,041
England	8,029
Wales	12
Northern Regional Health Authority	1
Hartlepool District Health Authority	—
North Tees District Health Authority	—
South Tees District Health Authority	—
East Cumbria District Health Authority	1
South Cumbria District Health Authority	—
West Cumbria District Health Authority	—
Darlington District Health Authority	—
Durham District Health Authority	—
North West Durham District Health Authority	—
South West Durham District Health Authority	—
Northumberland District Health Authority	—
Gateshead District Health Authority	—
Newcastle District Health Authority	—
North Tyneside District Health Authority	—
South Tyneside District Health Authority	—
Sunderland District Health Authority	—
Yorkshire Regional Health Authority	483
Hull District Health Authority	—
East Yorkshire District Health Authority	—
Grimsby District Health Authority	—
Scunthorpe District Health Authority	4
Northallerton District Health Authority	—
York District Health Authority	2
Scarborough District Health Authority	—
Harrogate District Health Authority	—
Bradford District Health Authority	1
Airedale District Health Authority	—
Calderdale District Health Authority	4
Huddersfield District Health Authority	264
Dewsbury District Health Authority	206
Leeds Western District Health Authority	—
Leeds Eastern District Health Authority	—
Wakefield District Health Authority	—
Pontefract District Health Authority	2
Trent Regional Health Authority	214
North Derbyshire District Health Authority	—
Southern Derbyshire District Health Authority	1
Leicestershire District Health Authority	68
North Lincolnshire District Health Authority	2
South Lincolnshire District Health Authority	—
Bassetlaw District Health Authority	4
Central Nottinghamshire District Health Authority	1
Nottingham District Health Authority	2
Barnsley District Health Authority	6
Doncaster District Health Authority	128
Rotherham District Health Authority	2
Sheffield District Health Authority	—
East Anglian Regional Health Authority	3
Cambridge District Health Authority	2
Peterborough District Health Authority	—
West Suffolk District Health Authority	—
East Suffolk District Health Authority	—
Norwich District Health Authority	—
Great Yarmouth and Waveney District Health Authority	—
West Norfolk and Wisbech District Health Authority	1
Huntingdon District Health Authority	—
North West Thames Regional Health Authority	999
North Bedfordshire District Health Authority	2
South Bedfordshire District Health Authority	1
North Hertfordshire District Health Authority	2
East Hertfordshire District Health Authority	3
North West Hertfordshire District Health Authority	2
South West Hertfordshire District Health Authority	1
Barnet District Health Authority	6
Harrow District Health Authority	52
Hillingdon District Health Authority	—
Hounslow and Spelthorne District Health Authority	3

	Of which non-National Health Service agency[1]
Ealing District Health Authority	7
Brent District Health Authority	908
Paddington and North Kensington District Health Authority	5
Riverside District Health Authority	7
North East Thames Regional Health Authority	44
Basildon and Thurrock District Health Authority	—
Mid Essex District Health Authority	—
North East Essex District Health Authority	—
West Essex District Health Authority	2
Southend District Health Authority	—
Barking, Havering and Brentwood District Health Authority	—
Hampstead District Health Authority	6
Bloomsbury District Health Authority	8
Islington District Health Authority	10
City and Hackney District Health Authority	4
Newham District Health Authority	1
Tower Hamlets District Health Authority	—
Enfield District Health Authority	3
Haringey District Health Authority	7
Redbridge District Health Authority	—
Waltham Forest District Health Authority	3
South East Thames Regional Health Authority	240
Brighton District Health Authority	—
Eastbourne District Health Authority	—
Hastings District Health Authority	—
South East Kent District Health Authority	1
Canterbury and Thanet District Health Authority	—
Dartford and Gravesham District Health Authority	1
Maidstone District Health Authority	1
Medway District Health Authority	1
Tunbridge Wells District Health Authority	—
Bexley District Health Authority	2
Greenwich District Health Authority	3
Bromley District Health Authority	4
West Lambeth District Health Authority	204
Camberwell District Health Authority	17
Lewisham and North Southwark District Health Authority	6
South West Thames Regional Health Authority	54
North West Surrey District Health Authority	1
West Surrey and North East Hampshire District Health Authority	5
South West Surrey District Health Authority	1
Mid Surrey District Health Authority	—
East Surrey District Health Authority	1
Chichester District Health Authority	2
Mid Downs District Health Authority	—
Worthing District Health Authority	—
Croydon District Health Authority	4
Kingston and Esher District Health Authority	3
Richmond, Twickenham and Roehampton District Health Authority	5
Wandsworth District Health Authority	28
Merton and Sutton District Health Authority	4
Wessex Regional Health Authority	611
East Dorset District Health Authority	163
West Dorset District Health Authority	43
Portsmouth and South East Hampshire District Health Authority	59
Southampton and South West Hampshire District Health Authority	45
Winchester District Health Authority	46
Basingstoke and North Hampshire District Health Authority	64
Salisbury District Health Authority	29
Swindon District Health Authority	47
Bath District Health Authority	99
Isle of Wight District Health Authority	16

	Of which non-National Health Service agency[1]
Oxford Regional Health Authority	158
East Berkshire District Health Authority	4
West Berkshire District Health Authority	3
Aylesbury Vale District Health Authority	2
Wycombe District Health Authority	2
Milton Keynes District Health Authority	135
Nottinghamshire District Health Authority	7
Oxfordshire District Health Authority	2
South Western Regional Health Authority	50
Bristol and Weston District Health Authority	9
Frenchay District Health Authority	7
Southmead District Health Authority	16
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly District Health Authority	—
Exeter District Health Authority	3
North Devon District Health Authority	—
Plymouth District Health Authority	2
Torbay District Health Authority	2
Cheltenham and District District Health Authority	5
Gloucester District Health Authority	—
Somerset District Health Authority	6
West Midlands Regional Health Authority	5,168
Bromsgrove and Redditch District Health Authority	11
Herefordshire District Health Authority	2
Kidderminster and District District Health Authority	—
Worcester and District District Health Authority	4
Shropshire District Health Authority	5
Mid Staffordshire District Health Authority	14
North Staffordshire District Health Authority	—
South East Staffordshire District Health Authority	4
Rugby District Health Authority	210
Kettering District Health Authority	3
North Warwickshire District Health Authority	382
South Warwickshire District Health Authority	566
Central Birmingham District Health Authority	321
East Birmingham District Health Authority	315
North Birmingham District Health Authority	159
South Birmingham District Health Authority	354
West Birmingham District Health Authority	571
Coventry District Health Authority	828
Dudley District Health Authority	423
Sandwell District Health Authority	537
Solihull District Health Authority	122
Walsall District Health Authorituy	7
Wolverhampton District Health Authority	333
Mersey Regional Health Authority	2
Chester District Health Authority	—
Crewe District Health Authority	—
Halton District Health Authority	1
Macclesfield District Health Authority	—
Warrington District Health Authority	—
Liverpool District Health Authority	1
St. Helens and Knowsley District Health Authority	—
Southport and Formby District Health Authority	—
South Sefton District Health Authority	—
Wirral District Health Authority	—
North Western Regional Health Authority	2
Lancaster District Health Authority	—
Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde District Health Authority	—
Preston District Health Authority	—
Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley District Health Authority	—
Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale District Health Authority	—
West Lancashire District Health Authority	—

	Of which non-National Health Service agency[1]
Chorley and South Ribble District Health Authority	—
Bolton District Health Authority	—
Bury District Health Authority	—
North Manchester District Health Authority	—
Central Manchester District Health Authority	—
South Manchester District Health Authority	—
Oldham District Health Authority	—
Rochdale District Health Authority	2
Salford District Health Authority	—
Stockport District Health Authority	—
Tameside and Glossop District Health Authority	—
Trafford District Health Authority	—
Wigan District Health Authority	—
Wales	12
Clwyd District Health Authority	—
East Dyfed District Health Authority	—
Pembrokeshire District Health Authority	1
Gwent District Health Authority	4
Gwynedd District Health Authority	—
Mid Glamorgan District Health Authority	6
Powys District Health Authority	—
South Glamorgan District Health Authority	1
West Glamorgan District Health Authority	—

[1] Operations carried out under 'Agency' arrangements in non-National Health Service premises on National Health Service patients.

Nurses (Leicestershire)

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many nurses have left the Leicestershire health district under retirement age in the latest period for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: I regret that the information is not held centrally. The hon. Member may therefore wish to contact the chairman of the Leicestershire district health authority.

Health Authorities (Resources)

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what advice he has given to health authorities over the past 12 months regarding the efficient use of resources.

Mrs. Currie: Ministers and the National Health Service Management Board are committed to ensuring that health authorities continue to improve the efficiency with which they manage and provide services so as to maximise the resources available for patient care. This objective has most recently been reinforced in the 1989-90 planning guidelines (Circular HC(88) 43), which was issued to authorities on 19 July. A copy has been placed in the Library.

The guidelines highlight a number of ways in which health authorities could seek to improve their use of resources. The provision of advice is, however, a continuous process, and more detailed information has been given to authorities through the year on areas of particular potential for improving efficiency, on ways of structuring value for money initiatives, and general good practice.

Hospitals (Derby)

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what is the maximum number of in-patients treated at any one-time during each of the past five years at Kingsway hospital, Derby; and what is the overall in-patient capacity of that hospital;

(2) what is the maximum number of in-patients treated at any one time during each of the past five years at Pastures hospital, Derby; and what is the overall capacity of that hospital;

(3) what is the maximum number of in-patients treated at any one time during each of the past five years at the Manor hospital in Derby; and what is the overall in-patient capacity of that hospital.

Mrs. Currie: The available information is given in the table. In 1968 the daily average number of occupied beds for Kingsway, Pastures and Manor hospitals was 715·2, 971·9 and 368·8 respectively. Details of the maximum number of patients treated at any one time is not available centrally, and my hon. Friend may wish to write to the chairman of the Southern Derbyshire district health authority who may be able to supply this information.

The Manor hospital closed in May 1988 with patients being transferred mainly to new or upgraded facilities at the Derbyshire royal infirmary and Ilkeston community hospital.

In-patient activity for Kingsway, Pastures and Manor Hospitals for the years 1982 to 1986

Year	Daily average number of available beds	Daily average number of occupied beds	Discharges and deaths
Kingsway hospital			
1982	480·0	449·6	794
1983	470·8	419·8	804
1984	440·5	302·7	762
1985	431·0	319·4	756
1986	405·0	343·5	995
The Pastures hospital			
1982	725·4	629·2	1,019
1983	720·5	596·1	1,012
1984	655·2	583·7	1,047
1985	672·2	570·3	1,107
1986	651·7	539·6	1,023
The Manor hospital			
1982	276·4	244·8	1,398
1983	276·1	238·0	1,725
1984	262·7	224·3	1,753
1985	245·9	226·2	1,645
1986	266·5	233·8	1,897

Income Support

Mr. Dunnachie: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will make estrangement from home and family sufficient grounds for a young person to qualify for income support;

(2) what discretion is given to local offices to pay benefit to 17-year-olds forced to live away from home as a result of sexual abuse and unable to undertake a YTS placement as a result of psychological problems;

(3) what provision is made for young persons to receive benefit where they have been thrown out of their homes by their parents;

(4) what are the criteria under which a 17-year-old made homeless is entitled to income supplement.

Mr. Scott: I assume that the hon. Member is referring to the situation after 12 September when young people aged under 18 will no longer be eligible for income support, except in prescribed circumstances.

Income support will continue for those who are estranged from their parents and who are in full-time education, and also for those who are (either physically or psychologically) so ill or so disabled that they will not be capable of work or training under the Youth Training Scheme within a year.

Income support will be payable for a period—from 12 September to the end of the year for summer school leavers and for 12 weeks after child benefit normally ends for Christmas and Easter leavers—to young people living away from home because of the risk of physical or sexual abuse, those who are in care or prison immediately before their 16th birthday and those who entered accommodation away from home as part of a programme of rehabilitation or resettlement under the guidance of social services or the probabtion service. Such young people will have to be registered for a job or for the Youth Training Scheme. In addition, income support may be payable at the direction of the Secretary of State where failure to pay would cause severe hardship.

A young person who is estranged from his parents but is not continuing in full-time education will not qualify for income support on grounds of estrangement alone; benefit will depend on his being in one of the eligible categories described above. Similarly a 16 or 17-year-old who is homeless or who has been thrown out by his parents will not receive benefit unless he is in one of the eligible groups.

Foetuses (Research)

Sir John Biggs-Davison: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish the composition and terms of reference of the committee set up to review the code of practice on the use of foetuses and foetal material for research; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: The committee is chaired by the Rev. Dr. J. Polkinghorne, FRS, Dean of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, and its membership comprises Sir Raymond Hoffenberg, president of the Royal College of Physicians of London, Professor Ian Kennedy, professor of medical law and ethics, King's college London and Dr. Sally Macintyre, director MRC medical sociology unit, university of Glasgow.

Its terms of reference are:

In the light of recent developments in the field of human tissue transplantation, and other relevant medical research, to review the Report of the Advisory Group on the Use of Foetuses and Foetal Material for Research (the "Peel Report"), and in particular to consider whether any modifications or additions should be made to the Recommended Code of Practice in that Report.

National Insurance

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the latest estimated income of the national insurance fund from national insurance contributions in the current financial year, the income which would accrue if the upper earnings limit on all contributions was removed and the income which would be lost in each case if *(a)* the contributions rate for single persons was reduced to 5·5 per cent., *(b)* the rate for married persons was dropped to 4 per cent., *(c)* £3,000 were deducted from earned income for contribution purposes, rising to £6,000 for a contributor with a non-earning spouse and *(d)* if the reductions in *(a)* to *(c)* were in operation at the same time;

(2) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for those below and those above pensionable age the estimated number of earned incomes subject to employers' national insurance contributions in steps of £1,000 between £15,000 and £25,000 and in £5,000 steps thereafter, showing single persons and one-earner and two-earner married couples together with the amount collected;

(3) whether he will bring up to date for the current financial year the information given in his answer of 10 December 1986, *Official Report*, column *204*, to the hon. Member for Great Grimsby concerning the distribution of incomes and national insurance contributions, adding *(a)* the saving on the abolition of the reduced rate contribution and *(b)* the numbers contracted-in and contracted-out together with their contributions;

(4) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for those contracted in and for those contracted out, the national insurance contributions rates, including the class 2 and class 4 contributions and the reduced rate, in 1988-89, together with *(a)* the total number in each category, their sex and their marital status and *(b)* the aggregate contributions in each category and the earnings to which they relate;

(5) what is the current reduced rate of national insurance contributions for *(a)* married women and *(b)* widows; how many are still paying contributions at this rate; what is his forecast for 1990-91; how many would otherwise be paying at the rate of 5 per cent. and 7 per cent.; and what is the estimated cost to the national insurance fund in the current financial year in each case;

(6) what has been the increase in the number and annual value of national insurance contributions since 1986 as a result of the reduction in unemployment; and what is the division between full-time and part-time employment;

(7) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the number of nationally insured male and female workers in manufacturing and non-manufacturing, respectively, together with his estimate of average earnings in each case in 1987-88 and his forecast for 1988-89.

Mr. Scott: I will write to the hon. Member.

Körner Exercise

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will list the collections of statistical data which will become regularly available as a result of the Körner exercise giving in each case *(a)* the date on which the first collection was made available or the estimated date on which it will become available and *(b)* the regularity with which the updated statistics will be made available and the points in the year at which he expects this to happen;

(2) if he will list the collections of statistical data which will no longer be available as a result of the Körner exercise, identifying in each case the information which will be made available instead.

Mrs. Currie: I will write to the hon. Member.

Hospital Closures

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to the answer of 8 December 1987, *Official Report*, column *139-40*, why the list of hospital closures included in deposited paper 3399 does not include Barrowmare hospital, Chester, Davenham hospital, Norwich; Princess Mary's hospital, Margate, Dover eye unit; Liverpool psychiatric day hospital, Pemberton day hospital, together with others listed in the answer to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras on 8 December 1986, *Official Report*, columns *49-64*.

Mrs. Currie: The bulk of facilities listed in the answer of 8 December 1986 but not included in deposited paper 3399, were day or out-patient facilities with no loss of beds, including the Liverpool and Pemberton day units. Barrowmore hospital, Chester and Davenham hospital, Northwich were both omitted in error and Princess Mary's hospital, Margate and Dover eye unit were proposed changes of use, not closures and should be deleted from the 1986 list.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if, pursuant to the answer of 8 December 1987, *Official Report*, column *139-40* relating to information on hospital closures deposited in the Library, he will give the address and main specialty of *(a)* Harnwood hospital, Wiltshire, *(b)* St. Mary's hospital, Oxfordshire, *(c)* Westbury maternity hospital, Milton Keynes, *(d)* Greenham hospital, Plymouth, *(e)* Tadley hospital, Chester, *(f)* Heswall hospital, Liverpool, *(g)* Crossley (West) hospital, Holton, *(h)* Hawscroft free discharge clinic, Bolton *(i)* Ashton on Mersey hospital, Trafford, and *(j)* Delaunays hospital, North Manchester.

Mrs. Currie: The information requested is as follows:

		Specialty
(a)	Salisbury General Hospital, Harnwood Branch, Salisbury, Wilts.	Long stay mental illness
(b)	Wantage Road, Wallingford, Oxon	Geriatric
(c)	Wolverton Road, Newport Pagnell, MK16 8HY	Maternity
(d)	Greenbank, Plymouth	Acute medical/surgical
(e)	Tabley Superior, Knutsford, Cheshire	Mental handicap
(f)	Telegraph Road, Heswell, Wirral	Children's hospital
(g)	Kingswood, Warrington	Psychiatric
(h)	Havercroft Unit, Victoria Road, Bolton, BL1 5AU	Mental illness rehabilitation
(i)	Sandiway Road, Sale, near Manchester	Geriatric
(j)	Delaunays Road, Manchester, M8 6RB	Geriatric

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if, pursuant to the answer of 8 December 1987, *Official Report*, columns *139-40* relating to information on hospital closures deposited in the Library, he will give *(a)* the month in which St. Mary's, Newham in City and East London area health authority was approved for closure in 1981 and *(b)* the month in 1986 in which; *(a)* Brunswick house, North East Essex and (ii) Dagenham hospital, Redbridge were approved for closure.

Mrs. Currie: The information requested is as follows:

(a) October

(b) (i) September, (ii) October

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will place in the Library a list of hospital closures for 1987 as set out for previous years in deposited paper 3399.

Mrs. Currie: Information on hospital facilities involving the closure of beds approved for closure in 1987 is currently being collated and will be available shortly. I will inform the hon. Member when I am in a position to place a table in the Library as he has requested.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if, pursuant to the answer of 8 December 1987, *Official Report*, columns *139-40* relating to information on hospital closure deposited in the Library, he will give the address of the Garrett Anderson maternity home in Camden and Islington area health authority.

Mrs. Currie: The Garrett Anderson maternity home, which was approved for closure in September 1979, was situated at 40 Belsize Grove, London NW3 4TS.

Homeless Persons

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what support is given under the new regulation to young people made homeless, with no priority for crisis loans, during the two weeks they must wait for an arrears payment.

Mr. Scott: Young homeless people can apply for a social fund crisis loan. A social fund officer must decide whether a crisis loan is the only means of preventing serious risk to the health and safety of an applicant. Relative priority is not a condition generally applied to applications for crisis loans.

Unemployed people do not necessarily have to wait two weeks for their first payment of income support as benefit for each day since the date of claim can be paid in the first week. Such payments can include a full week's board and lodging charge where this falls due in the part-week.

Listeriosis

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many cases of listeriosis were notified in 1987; in how many of these deaths occurred; and if he will list the number of cases of listeriosis notified to the Government for the previous three years.

Mrs. Currie: Listeriosis is not a notifiable disease under either the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 or the Public Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 1968.

In 1987, there were 17 deaths at ages 28 days and over registered in England and Wales where the underlying cause of death was assigned as listeriosis (international classification of diseases ICD 9th revision 027.0). There were a further three deaths occurring in the neonatal period (first 28 days of life) where congenital listeriosis (ICD (9) 771.2 (part)) was mentioned on the death certificate.

St. James Hospital, West Norfolk

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if, pursuant to the answer of 8 December 1987, *Official Report*, columns 139-40, relating to information on hospital closures deposited in the Library, he will give the month and year in which St. James hospital in west Norfolk and Wisbech health authority was approved for closure.

Mrs. Currie: The hospital referred to was formally approved for closure in May 1978 but did not finally close until September 1986 when phase II of the new Queen Elizabeth hospital opened.

Infant Feeding

Dame Jill Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects publication of the report on the infant feeding survey by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: The report of the third survey of infant feeding practice, "Infant Feeding 1985", produced by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys (OPCS) is being published today. We welcome this report. This scientific survey of infant feeding practice is part of the Government's continuous monitoring of the health of the population. It is unique to this country, and produces valuable evidence for health professionals.

Key points in the report are:

No improvement in breast feeding "starts" between 1980 and 1985, with some decline among particular groups of mothers; overall, 65 per cent. down to 64 per cent. Some decline amongst particular groups of mothers; among mothers of first babies, 74 per cent. to 69 per cent.; and among such mothers who left school aged 16 or less, 65 per cent. to 58 per cent.

Little change in duration of breast feeding since 1980. Only half of all babies are breast-fed for as long as two weeks; only a quarter of four months or more.

Highest incidence of breast feeding is among mothers of first babies:

in higher social classes;
educated beyond 18;
living in London and South-east;
on maternity leave.

There is no evidence to show that mothers who return to paid employment six weeks after the birth are any less likely to begin breast feeding than mothers not in paid employment.

Although breast feeding may have reached its maximum among higher social class mothers at around 85 per cent., there is ample scope to encourage other mothers but they will need advice and support.

Giving infant formula in the first week is associated with ceasing to breast feed within two weeks.

Mothers likely to stop breast feeding early are those who do not put the baby to breast within the first few hours of life.

The surveys also provide the factual basis for the reports from the chief medical officer's Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy (COMA). The COMA report based on this survey and entitled "Present day practice in Infant Feeding: Third Report" was published in February.

Carers National Association

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will be providing grant aid to the newly formed Carers National Association; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: The merger of the Association of Carers and the National Council for Carers and their Elderly Dependents was effected on 14 May 1988 with the creation of the Carers National Association. We have today approved the award of a grant of £77,000 to the new organisation in the current financial year.

The Government have consistently recognised the essential work of carers in looking after disabled people at home, and have supported the proposals for a single national body to take a stronger lead in representing their interests to Government, and to assist and advise their members throughout the country.

We are particularly keen to see the development of support networks and groups, set up by carers and those working with them, and hope to see more of them in future.

Discretionary Payments

Mr. Dunnachie: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services, what criteria in respect of discretionary payments are used to define severe hardship; and what guidelines are issued to his Department's local offices.

Mr. Scott: An announcement will be made in due course.

Young Persons (Severe Hardship)

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what guidelines he has issued regarding the cases to which severe hardship applies, according to the new rules, to young people aged 16 and 17 years.

Mr. Scott: The announcement will be made in due course.

Hospital Research

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what action he proposes to take, inthe light of the published results of the research work of Shortell and Hughes, concerning the consequences of competitive economic pressures on hospitals, a copy of which has been sent to him; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 15 July 1988]:* I have noted the contents of the article by Shortell and Hughes published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* on 28 April. It is often difficult to draw direct lessons from overseas experience with health care markets; especially if, as in this case, the hospital markets concerned and the forms of Government regulation studied have no immediate parallel in this country.

Nurses' Pay

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what were the data on which he based his allocation to Trent regional health authority of additional resources to meet the full cost of the nurses' pay award; what representations he has received on the adequacy of the sum allocated; what changes there have been to those data; if he will meet the chairman of the regional health authority to discuss the funding of the pay award; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 18 July 1988]:* Health authorities generally have welcomed this year's review body pay awards and the additional funds made available. Both have been discussed in the course of the regular meetings Ministers have with regional chairmen.

The additional sums provided were to meet the cost of the recommendations made by the pay review bodies for nurses and midwives, doctors and dentists and the

professions allied to medicine. The sum available to regional health authorities has been allocated in proportion to their 1988-89 initial revenue cash limits and in the form of a single cash limit adjustment. Trent regional health authority's share of this extra funding was £43·1 million.

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what estimate he has of the possible shortfall in funding of the nurses' pay award in the North Western regional health authority as a result of the distribution of the sums allocated by his Department; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 18 July 1988]:* The clinical regrading exercise, which forms a major part of this year's pay award to nurses and midwives, will not be completed until 31 October. It is too early to predict the final outcome for any individual health authority.

Community Care

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he intends to make his response to the Griffiths report on community care; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 26 July 1988]:* Work is in hand to take forward consideration of Sir Roy Griffiths' recommendations. The Government will bring forward their own proposals in due course.

Social Work Qualification

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he will meet the director of the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work to discuss the rejection of its plans for a three-year social work qualification.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 26 July 1988]:* My right hon. Friend the then Minister for Health had already met the chairman and director of the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work and discussed the Government's decision not to fund three-year qualifying training. The Government's objectives of better-trained social workers are reflected in the recent announcement about the extra provision to CCETSW of up to £1 million this year to improve planning and co-operation between the colleges and employers and to review teaching standards.

We feel that more in-service training directed at a substantial number of key staff in the field will more rapidly achieve its purpose than a further year of initial training. Hence the introduction this year of a £10 million training support grant (including £7 million funding from the Department of Health) for local authority staff working with elderly people and the proposed introduction next year of a £10 million training support grant for staff working in the child care field.

Trasidrex

Mr. Skinner: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make further inquiries into the drug Trasidrex with respect to its association with bronchospasm and dyspnoea; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: Reports of suspected adverse reactions to all drugs marketed in the United Kingdom, including Trasidrex, are routinely monitored by the Committee on Safety of Medicines. As my right hon. Friend's reply on 12 July, at column *152*, made clear, appropriate warnings concerning bronchospasm already appear in the manufacturer's data sheet for Trasidrex. We are not aware of any grounds for further inquiries.

Benefits

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many men and how many women were receiving invalidity benefit and severe disability allowance at the latest date for which figures are available.

Mr. Scott: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) on 15 July, at column *389*.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 28 July 1988

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Japanese Cars

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if Her Majesty's Government agree with the proposals of the EEC Commission to curb the import of Japanese cars; if the issue will be determined by majority vote; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: The Commission has not yet put forward proposals for future policy towards imports of Japanese cars into the Community. If and when it does so, the Government will study the proposals carefully.

Imports

Mr. Grocott: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if, using 1980 as the base year, he will publish an index of the degree of import penetration in each major industrial grouping for each subsequent year, using both of the ratios normally used to measure such penetration.

Mr. Alan Clark: The information is as follows:

Import Penetration
Ratio 1 (Imports/Home demand)
1980 = 100

	1980	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*
Divisions 2-4 Manufacturing industries	100	106	111	118	127	131	131	134
Division 2 Ores, metals, chemicals and non-fuel minerals	100	99	106	114	128	133	132	135
Class 21 Extradition and preparation of metalliferous ores	100	99	99	98	95	97	—	—
Class 22 Metal manufacturing	100	87	98	107	131	136	139	147
Class 23 Extraction of minerals nes	100	97	118	126	126	130	113	109
Class 24 Non-metallic mineral products	100	101	109	124	138	143	177	186
Class 25 Chemical industry	100	108	118	124	137	142	144	146
Class 26 Production of man-made fibres	100	106	121	127	123	127	122	119
Division 3 Metal goods, engineering and vehicles	100	110	117	126	134	138	138	140
Class 31 Metal goods nes	100	97	109	115	126	139	145	156
Class 32 Mechanical engineering	100	108	108	111	118	123	125	131
Class 33 Office Machinery and data processing equipment	100	99	109	111	109	104	104	96
Class 34 Electrical and electronic engineering	100	117	126	135	141	151	150	157
Class 35 Motor vehicles and parts	100	109	121	134	131	130	133	125
Class 36 Other Transport Equipment	100	107	104	110	134	119	119	110
Class 37 Instrument Engineering	100	112	107	105	111	109	105	111
Division 4 Other manufacturing industries	100	107	106	112	119	120	121	125
Classes 41/42 Food, drink and tobacco	100	102	102	107	115	115	116	115
Class 43 Textile Industry	100	114	115	120	128	130	132	138
Class 44 Leather and leather goods	100	105	105	109	111	121	115	122
Class 45 Footwear and clothing industries	100	114	113	114	124	123	123	133
Class 46 Timber and Wooden Furniture	100	105	107	118	119	112	115	114
Class 47 Paper, printing and publishing	100	107	102	104	113	112	111	118
Class 48 Processing of rubber and plastics	100	116	124	134	139	147	148	154
Class 49 Other manufacturing industries	100	116	92	92	95	93	94	111

Ratio 2 (Imports (Home Demand plus Exports)) 1980 = 100

	1980	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*
Divisions 2-4 Manufacturing industries	100	105	111	120	127	129	130	133
Division 2 Ores, metals, chemicals and non-fuel minerals	100	98	105	112	122	123	120	122
Class 21 Extraction and preparation of metalliferous ores	100	99	98	99	96	98	—	—
Class 22 Metal manufacturing	100	85	96	103	120	123	122	125
Class 23 Extraction of minerals nes	100	97	137	147	147	152	134	127
Class 24 Non-metallic mineral products	100	102	110	126	139	142	173	182
Class 25 Chemical industry	100	108	116	123	132	132	135	138
Class 26 Production of man-made fibres	100	118	134	131	127	133	138	141
Division 3 Metal goods, engineering and vehicles	100	108	117	130	136	138	141	142
Class 31 Metal goods nes	100	98	110	117	128	140	147	158
Class 32 Mechanical engineering	100	105	108	120	126	131	134	142
Class 33 Office Machinery and data processing equipment	100	108	116	119	113	104	106	100
Class 34 Electrical and electronic engineering	100	117	126	136	142	146	146	154
Class 35 Motor vehicles and parts	100	107	126	144	140	140	147	137
Class 36 Other Transport Equipment	100	97	90	94	106	104	97	90

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
Class 37 Instrument Engineering	100	111	108	114	120	121	118	121
Division 4 Other manufacturing industries	100	107	107	113	121	120	122	126
Classes 41-42 Food, drink and tobacco	100	102	102	107	115	114	116	114
Class 43 Textile Industry	100	115	118	126	134	134	137	143
Class 44 Leather and leather goods	100	107	105	109	109	118	114	117
Class 45 Footwear and clothing industries	100	114	115	116	126	123	125	133
Class 46 Timber and Wooden Furniture	100	106	108	119	120	113	117	116
Class 47 Paper, printing and publishing	100	107	102	105	114	112	111	118
Class 48 Processing of rubber and plastics	100	116	125	137	143	150	153	159
Class 49 Other manufacturing industries	100	117	99	100	102	99	102	116

West Lancashire District Council

Mr. Hind: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) what was the total amount awarded to firms in the West Lancashire district council area in regional development grants and regional selective assistance in 1987-88;

(2) how many regional development grants and grants of regional selective assistance were made to firms in the West Lancashire district council area in 1987-88.

Mr. Atkins: The information requested is as follows:

	RDG[1]	*RSA*[4]
Number	165[2]	15
Value (£ million)[3]	6·1	1·1

[1] Data are only available for the revised RDG scheme, introduced on 29 November 1984.
[2] Approvals.
[3] Amount expected to be paid if the projects proceed as planned.
[4] Offers of industrial grants.

Manufactures

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he will bring up to date the figures on direct investment in manufacturing in table 9 of the evidence submitted by Her Majesty's Government to the Treasury and Civil Service Committee on the financial and economic consequences of United Kingdom membership of the European Communities (page 25 of HC57-II Session 1984-85).

Mr. Maude: The available information is given in the tables:

United Kingdom net direct investment in manufacturing in the EC[1 2]
Table 9

	United Kingdom inward direct investment in manufacturing	*United Kingdom outward direct investment in manufacturing*	*Net outward investment in manufacturing*
1960	4	21	17
1961	n/a	n/a	n/a
1962	−2	16	18
1963	4	24	19
1964	12	22	9
1965	10	15	6
1966	4	35	30
1967	37	16	−22
1968	16	47	32
1969	23	99	76
1970	38	74	37
1971	26	191	165
1972	17	128	111
1973[3]	29	299	270
1974	28	196	168
1975	33	118	85
1976	86	302	217
1977	109	352	243
1978	121	326	205
1979	104	114	11
1980	−91	161	253
1981	57	443	386
1982	−66	163	229
1983	201	257	56
1984	219	305	86
1985	100	687	587
1986	161	777	616

[1] Figures for 1960-1963 exclude oil companies.
[2] EC includes Denmark, Irish Republic, Greece, Spain and Portugal in all years.
[3] United Kingdom joined EC.
Source: Overseas Transactions Inquiry.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what assessment he has made of the causes of the fall in the unit value of imports of finished manufactures in terms of the pound sterling in May; and what effect this has had on the volume of imports.

Mr. Alan Clark: The type of assessment sought by the hon. Member is hardly appropriate to a movement over such a short period.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for *(a)* the United Kingdom, *(b)* West Germany, *(c)* Japan, *(d)* France, *(e)* Italy and *(f)* the United States of America information on imports of finished manufactures as a percentage to one place of decimals (i) gross product and (ii) manufacturing output in 1986 and in 1987; and if he will provide the same information for exports.

Mr. Alan Clark: Data on international trade in finished manufactures and on manufacturing output are not available on a common basis, and no valid comparison is possible. Information on imports and exports of finished manufactures in relation to gross domestic product is in the following table:

Trade in Finished Manufactures[1] *as a Proportion of Gross Domestic Product*

Per cent

	Imports		*Exports*	
	1986	*1987*	*1986*	*1987*
United Kingdom	10·4	10·9	9·1	9·7
Federal Republic of Germany	8·6	8·8	15·9	15·1
Japan[2]	1·1	1·3	8·4	7·7
France[2]	7·5	8·2	7·4	7·5
Italy[2]	5·2	5·7	9·5	9·2
United States of America	5·2	5·5	2·7	2·9

[1] Standard International Trade Classification Sections 7 and 8.
[2] Imports, but not exports, valued inclusive of insurance and freight charges.
Sources: OECD, National sources.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what was the change in the volume of imports of finished manufactures in the latest three months; what was the average change per month for 1987; what assessment he has made of the causes of the change; and what further change he anticipates as a result of the increase in the real exchange rate for the pound sterling since the fourth quarter of 1987.

Mr. Alan Clark: The volume of imports of finished manufactures rose by 11 per cent. between the first and second quarters of 1988. The average monthly rate in 1987 was +1 per cent.

There are of course many factors which may lead to a rise in import volume, such as a strong and growing economy, but no formal assessment of these various factors has been made by my Department.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is his estimate of the United Kingdom share of the volume of trade in manufacturers by the main manufacturing countries in each quarter of 1986 and 1987; what is his forecast of the share in the first two quarters of the current year; and what assessment he has made of the causes of the changes in the trend.

Mr. Alan Clark: The Department does not make such forecasts. Data for 1986 and 1987 are in the following table.

United Kingdom volume share of main manufacturing countries' exports of manufactures (1980 prices)

	United Kingdom share Per cent.
1986	
1	8·8
2	9·2
3	9·0
4	9·7
1987	
1	9·6
2	9·4
3	9·6
4	9·6

The figures suggest that the volume share of the United Kingdom has remained broadly stable over this period.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster by how much he expects investment by manufacturing industry in new plant and machinery to exceed allowances for depreciation in the current year; and if he will give comparable figures for each of the past 10 years.

Mr. Atkins: No assessment has been made for the current year. 1986 is the most recent year for which figures of net domestic fixed capital formation are available. Details for the 10 years 1977-1986 are shown in the following table:

Net domestic fixed capital formation (NDCF) in plant and machinery by manufacturing industry 1977-1986 (at 1980 prices)

Year	*NDCF in plant and machinery £ million*	*Year*	*NDCF in plant and machinery £ million*
1977	1,122	1982	−570
1978	1,297	1983	−588
1979	1,477	1984	90
1980	879	1985	763
1981	−385	1986	336

Note: Figures include assets leased to manufacturers from the financial industries.
Source: Central Statistical Office.

Hourly Earnings

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what effect changes in hourly earnings in the internationally tradeable goods industries have had on the level of competitiveness since the fourth quarter of 1986.

Mr. Alan Clark: Earnings in manufacturing increased by 8·4 per cent. between the fourth quarters of 1986 and 1987, a larger increase than in most competitor countries. Rising productivity offset much of the increase in earnings in the United Kingdom, but in some of our major competitors, unit labour costs fell.

Airbus

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, pursuant to the written reply dated 6 May 1987, *Official Report*, column *417*, on aid to Airbus Industrie, what steps Her Majesty's Government have taken to satisfy themselves that the projects have sound prospects of economic and commercial viability; whether they expect to earn a market rate of interest on the loan throughout its life; and when they expect to receive a real rate of return on its investment, including a return on any interest forgone.

Mr. Atkins: Before agreeing to provide British Aerospace with launch aid in respect of the Airbus A320 and A330/340 programmes, the Government undertook a detailed appraisal of the economic and commercial prospects of the programmes. Details of these appraisals, and of the rates of return and repayment profiles of launch aid contracts must remain commercially confidential between the Government and the company.

Companies Act Inquiries

Mr. Gould: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what representations he has received on his Department's record in completing inquiries under section 432, section 466 and section 442 of the Companies Act; if he has any proposals to speed them up; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: A number of representations have been received in the past about the length of time taken by inspectors appointed in major Companies Act investigations to complete their inquiries. As my right hon. and noble Friend announced on 11 May, a review of existing investigation powers and procedures was conducted in 1987 with a view to ensuring that investigations are

undertaken as effectively and as quickly as is compatible with a fair inquiry and, as a result of that review, a number of new measures were announced.

Mr. Gould: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) when he expects his inquiries under section 432 of the Companies Act into the Animal Defence Society Limited to be completed;

(2) when he expects his inquiries into Bremner plc under section 442 of the Companies Act to be completed;

(3) when he expects his inquiries under section 442 of the Companies Act into Consolidated Gold Fields plc to be completed;

(4) when he expects his inquiries into Pennine Commercial Holdings Limited under section 432 of the Companies Act to be completed;

(5) when he expects his inquiries into Bank Street Securities Limited under section 432 of the Companies Act to be completed;

(6) when he expects his inquiries into Link Service Stations Limited under section 432 of the Companies Act to be completed;

(7) when he expects his inquiries into Graylaw Holdings Limited under section 432 of the Companies Act to be completed;

(8) when he expects his inquiries in Signal Life Assurance Co., Ltd. under section 432 of the Companies Act to be completed;

(9) when he expects his inquiries into WMD Underwriting Agencies Ltd. under section 432 of the Companies Act to be completed;

(10) when he expects the inquiries under section 432 of the Companies Act into Minet Holdings to be completed;

(11) when he expects the inquiries into Guinness plc under sections 437 and 442 of the Companies Act to report.

Mr. Maude: The investigations into the companies mentioned continue, and I am unable to say when they will be completed.

Mr. Gould: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he expects his inquiries into Sumrie Clothes plc under section 466 and section 442 of the Companies Acts to be completed.

Mr. Maude: The inspectors were appointed under sections 442 and 446 of the Companies Act 1985. They submitted their report to the Secretary of State on 11 July, and it is currently being considered.

Mr. Gould: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he expects the inquiries under section 432 of the Companies Act into House of Fraser Holdings plc to be completed.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he expects to receive the report of the inspectors studying the circumstances in which House of Fraser and Harrods were acquired; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: I refer the hon. Member and my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Smith) yesterday.

Estate Agents

Mr. Heddle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Duchy of Lancaster if he will now implement section 22 of the Estate Agents Act 1979.

Mr. Forth: I have no immediate plans to do so.

Stainless Steel (Competition)

Mr. Speller: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make it his policy that before British Steel is privatised, the current anti-competitive policies in relation to stainless steel practised by the Sendzinir Club will be revoked.

Mr. Atkins: Alleged violations of European Community competition rules are a matter for the European Commission. The Commission is currently investigating allegations of anti-competitive arrangements among certain European producers of stainless cold rolled flat products, but has not yet made its findings known.

Rover Group

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, pursuant to his reply of 18 July, *Official Report*, column *446*, for what purpose he proposes to exchange documents with the European Commission in relation to the Rover Group after the company has been transferred to full private ownership.

Mr. Atkins: The Government are required, as a condition of the state aid approval, to supply six-monthly reports to enable the Commission to monitor the implementation of Rover Group's corporate plan.

Bosphorus Bridge

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how much financial assistance he has offered to provide to the Trafalgar House-led consortium in connection with its bid to win the contract for the third Bosphorus bridge.

Mr. Alan Clarke: The extent of financial assistance by the Department of Trade and Industry to companies pursuing major projects overseas must remain confidential between the company and the Department.

Feature Films

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list the number of feature films classified as British and produced in each year since 1974.

Mr. Atkins: Before the passing of the Films Act 1985, films released for public exhibition in cinemas had to be registered by my Department. The 1985 Act, however, removed these registration requirements with effect from 23 May 1985, and there are no official statistics of films since that date. The information available on British feature films (that is, those with a playing time of over 72 minutes) is as follows

	Over 72 minutes
1974	78
1975	70
1976	64
1977	42

	Over 72 minutes
1978	51
1979	40
1980	41
1981	32
1982	29
1983	36
1984	37
[1]1985	18

[1]To 23 May.

Industrial Research and Development

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what measures are being undertaken by his Department to encourage industrial research and development expenditure in the regions of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Forth: The Government have created the right climate to enable industry to invest more in research and development in all parts of the United Kingdom. Within my Department's enterprise initiative, particular attention is given to the needs of the regions. In the assisted areas and urban programme areas, support of up to two thirds of the cost of consultancy projects is available, rather than half elsewhere. We have also introduced a special scheme —regional enterprise grants—to help firms in the development areas, with fewer than 25 employees, to finance their innovation projects and have expanded SMART (small firms merit award for research and technology), reserving 20 awards for the urban programme areas. Applications for this year are currently being assessed.

European Single Market

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement about preparations for competing in Europe in 1992.

Mr. Maude: Over 80 per cent. of British businesses are now aware of the 1992 target date for completing the single European market. This is an excellent base from which to launch the next stage of DTI's "Europe Open for Business" campaign to encourage action in firms throughout the country to prepare for the single market.

Engineering Industry

Mr. Adley: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he last met representatives of the engineering industry; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Newton: I have not yet had the opportunity to meet representatives of the engineering industry in my new capacity.

Departmental Programmes

Mr. George: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how much has been spent by his Department in each of the past five years on the evaluation of Department programmes; and what proportion this constitutes of *(a)* the amount allocated for evaluation and *(b)* the Department's total budget.

Mr. Forth: Evaluation of departmental programmes is carried out principally by specialist staff and consultants. Many of the staff concerned are also engaged on other work, so it is not possible to give precise figures for the cost of evaluation. The following figures give an approximate indication:

£

	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88
DTI specialist staff	440,000	440,000	430,000
Consultants	109,000	52,000	131,000
Total	549,000	492,000	561,000

These figures do not take account of the contribution to evaluation of staff concerned with programme management in the relevant line divisions, or of the cost of consultancy studies financed from line divisions' budgets. Such costs, and costs for years before 1985-86, cannot be separately identified without disproportionate cost.

My Department does not have a separate allocation of funds for evaluation work. The objective is for evaluation generally not to cost more than 0·5 per cent. of the total expenditure of the programme under evaluation. The proportion of total expenditure for which my Department has policy responsibility, represented by the above figures is as follows:

	Per cent.
1985-86	0·03
1986-87	0·02
1987-88	0·05

Securities and Investments Board

Mr. Hanley: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he has received a report from the Securities and Investments Board on the exercise of its functions under the Financial Services Act.

Mr. Maude: I have today laid before Parliament a copy of the board's report, made in accordance with section 117 of the Act. The report covers the period from 1 April 1987 to 30 June 1988.

Export Credits Guarantees

Mr. Andrew MacKay: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on the accounting treatment of the Export Credits Guarantee Department's comprehensive external trade and comprehensive bank guarantee facilities.

Mr. Alan Clark: The comprehensive external trade facility insured United Kingdom companies trading in goods shipped directly from one overseas country to another on short terms of payment. It was discontinued in July 1987 because losses accumulated on confirming house business and no viable basis could be found for continuing cover for that sector. Cover for multi-sourcing business of manufacturers and merchants continues to be available under the comprehensive short term facility.

The comprehensive bank guarantee facility, which guaranteed banks against non-repayment of advances made to exporters in respect of insured short-term export contracts, was discontinued in October 1985, as the original need for the scheme no longer existed and demand had fallen because alternative sources of such finance were

available to viable companies. Residual claims payments and recovery action are likely to continue on the facility for several years.

At 31 March 1987, the ECGD had incurred cumulative cash flow deficits of £135·8 million (CBG) and £340·0 million (CET). These figures include notional interest on the borrowings from the Consolidated Fund. These deficits would continue to grow at an accelerating rate as notional interest accrued, thereby becoming a burden on the ECGD's other trading activities. It has therefore been decided that these facilities should properly be accounted for as public expenditure programmes and the losses incurred to date written out of the ECGD's trading account. The transfer will not affect the Government's aim to minimise the ultimate losses on the facilities.

The necessary changes will be made in the ECGD's 1987-88 trading accounts. Their precise effect will not be known until those accounts have been finalised, but the best current estimate is that reserves reported at 31 March 1987 will be increased by £360 million, reflecting trading losses accumulated in previous years. Retrospective adjustments to public expenditure for the years 1982-83 to 1988-89 will be made as follows:

	£ million
1982-83	58·0
1983-84	45·6
1984-85	84·7
1985-86	36·8
1986-87	17·7
1987-88	[1]12·7
1988-89	[2]—4·4

[1] provisional.
[2] estimate.

These figures represent the net annual cash payments to exporters. They do not include notional interest, administration expenses and accrued income and expenditure.

Trade Descriptions

Mr. Oppenheim: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when the repeal of the Trade Descriptions Act 1972 and the successor arrangements will come into force.

Mr. Forth: I have today laid before Parliament a draft order to bring into force section 48(2)(a) of the Consumer Protection Act 1987, which repeals the Trade Descriptions Act 1972. Subject to parliamentary approval, the repeal of the 1972 Act will come into force on 31 December 1988.

We propose to replace the 1972 Act with an order under section 8 of the Trade Descriptions Act 1968, which would require an indication of the place of production of goods to be given if the goods are presented in such a way that potential purchasers are likely to be misled about where the goods were produced. Consultations on a draft order for this purpose were carried out earlier this year.

In the light of the responses to the consultation, a number of amendments designed to clarify and strengthen the draft order have been made. In particular, the core provision of the order (article 2(1)) have been simplified; a requirement to indicate country of production if the place of origin could be misleading has been introduced; and the provisions dealing with the use of trade marks and language have been redrafted to make it clear that these factors are to be taken into account in assessing whether the presentation of goods is misleading as to their origin but they are not by themselves necessarily to be regarded as indicative of origin. These amendments should ensure that the order provides effective protection against misleading indications of origin.

Copies of the revised draft Trade Descriptions (Place of Production) (Marking) Order have been placed in the Libraries.

As required by section 38 of the Trade Descriptions Act 1968, I shall tomorrow advertise formally in the press and the London and Edinburgh Gazettes my intention to make this order. A period of at least 28 days during which representations may be made must then elapse before the order can be made. This will allow us to lay the final order before Parliament in good time before the necessary debates on the draft commencement order takes place.

Research and Development

Mr. George: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what has been the total expenditure over the past five years by Her Majesty's Government on research and development; what has been the total expenditure on social science research; and what figures he has for other member states of the European Community.

Mr. Forth *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* The available information relates to central Government expenditure, net of receipts, on research and development in total and on R and D for social science and humanities. Comparable information from international sources is not available. The information is given in the table:

Net central Government expenditure on R and D—social science and humanities and total £ million

	1982-83	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*
Social Science and Humanities	214·7	214·5	223·8	236·6	236·9
TOTAL	3,689·8	3,986·9	4,262·7	4,575·7	4,589·2

Satellite Television (Dish Installations)

Mr. French: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) if he has received any representations on the safety implications of faulty installations of roof-top dishes capable of receiving television programmes broadcast by satellite; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he has any plans to introduce a licensing system for installers of roof-top dishes capable of receiving television programmes broadcast by satellite; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* I am aware of no such representations. The industry operates a code of practice on the installation of satellite dishes, and I see no need to introduce a licensing system.

It is a criminal offence to supply goods which do not comply with the general safety requirement imposed by the Consumer Protection Act 1987, and where a defective dish or faulty installation gives rise to damage or injury there may be grounds for a claim for damages for negligence or for breach of contract.

Steel

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will publish a table showing the number of employees employed by the British Steel Corporation in *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* Wales and *(c)* England in (i) 1979, (ii) 1982, (iii) 1985 and (iv) June 1988.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 25 July 1988]:* The following table gives the total number employed by the British Steel Corporation at the end of September for the 1979, 1985 and for 1987, the latest date at which the total was broken down as follows:

	1979	*1982*	*1985*	*1987*
Scotland	18,970	11,250	7,970	6,110
Wales	50,630	22,310	19,060	18,610
England	114,040	58,550	37,130	26,680

The average weekly number of employees in the United Kingdom as a whole was 53,720 during the financial year 1987-88.

National Engineering Laboratory

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list the organisations which have submitted a bid to take over the National Engineering Laboratory, East Kilbride; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Forth *[pursuant to the reply, 25 July 1988, c. 23.]:* I can now disclose that bids and proposals were received on 22 July from:

The Management of NEL
Production Engineering Research Association (PERA)
British Maritime Technology Group
British Hydro-Mechanics Research Association (BHRA) joint with Strathclyde University
YARD (a subsidiary of CAP Group plc)
Cranfield Institute of Technology
RAPRA Ltd. (a proposal also involving other companies)
SGS Moore Barrett and Redwood Limited
A partial bid for the Internal Combustion Engines Development Unit of NEL from the staff there.

Initial Training

Mr. Terry Lewis: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Worsley of 20 July, he will now list in the *Official Report* all exempted categories of persons in the Manpower Services Commission initial training scheme.

Mr. Cope: I have been asked to reply.

Further to my reply to the hon. Member on 20 July, the Training Commission is planning to introduce initial training as part of YTS, to provide a short period of preparation and assessment for young people who are not ready to enter a vocational training course, and need help to overcome special problems.

There are no predetermined categories of young people who would be excluded from initial training and anyone will be eligible if it is considered that they will benefit from this training provision.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Ethiopia

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on aid to Ethiopia.

Mr. Chris Patten: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Kingswood (Mr. Hayward) on 11 July 1988 at column *10*. Since that date, in view of the serious plight of Sudanese and Somali refugees in Ethiopia, we have made available additional relief assistance totalling £444,000, together with a further contribution of £1·5 million to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. In addition to relief aid, we provide technical co-operation and famine rehabilitation, currently running at around £1·5 million a year.

Southern Africa (Front-line States)

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on his Department's policy towards aid to the front-line states in southern Africa.

Mr. Chris Patten: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 5 July, at column *503*.

Sub-Saharan Africa

Miss Lestor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what was the total United Kingdom bilateral aid given to the whole of sub-Saharan Africa in each year from 1979 to the latest available year.

Mr. Chris Patten: The information is as follows:

Gross bilateral aid to sub-Saharan Africa 1979 to 87

	£ thousand
1979	212,504
1980	243,894
1981	278,706
1982	234,760
1983	225,899
1984	249,808
1985	285,497
1986	267,489
1987	283,720

Poverty Alleviation

Miss Lestor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much, and what proportion of the British aid programme in 1986 was spent directly on poverty alleviation.

Mr. Chris Patten: I am currently reviewing the extent of our activities on direct poverty alleviation. The conclusions of this review will be available in the autumn.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Staff Surveys

Mr. Janner: To ask the Attorney-General what is the phased programme of surveys of staff being carried out by and within the Treasury Solicitor's Department and the Lord Chancellor's Department, respectively; what are the

phases and when each will be completed; and whether on completion he will place copies of such results in the Library.

The Solicitor-General: Both Departments have completed their programme of surveys of ethnic origins of serving staff. Results of east and west midlands, north-west and Avon, and London and the south-east have been published by the Cabinet Office and copies are in the Library.

Recruitment Schemes

Mr. Janner: To ask the Attorney-General what surveys of applicants have been carried out in recruitment schemes by the Treasury Solicitor's Department and the Lord Chancellor's Department, respectively, in respect of the sex and race of applicants and of those appointed; and with what results.

The Solicitor-General: Since the beginning of this year, applicants in all local recruitment schemes carried out by the Treasury Solicitor's Department and the Lord Chancellor's Department have been asked to complete an ethnic origin form. This information is being analysed on a servicewide basis by the Cabinet Office (Office of the Minister for the Civil Service).

Departmental Staff

Mr. Janner: To ask the Attorney-General whether he proposes to take any positive action measures in accordance with the code of the Commission of Racial Equality by reason of there being at present no black or Asian members of staff in the Law Officers' Department.

The Solicitor-General: All members of staff in the Law Officers' Department are seconded from other Government Departments, who recruit in accordance with the code of practice of the Commission for Racial Equality. The Law Officers' Department has no recruitment function.

Ethnic Monitoring

Mr. Janner: To ask the Attorney-General how many new entrants to the Lord Chancellor's Department and the Treasury Solicitor's Department, respectively, were from ethnic minority groups in the year ended 31 May.

The Solicitor-General: In the year ending 31 May 1988, of those new entrants to the Lord Chancellor's Department and the Treasury Solicitor's Department who responded to the ethnic origin survey, the numbers who were from ethnic minority groups were 83 and eight respectively.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Attorney-General in what quasi-governmental bodies or other organisations under his aegis he has authority to request or require the carrying out of ethnic monitoring exercises in accordance with the code of the Commission for Racial Equality; and what ethnic monitoring and equal opportunities exercises have been carried out by each such Department.

The Solicitor-General: There are no such bodies or organisations under the aegis of the Attorney-General.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Attorney-General when he expects the full result of the survey of ethnic origin of staff to become available; and whether he will then place a copy in the Library.

The Solicitor-General: The results of the survey are being collated and analysed by the Cabinet Office (Office of the Minister for the Civil Service) on a servicewide basis.

Departmental Programmes

Mr. George: To ask the Attorney-General how much has been spent by his Department in each of the past five years on the evaluation of Department programmes; and what proportion this constitutes of *(a)* the amount allocated for evaluation and *(b)* the Department's total budget.

The Solicitor-General: The process of evaluation of my Department's programmes is part of the work itself. It is therefore not possible to identify separately the resources involved.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Milk Marketing Board

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the chairman of the Milk Marketing Board; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. MacGregor: I met the chairman of the Milk Marketing Board on 9 June, when we discussed various issues affecting the dairy industry.

Farming Unions

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met representatives of the farming unions; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. MacGregor: I meet representatives of the farming unions frequently to discuss agriculture matters. I last met members of the National Farmers Union on the 11 July, when we discussed sheepmeat and beef.

Agriculture Ministers (Meetings)

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met his counterparts from the other European Community states; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. MacGregor: I last met my counterparts from other European Community states at the Agriculture Council on 18-19 July. I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Beverly (Mr. Cran) on Wednesday 20 July, at columns *633-34*.

Public Expenditure

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will publish a table in the *Official Report*, in the same format as the written reply of 7 July, *Official Report*, columns *751-52*, on receipts classified as charges in respect of his programme expenditure over the years 1982-83 to 1990-91, indicating the receipts in respect of running costs expenditure together with a supplementary analysis indicating, separately, the amounts of receipts in respect of programme expenditure and of running costs expenditure estimated to have been met from other public expenditure programmes.

Mr. MacGregor: For receipts in respect of programme expenditure I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 7 July 1988, at columns 751-52. Receipts in respect of running costs expenditure for which the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has responsibility are given in the table. In no year did receipts in respect of running costs included in other Government Departments' running costs exceed £½ million.

	Running costs receipts
1982-83 outturn	8
1983-84 outturn	8
1984-85 outturn	9
1985-86 outturn	9
1986-87 outturn	10
1987-88 outturn	20
1988-89 plans	23
1989-90 plans	29
1990-91 plans	31

Note: Figures for the Intervention Board for Agricultural Produce are de minimis.
The Forestry Commission has no running costs receipts.

EC (Membership Consequences)

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will bring up to date the figures in table D of the evidence submitted by Her Majesty's Government to the Treasury and Civil Service Committee on the financial and economic consequences of United Kingdom membership of the European Communities (page 67 of HC57-II Session 1984-85).

Mr. Donald Thompson: This information will take some time to prepare. I shall write to the hon. Member when it is available.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will bring up to date the figures in annex V of the evidence submitted by Her Majesty's Government to the Treasury and Civil Service Committee on the financial and economic consequences of United Kingdom membership of the European Communities (pages 53-4 of HC57-II Session 1984-85).

Mr. Donald Thompson: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will bring up to date the figures in tables 4(e)2 and 4(e)3 of the evidence submitted by Her Majesty's Government to the Treasury and Civil Service Committee on the financial and economic consequences of United Kingdom membership of the European Communities (pages 37 to 38 of HC57-II Session 1984-85).

Mr. Donald Thompson: The most recent information corresponding to that in table 4(e)2 is set out in the Commission publication "The Agricultural Situation in the Community—1987 Report", page T/38. Table 4(e)3 is updated by the Eurostat publication "Agricultural Income 1987", page 98. Copies of these publications are in the Library of the House.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will bring up to date the figures in table 4(e)1 including figures for Spain and Portugal, of the evidence submitted by Her Majesty's Government to the Treasury and Civil Service Committee on the financial and economic consequences of United Kingdom membership of the European Communities (pages 35-36 of HC57-II Session 1984-85)

Mr. Donald Thompson: Information on yields of agricultural products in the European Community is contained in the Commission publication "The Agricultural Situation in the Community—1987 Report", pp T/168, T/169, T/188, T/193, T/221 and T/282. A copy is in the Library of the House. The latest readily available information for the non-Community countries is shown in the table.

Yields of selected agricultural products: 1986

	United States of America	*Japan*	*Australia*	*Canada*
Wheat (tonne/ha)	2·31	3·57	1·55	2·24
Barley (tonne/ha)	2·74	3·21	1·55	3·03
Sugar beet (tonne/ha)	51·29	53·99	n.a.	42·00
Oilseed rape (tonne/ha)	n.a.	1·68	1·12	1·40
Potatoes (tonne/ha)	32·69	29·23	25·22	25·12
Milk (kg/cow)	6,048·00	5,000·00	3,395·00	4,837·00

Source: FAO Production Year Book.
n.a.—not available.

Milk Quotas

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will publish in the *Official Report* the highest recorded price per 1,000 litres on the sale of a United Kingdom milk quota, the capital value in terms of a cow with a representative milk yield and a representative price for the cow itself.

Mr. Donald Thompson: My Ministry does not collect this information.

Cotton

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for the years 1985 to 1987 and the estimate for the current year the guide and minimum prices for cotton under the common agricultural policy, the average world price, the cost of support to the EEC budget, the tonnage qualifying under the arrangement and the amount of aid per tonne, and production imports and exports of cotton in the EEC.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The information requested is contained in the table. Institutional prices and rates of aid,

as laid down in the EC regime for cotton, relate to cotton in the unginned state. Estimates for the current year are given where available.

	1985	1986	1987	1988
Guide price[1] (ECU/100 kg)	96·02	96·02	96·02	96·02
Minimum price[1 2] (ECU/100 kg) before adjustment under MGQ system	91·23	91·23	91·23	91·23
Average world price (approximately)[1 3] (ECU/100 kg)	29·00	28·00	29·00	
Aid payable[1 2] (by weighted average) before adjustment under MGQ system (ECU/100 kg)	63·22	70·1	65·3	
Quantity in receipt[1 2] of aid (tonnes) (In effect, EC production)	561,555	947,000	[4]870,000	
Imports of cotton into the EEC (ginned; tonnes) *Source:* Nimexe	808,166 (EC of 10)	1,054,536	1,119,309	
Exports of cotton from the EC (ginned, tonnes) *Source:* Nimexe	46,425	24,343	56,742	
EC expenditure on[1] aid (in million ECU)	355	587	519	

[1] Prices, aid and quantities are for the marketing year beginning in the year of harvest, and relate to a standard quality.
[2] Production in excess of the maximum guaranteed quantity attracts a proportionate reduction in rates of aid and minimum price and possible reduction in the MGQ the following year. In 1986/87 marketing year the deduction was 8 ECU/100 kg (approximately) and in 1987/88 it was 5·761 ECU/100 kg.
[3] World prices are for unginned cotton and are calculated from recorded prices for ginned cotton.
[4] Provisionally estimated.

Agricultural Production

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing his estimate of the contribution to agricultural production of each of the four categories of holding, by size of business, given in table 4 of the annual review (Cm. 299).

Mr. Donald Thompson: The information requested is given in paragraph 6 (page 2) and table 4 of the "Annual Review of Agriculture 1988" (Cm. 299).

SOEC Index (Statistics)

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the SOEC index of real agricultural net value added at factor cost per person engaged in British agriculture in each of the years 1984-87 based on 1979-81 = 100.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The latest available estimates are:

	Number
1984	119·1
1985	96·8
1986	103·8
1987	100·8

These estimates are shown in table A.18 (page 89) of the Eurostat publication "Agricultural Incomes 1987", a copy of which is in the Library of the House.

Farmgate Prices

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the average farmgate price in the United Kingdom for the principal common agricultural policy products in 1987; what was the average price in real terms in 1967-68 to 1970-71; and if he will state the quantities produced in each period.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Support Costs

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his estimate of the total cost of EEC/Exchequer support for United Kingdom agriculture per acre of arable crops and per head of cattle, sheep and pigs.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Expenditure in the United Kingdom on market regulation under the CAP (excluding structural measures) in 1987-88 was:

	Expenditure
Arable crops[1]	£87/ha
Cattle	£50/head
Sheep	£7/head
Pigs[2]	−£0·2/head

[1] Excludes grasses more than four years old and rough grazing.
[2] Receipts from MCA levies on exports of pigmeat exceed expenditure.
Source: "Annual Review of Agriculture 1988" (Cm. 299)—tables 3 and 34.

Supply Estimates

Mr. Patnick: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will describe the net effects on Supply Estimates of the decisions on agricultural prices for 1988-89.

Mr. MacGregor: The voted provision of £558·855 million for the Intervention Board for Agricultural Produce is not expected to be reached. Since the Supply Estimates were prepared a number of changes have taken place in market prices, levels of production, exchange rates and trade volume. These changes, which include a revised reassessment of the effects of earlier policy measures, are substantially greater than the £9·5 million estimated net Exchequer cost of the price decisions. The settlement of the

price negotiations (including changes to market management measures to offset the cost to the Community budget) is forecast to add £12·968 million to expenditure, mainly because of the devaluation of the green pound. Additional receipts are forecast at £3·464 million. These forecasts allow for a delay in Community funding of approximately two months (so that additional expenditure incurred after January will not be reimbursed until the 1989-90 financial year) and for the fact that the new cane sugar refining aid agreed as part of the price fixing is only partly funded by the Community.

A token winter Supplementary Estimate will be submitted seeking parliamentary approval for the provision of the cane sugar refining aid.

Food Aid

Sir John Biggs-Davison: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will publish the list of organisations designated to participate in the European Community free food scheme; and what advice he is circulating on the distribution of such food.

Mr. Ryder: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the then Minister of State to my hon. Friend for Cambridgeshire, North-East (Mr. Moss) on 21 April, at column *566*.

EC Budget

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will bring up to date the information on the EEC agricultural budget and outturn given in his written reply dated 7 May 1986, *Official Report*, column *176*; and if he will include the supplementary budgets, the conversion factor for the pound sterling, the United Kingdom contribution and receipts and his forecasts for 1988 and 1989.

Mr. MacGregor: The information requested is set out in the table. The United Kingdom contributes to the budget as a whole rather than to individual components, so the figures shown for the United Kingdom contribution are notional.

	Original budget (excluding supplementary budgets)	*Supplementary budget*	*Outturn*	*Notional United Kingdom contribution*	*United Kingdom receipts*	*Conversion rate*
	mua	*mua*	*mua*	*mua*	*mua*	*1 ua = £*
1973	3,263	—	3,786	333	152	0·416667
1974	3,839	—	3,228	355	279	0·416667
1975	4,306	—	4,914	668	848	0·416667
1976	5,490	717	5,793	939	517	0·416667
1977	6,581	934	6,964	1,340	422	0·416667
	mecu	*mecu*	*mecu*	*mecu*	*mecu*	1 ecu = £
1978	9,131	—	9,000	1,386	480	0·663759
1979	10,022	725	10,880	1,904	593	0·649236
1980	11,878	—	11,943	2,484	941	0·605540
1981	13,401	−1,070	11,581	2,490	1,198	0·556891
1982	14,533	—	13,077	3,165	1,357	0·557801
1983	14,786	1,763	16,637	3,677	1,849	0·586581
1984	17,288	1,848	19,092	4,166	2,244	0·583969
1985	20,755	—	20,549	4,011	2,016	0·588051
1986	23,104	—	23,028	3,340	2,074	0·647851
1987[1]	24,174	−73	23,996	n.a.	1,839	0·719320
1988[2]	29,003	—	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0·671141
1989[3]	30,153	—	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0·671141

Source: EC budgets, EAGGF financial reports, EC Court of Auditors reports, implementation of the budget reports.

Notes: Before 1978, Community expenditure was expressed in units of account. As this unit had a different basis from the present ecu the figures for 1973-77 are not directly comparable with those for later years.

[1] Covers expenditure on market support for first 10 months only.

[2] Covers expenditure on market support from November 1987 to 15 October 1988. In addition, the budget contains provision of 1,240 mecu for depreciation of old stocks and a monetary reserve of 1,000 mecu.

[3] Covers expenditure on market support from 16 October 1988 to 15 October 1989. In addition the PDB contains 640 mecu for depreciation of old stocks, 800 mecu for reimbursement of butter disposals in 1987-88 and a monetary reserve of 1,000 mecu.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a revision of the table on pp 38-39 of Cm. 288-II to take account of what was agreed at the European Economic Community summit meeting on financing the European Economic Community budget and the current year's budget settlement, together with *(a)* a note of any other significant consequential changes in the forecast of his Department's expenditure and *(b)* a forecast for this year's expenditure on common agricultural policy support on the same basis as in table 4.7 on page 44.

Mr. MacGregor *[holding answer 2 July 1988]:* Revised figures for planned expenditure on agriculture, taking account of the European Council's agreement, will be published in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement. The estimated expenditure on CAP market support for 1988-89 is set out in the Supply Estimates, class IV, vote I.

Cattle and Sheep (Prices)

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he expects to publish target prices for cattle and sheep for January 1989; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I published the target price scale for the beef variable premium scheme and the seasonal scale of weekly guide prices for the sheep variable price scheme on 22 July. The tables published included figures for January 1989, but, as explained in the press notices,

those for beef are provisional and depend upon the extension of the existing BVPS after its expiry at the end of 1988, while those for sheep will be reduced in due course by the operation of the 1989 sheepmeat stabiliser, the level of which is still to be decided by the EC Commission.

Silage and Slurry Facilities

Ms. Walley: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what measures he will introduce to provide for the regular safety inspections of new, existing and extended silage and slurry facilities.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Responsibility for farm safety rests with the Health and Safety Executive. During the course of its regular routine visits and inspections, HSE's agricultural inspectorate examines all aspects of health and safety including, where appropriate, machinery systems and plant such as slurry stores, silage tanks, and so on.

Departmental Programmes

Mr. George: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how much has been spent by his Department in each of the past five years on the evaluation of departmental programmes; and what proportion this constitutes of *(a)* the amount allocated for evaluation and *(b)* the Department's total budget.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The process of evaluation of my Department's programmes is part of the work itself. It is therefore not possible to identify separately the resources involved.

Export Refunds

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how he will compensate exporters of agricultural and food products for the extra costs they have incurred as a result of the current year's delays in export refund payments by the Intervention Board for Agricultural Produce.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I regret that export refund payments have been subject to particular delays since the new Customs and Community documentation came into effect at the beginning of this year as a result of the intervention board's associated computer problems. I recognise that these delays have meant additional costs for many traders, especially when they have extended beyond the period of two months, which I am advised is reasonable by analogy with the express provisions of Community law relating to monetary compensatory amounts. I have therefore authorised the Intervention Board for Agricultural Produce to pay compensation at a varying rate equal to base rate plus one point on export refund claims, including exporter pays MCAs where applicable, paid on or after 1 January 1988 after an interval of more than two months from the day of deposit with Her Majesty's Customs or the board of sufficient supporting documents. The compensation will be paid on the net amount due after appropriate charges on the claim such as MCA levies have been taken into account. Parliamentary approval for payments will be sought in a winter Supplementary Supply Estimate for IBAP's market support vote (class IV, vote 1). Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at up to £5 million will be met by repayable advances from the Contingencies Fund. Details of the arrangements will be announced by the intervention board as son as possible, with the first payments under the scheme being expected to be made in the autumn.

Plant Variety Testing and Seed Certification

Mr. Strang: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will make it his policy that no decision will be taken in the parliamentary summer recess on the recommendations in the report on plant variety testing and seed certification systems in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I cannot give such an undertaking.

River Pollution

Sir Bernard Braine: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) whether he has yet received the report from the Anglian water authority regarding the effect of the extension of the Southend on Sea sewage outfall on the quality of river water generally; and whether there has been any increase in levels of pollution off Canvey Island's beaches;

(2) if he will detail the arrangements for continuous monitoring of all sewage outfalls and beaches in the Thames estuary.

Mr. Donald Thompson *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* I refer my right hon. Friend to the reply he received on 22 July from my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment, at column *857*.

PRIME MINISTER

Middle East

Q29. **Mr. Dykes:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has any plans to visit the middle east in the near future.

The Prime Minister: I hope to stop over briefly in the Gulf on the way to and from Australia, but have no plans at present to pay an official visit.

Scotland

Q66. **Mr. Harry Ewing:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has any plans to make an official visit to Scotland during the summer recess.

The Prime Minister: Yes.

Maidstone

Q125. **Miss Widdecombe:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has any plans to pay an official visit to Maidstone.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

Invoices (Payment)

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Prime Minister what action is being taken by Government Departments to ensure that invoices are paid promptly, especially where the debt is owed to a small business.

The Prime Minister: Government Departments are advised in "Government Accounting" that payment should be made as soon as possible after authorisation, subject to Departments taking, at their discretion, advantage of any supplier credit. Departments should not postpone payment to avoid an excess on a vote nor for any other reason. Copies of the booklet "Prompt Payment Please" prepared by the Department of Employment and a number of other organisations, which emphasises the need for fair dealing with small suppliers, have been sent by that Department to other Government Departments.

Mr. Raoul Wallenberg

Mr. Amess: To ask the Prime Minister (1) if, when she next meets the President of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, she will raise the case of Mr. Raoul Wallenberg; and if she will make a statement;

(2) when she last discussed the case of Mr. Raoul Wallenberg with the Swedish Government; and if she will make a statement;

(3) what discussions she has held with other EEC Heads of Government concerning the case of Mr. Raoul Wallenberg; and if she will make a statement;

(4) when she last discussed the case of Mr. Raoul Wallenberg with the Head of the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: Mr. Wallenberg's nationality is Swedish. His disappearance is therefore primarily for the Swedish Government to pursue. Since 1957, the Soviet authorities have said that Mr. Wallenberg died in prison in 1947.

Over the years, there have been many reports that he was alive and in prison in the Soviet Union considerably later than that, but there has been no conclusive proof. We have frequently pressed the Soviet Union for a full account of Mr. Wallenberg's fate, and shall continue to do so as long as there is doubt as to whether he did in fact die, and if so, how. Increasing openness in Soviet society, particularly as regards matters of history, and indications that glasnost may possibly be extended to cover international tragedies such as the Katyn massacre, suggest that it may be possible before too long to establish the truth about Mr. Wallenberg.

I have not discussed Mr. Wallenberg's fate with other EC Governments or with the Swedish Government. I know that there is widespread international interest in this tragic case, and I am sure that all concerned are as anxious as we are to find out the truth.

Small Businesses

Mr. Amess: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list those Government measures of particular help for small businesses since 1979.

The Prime Minister: In 1979 responsibility for the small firms sector resided with the Department of Industry. Responsibility was transferred from the amalgamated Department of Trade and Industry to the Department of Employment on 3 September 1985. Government policy throughout has been to create a climate in which small firms can flourish and to tackle the particular disadvantages faced by people setting up a new business or wishing to expand an existing small firm.

The principal Government measures of particular help for small businesses include the small firms service which provides information and business counselling to new and established firms; the business improvement initiative launched by the DTI in January 1988 which offers access to specialised consultancy in a number of key business areas; the rural development commission, which provides advice and technical services to small firms in rural areas; a range of tax changes to improve the incentives and rewards for successful small business owners; the loan guarantee scheme introduced in 1981; the business expansion scheme introduced in 1983; the enterprise allowance scheme introduced in 1983; a range of training programmes operated by the Training Commission which take account of new and established small firms' business training needs.

Mr. S. Clinton Davis

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Prime Minister if she will give the reasons for not renewing the nomination of Mr. S. Clinton Davis as a member of the European Commission; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: I have written to Mr. Clinton Davis expressing gratitude for his work as a member of the Commission and explaining that I thought as a general rule that people should not serve as commissioners for too long.

European Council

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Prime Minister if she will raise at the next meeting of the European Council the responsibility for allocating responsibilities within the European Commission; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: No. The allocation of portfolios is a matter for the Commission.

EC Commissioners

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Prime Minister what are the salary, expenses, pension, period of office, and criteria for the appointment of a European Economic Community commissioner.

The Prime Minister: The basic annual salary of a commissioner is BFr 5,592,708 (at the present exchange rate about £86,000) with certain allowances payable depending on personal circumstances; travel and hotel expenses are paid on a reimbursement basis plus a subsistence allowable for travel; pensions are calculated at 4·5 per cent. of last annual salary per year of service. The period of office is four years.

As to the criteria, I have nothing to add to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) on 20 July at column *607*.

Teachers (Pay Award)

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Prime Minister what factors have determined the decision to award teachers a pay increase of *(a)* 4·25 per cent. in England and Wales and *(b)* 6 per cent. in Scotland; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: The pay increase for teachers in England and Wales in 1988, which is worth about 4·75 per

cent. on average, resulted from a report of the Interim Advisory Committee on School Teachers' Pay and Conditions. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science implemented in full the committee's recommendations on pay. The pay increase of 6 per cent. in Scotland was conceded by the Scottish local authorities within the Scottish Joint Negotiating Committee for Teaching Staff in School Education. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland made clear the Government's view that this settlement was excessive and unjustifiable.

Members' Salaries

Mr. Pendry: To ask the Prime Minister if she has anything to add to her statement of 28 April, *Official Report*, column *506*, in reply to a question by the hon. Member for Stalybridge and Hyde, with specific reference to the current value in real terms of Members' salaries in relation to their salaries in 1964.

The Prime Minister: Yes. In 1964, Members were required to pay for secretarial assistance from their own resources. Since 1969, the secretarial allowance has been available to defray the cost of secretarial expenses, and if this is taken into account Members are undoubtedly better off. In addition, parliamentary salaries will be increased by 6·9 per cent. from £22,548 to £24,107 from 1 January 1989 in accordance with the Resolution of 21 July 1987.

Engagements

Mr. Stern: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 28 July.

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 28 July.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 28 July.

Mr. Cran: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 28 July.

The Prime Minister: This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Legislation (Statistics)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Lord President of the Council (1) if he will publish in the *Official Report* a list of the sponsors of private Members' Bills which have failed to complete their report stage in the House of Commons in each Session since 1958;

(2) if he will publish in the *Official Report* a list of private Member's motions, including prayers against statutory instruments, which have been debated in parliamentary time provided by the Government in each Session since 1959;

(3) if he will publish in the *Official Report* a list of Government Bills which failed to complete their report stage in the House of Commons since 1958;

(4) if he will publish in the *Official Report* a list of private Members' Bills which failed to complete their report stage in the House of Commons in each Session since 1959;

(5) how many ten-minute Bills were introduced in each Session since 1959.

Mr. Wakeham: It has not been possible to provide this information in the time available without disproportionate cost.

Divisions

Mr. Amess: To ask the Lord President of the Council what was the total number of Divisions on *(a)* Government business, *(b)* private Members' business, *(c)* private business and *(d)* other public business in each Session since 1959.

Mr. Wakeham: The information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Visitors

Mr. Amess: To ask the Lord President of the Council if he has any plans to review the present line of route; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wakeham: I have no such plans. I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Hyndburn (Mr. Hargreaves) on 12 May at column *234*.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will raise with the Services Committee the possibility of levying charges for tourists visiting the Palace of Westminster during the summer recess; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wakeham: I have no plans to do so. This matter was most recently considered and rejected by the Accommodation and Administration Sub-Committee in January 1987. Successive Administrations have accepted that the costs of the Palace of Westminster, which include the cost of controlling visits, are a legitimate charge on public funds.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Lord President of the Council what was the total number of visitors to the Palace during the summer recess in 1987; how many were tourists; and what were the figures for each year since 1983.

Mr. Wakeham: The total number of all visitors during each summer recess since 1983 is as follows:

	Number
1983	12,751
1984	17,502
1985	19,290
1986	20,462
1987	20,449

It is not possible to differentiate between tourists and other visitors.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Lord President of the Council what representations he has received requesting him to raise with the Services Committee the levying of charges for tourists visiting the Palace of Westminster during the summer recess; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wakeham: I have received no such representations during this Parliament. However, I am aware that my hon. Friend raised this matter in the debate on tourism on 17 June.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will raise with the Services Committee the possibility of opening the line of route for visitors on Saturdays and throughout the summer recess; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wakeham: I have no plans to do so.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Lord President of the Council what is his estimate of the cost of providing visitors to the Strangers Gallery with copies of documents relating to the business under discussion; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wakeham: Given the wide range of subjects discussed and the variation in size and price of documents, it is not possible to provide a reliable estimate. However, the value of Order Papers and guides for visitors to the gallery, which are already provided to visitors free of charge, amounts to some £450,000 annually.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will raise with the Services Committee the possibility of making certain parliamentary publications available for sale to visitors to the Palace of Westminster; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wakeham: I have no plans to do so. Visitors to the Gallery are already provided with the "Guide for Visitors to the Gallery" and with a copy of the relevant Order Paper free of charge. On leaving the Gallery, they may also obtain from the Admission Order Office, an order form for a copy of the relevant Hansard, which will be supplied by Her Majesty's Stationery Office on receipt of the order form and payment.

The new parliamentary building (phase I) will include a parliamentary bookshop, which will offer a full range of parliamentary publications to the public. It is expected that this bookshop will be open in late 1990.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

School Discipline

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he now expects to receive the report of the committee of inquiry into discipline in schools; and when he hopes to publish it.

Mrs. Rumbold: I refer the right hon. Member to my right hon. Friend's reply to the Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) on 29 April at columns *281-84*.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science which bodies were specifically asked by the committee of inquiry into discipline in schools to answer questions other than those which featured in the public advertisement; and what questions these bodies were asked.

Mr. Rumbold: All those invited to submit evidence were asked to address the four questions in the public advertisement. Additional, more specific, questions were addressed to all local education authorities and all institutions providing teacher training in England and Wales. The additional questions for local education authorities were as follows:

Prevalence

Do you have any statistical (or other) evidence indicating prevailing levels of misbehaviour by pupils? (e.g. records of suspensions and exclusions and the reasons for them, truancy etc.)

Can any local trends be identified from this evidence? If so, what are they?

Policies

Does your authority have a stated policy on school discipline? (If it has, a copy would be very useful.)

Are schools encouraged to publish such policies? (Examples of school policies would also be very valuable.)

Does your authority provide schools with guidelines covering criteria to be used when considering the exclusion of a pupil? (If it does, a copy would be helpful.)

In-service training

Are teachers in your authority involved in any in-service training specifically related to classroom control? (Some details of courses and numbers involved would be helpful.)

Alternative provision for disturbed/disturbing pupils

What alternative provision (support teams, on or off-site units etc.) is made by your authority for such pupils?

How many pupils are involved in such provision compared with your mainstream primary secondary school population?

What criteria are used to identify pupils requiring such provision?

What would your assessment be of the costs and benefits of this provision for your authority?

The additional questions for institutions providing teacher training were as follows:

Initial Teacher Training

Do your current courses deal with issues of behaviour and discipline through:

specific core units or modules?
optional units or modules?
the permeation of the whole course?
the school experience component of the course?
a combination of these?

Do you provide guidelines for staff and/or students on these issues? If so, what form do they take?

What methods are used to help students develop skills and attitudes which will be effective in promoting good behaviour and preventing disruptive behaviour by pupils? Please give examples.

Is it possible to distinguish the course time spent on this from that spent on the development of more general classroom management skills? If so, please quantify it in relation to total course hours.

Do courses contain practical advice on how to handle disruptive incidents? If so, what form does it take?

Does a specific member of staff have responsibility for advising on and monitoring training in these areas?

Do any arrangements exist for students to gain experience of schools and classes in which pupils' behaviour may be difficult? If so, what are they?

How are students prepared for and supported through such situations if they are encountered in their school experience?

Are students helped to understand the perspectives of parents in relation to their children's behaviour? If so, how is this achieved.

How are students made aware of the range of professional support available within schools and from outside agencies to help in managing the behaviour of pupils?

In-service Training

Does your college/department currently run or contribute to INSET courses specifically related to the management of pupil behaviour? If it does, please give details of course content, teaching methods and participants.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many individuals have submitted evidence to the committee of inquiry into discipline in schools.

Mrs. Rumbold: The committee has received 360 letters from individuals, including groups of staff within schools and social service departments. Nine letters were signed by more than one individual. The total number of signatories is 465.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list the organisations which have submitted evidence to the committee of inquiry into discipline in schools.

Mrs. Rumbold: The organisations which have submitted evidence to the committee are:

Local Education Authorities

Avon
Barking and Dagenham
Barnet
Berkshire
Birmingham
Bradford
Bromley
Calderdale
Cambridgeshire
Cheshire
Cleveland
Clwyd
Cornwall
Croydon
Cumbria
Derbyshire
Devon
Dudley
Dyfed
East Sussex
Enfield
Essex
Gateshead
Gloucestershire
Gwent
Gwynedd
Hampshire
Havering
Hereford and Worcester
Humberside
Inner London Education Authority
Isle of Wight
Kent
Kingston upon Thames
Kirklees
Lancashire
Leeds
Leicestershire
Lincolnshire
Liverpool
Newcastle-upon-Tyne
Norfolk
Northamptonshire
Northumberland
North Yorkshire
Nottinghamshire
Oldham
Oxfordshire
Powys
Redbridge
Richmond-upon-Thames
Rotherham
Salford
Sandwell
Sefton
Solihull
Somerset
South Tyneside
St. Helens
Surrey
Wakefield
West Glamorgan
Wiltshire

Initial Teacher Training Institutions

University of Bath
Bedford College of Higher Education
Birmingham Polytechnic
University of Birmingham
Brighton Polytechnic
Bristol Polytechnic
Bristol University
Brunel University
Bulmershe College of Higher Education, Reading
Cambridge University
Central School of Speech and Drama, London
Charlotte Mason College, Cumbria
Chester College
Crewe and Alsager College
Coleg Normal, Bangor
College of St. Mark and St. John Foundation
Durham University
University of East Anglia
Edge Hill College of Higher Education, Liverpool
Exeter University
Hatfield Polytechnic
Homerton College, Cambridge
Hull University
Keele University
King Alfred's College, Winchester
Kingston Polytechnic
Lancaster University
Liverpool Institute of Higher Education
London University
Loughborough University
Manchester Polytechnic
Middlesex Polytechnic
Nene College, Northampton
Newcastle-upon-Tyne Polytechnic
Oxford Polytechnic
Oxford University
Reading University
Roehampton Institute, Whitelands College
St. Martin's College
Sheffield City Polytechnic
Sheffield University
South Glamorgan Institute of Higher Education
Thames Polytechnic
Trent Polytechnic, Nottingham
Trinity College, Carmarthen
University College Cardiff
University College of North Wales
University College of Wales
University College, Swansea
Warwick University
West London Institute of Higher Education
West Midland College of Higher Education, Walsall
Westminster College, Oxford
West Sussex Institute of Higher Education
Worcester College of Higher Education

Teachers' Associations

Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association
Caribbean Teachers Association
Croydon Head Teachers' Association
National Association of Head Teachers
National Association of Head Teachers in Wales
National Association of School Masters/Union of Women Teachers
National Union of Teachers
Professional Association of Teachers
Secondary Heads Association
The Headmasters' Conference
UCAC (Welsh Teachers Association)

Other Organisations

Adjustment Unit: Special Education Centre, Clwyd
Arts Education Forum
Association for Behavioural Approaches with Children
Association of Educational Psychologists
Association of Chief Education Social Workers
Association of Chief Officers of Probation
Association of County Councils
Association of Metropolitan Authorities
Association of Workers for Maladjusted Children
The Boys' Brigade
British Association of Counselling
British Association of Ideal Education
British Association of Social Workers
British Housewives' League
British Psychological Society

The Campaign for the Advancement of State Education
Catch 'Em Young Project Trust
Centre for the Study of Comprehensive Schools
The Children's Legal Centre
Commission for Racial Equality
Community Education Development Centre
Conservative Western Area Local Government Committee
Department of Health and Social Security
Dr. Barnardo's
Drugs Education Unit, Hatfield
Educational Institute of Scotland
Education Management Information Exchange
Education Service Advisory Committee (Health and Safety Commission)
Forum for the Advancement of Educational Therapy
The General Synod of the Church of England
Girls' School Association
The Hereford Diocesan Council of Education
HM Prison Service
ILEA Behaviour Management Project
Incorporated Association of Preparatory Schools
Independent Schools Joint Council
Inter-Diocesan Schools Commission
Llandaff Diocesan Council for Education
Manpower Services Commission
The Methodist Church Division of Education and Youth
The Muppet Club Project
The Muslim Educational Trust
National Association of Governors and Managers
National Association for Pastoral Care in Education
National Association of Social Workers in Education
National Confederation of Parent-Teacher Associations
National Foundation for Educational Research
National Youth Bureau in England and Wales
Narborough Road Integration Project
Pax Christi
Professional Development Foundation
Programme for Reform in Secondary Education
School Psychological and Child Guidance Service, North Yorkshire
Social Education Team, Liverpool Education Authority
Socialist Education Association
Society of Teachers Opposed to Physical Punishment
Southwark School Support Service
Special Educational Needs—National Advisory Council
The Sports Council
The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations
Training, Consultancy, Resources, in Health Personal and Social, and Drug Education (TACADE)
Welsh Counties Committee
Welsh Joint Education Committee

City Technology Colleges

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is his policy regarding the year-on-year revenue funding of city technology colleges, having regard to future fluctuations in spending by local education authorities of maintained schools.

Mrs. Rumbold: Decisions on public expenditure on the revenue funding of city technology colleges will take into account funding levels on LEA-maintained schools in similar areas.

Mr. Anthony Coombs: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what factors he will take into account in deciding proposals published by local education authorities to close schools in order that city technology colleges or city colleges for the technology of the arts might be established in their place.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: All proposals which fall to me to be decided under the provisions of section 12 of the Education Act 1980 are treated strictly on their merits and in the light of the individual circumstances. In reaching my decision I weigh carefully the case presented by the local education authority and the comments made by any objectors to the proposals. I also take careful account of my published education policies. My Department has given detailed guidance to local education authorities in circular 3/87 on some general considerations against which I judge rationalisation proposals.

If section 12 proposals should be put to me which included as an objective making premises available to the promoters of a city technology college (CTC) or a city college for the technology of the arts (CCTA), I would consider them against the same criteria. In addition I would need to satisfy myself that the plans formulated by the promoters were sufficiently clear, considered and developed; that they fitted the criteria of the CTC programme; and that agreements in principle had been reached, subject to my approval of the section 12 proposals, on the terms of a proposed funding agreement with the promoters. I should need to be satisfied that the necessary agreement in principle had been reached between those persons and the local education authority; and that sufficient schools would continue to be available for pupils in the area of the authority, taking account, where appropriate, of the facilities to be provided by the CTC or CCTA. I should also need to satisfy myself that full details of the plans had been made available to all those with an interest in the matter at the appropriate time during the consultation process, in line with the guidance set out in circular 3/87.

Student Loans

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations his Department has received about the introduction of student loans; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: The student support review group has received written evidence from 106 organisations and individuals, nine of which have also given oral evidence. In addition, since the beginning of 1987, the Department has received seven petitions, signed by a total of 1,300 people, and well over 1,500 letters.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will place in the Library copies of the representations he has received concerning the introduction of student loans; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: Copies of written evidence received by the student support review group were placed in both Libraries of Parliament in April 1987. It would not be appropriate to do the same with all the correspondence —not usually intended for publication—addressed to my right hon. Friend and myself.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list in the *Official Report* those *(a)* individuals and *(b)* organisations who made representations to his Department concerning the introduction of student loans.

Mr. Jackson: The following organisations and individuals submitted written evidence to the student support review group:

Alliance Party of Northern Ireland
Association for Student Counselling
Association of Accommodation and Welfare Officers
Association of British Chambers of Commerce
Association of Charity Officers
Association of County Councils
Association of Directors of Education in Scotland
Association of Heads of Polytechnic Student Services
Association of Lecturers in Colleges of Education in Scotland
Association of Metropolitan Authorities
Association of Northern Ireland Education and Library Boards
Association of Polytechnic Teachers
Association of Principals of Colleges
Association of University Teachers
Ayr College
Balliol College, Oxford, Junior Common Room
Bath Area Students' Organisation
Brighton Polytechnic
Bristol University Graduate Association
British Youth Council (Scotland)
Business and Technician Education Council
Cambridge University Graduate Union
Cambridge University Students' Union
Church of Scotland Department of Education
City of London Polytechnic
Committee of Directors of Polytechnics
Committee of Principals and Directors of Scottish Central Institutions
Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals of the Universities of the United Kingdom
Confederation of British Industry
Conservative Collegiate Forum
Conservative Student Affairs Research Group
Consultative Council of Professional Management Organisations
Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
Council for National Academic Awards
Cranfield Students' Union
Dundee College of Technology
Edge Hill College of Higher Education
Edinburgh University of Students' Association
Equal Opportunities Commission
Family Welfare Association
General Synod of the Church of England Board of Education
Gloucestershire College of Arts and Technology
Gloucestershire College of Arts and Technology, Academic Board
Gloucestershire County Council
Heriot-Watt University
Heriot-Watt University Students' Association
Hertfordshire Area National Union of Students
Institute of Personnel Management
Irish Congress of Trade Unions Northern Ireland Committee
Joint Committee of Colleges of Education in Scotland
Jordanhill College of Education
Kilmarnock College Students Association
King Ecgbert School, Sheffield, Governors
London Borough of Barnet
Manpower Services Commission
Dr. G. P. McNicol, Principal and Vice-Chancellor, University of Aberdeen
NAB/UGC Continuing Education Standing Committee
Napier College of Commerce and Technology
National Advisory Body for Public Sector Higher Education
National and Local Government Officers Association
National Association of Education Guidance Services
National Association of Head Teachers
National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education
National Confederation of Parent-Teacher Associations
National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (England and Wales)
National Union of Students
National Union of Students (UK) and Union of Students in Ireland, Northern Ireland Regional Committee
Dr. A. Neville, Principal, University of Dundee
Open University
Open University Students' Association
Oxford University Student Union
Dr. E. S. Page, Vice-Chancellor, University of Reading
Polytechnic of Central London Faculty of Law
Residential Colleges Committee
Scottish Chiropractic Association
Scottish Further and Higher Education Association
Scottish Institute of Adult and Continuing Education
Scottish Tertiary Education Advisory Council
Scottish Vocational Education Council
Sheffield City Polytechnic
Sheffield City Polytechnic Union of Students
Sheffield University Students' Union
Society of Education Officers
South Bank Polytechnic
Southampton University Students' Union
Staffordshire County Council
Sir William van Straubenzee, M.P.
Sir Peter Swinnerton-Dyer, Chairman, University Grants Commitee
Trades Union Congress
United Kingdom Federation of Business and Professional Women
Universities Council for Adult and Continuing Education
University College of Wales, Aberystwyth
University of Edinburgh
University of Kent
University of Oxford Hebdomadal Council
University of Ulster
Voluntary Sector Consultative Council
Wales Advisory Body for Local Authority Higher Education
Welsh Counties Committee
Welsh Joint Education Committee
West Surrey College of Art and Design
Western Education and Library Board
Westfield Campus, Sheffield
Mr. M. I. J. Woodward, Headmaster, Holsworthy Community College
Women Returners Network
World University Service (UK)

Oral evidence was received from the following organisations:

Association of County Councils
Association of Metropolitan Authorities
Association of University Teachers
Committee of Directors of Polytechnics
Committee of Principals and Directors of Scottish Central Institutions
Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals of the Universities of the United Kingdom
Conservative Collegiate Forum
Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
National Union of Students

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what recent representations his Department has received concerning automatic membership of student unions; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: Since the end of May we have received 13 letters from hon. Members and members of the public about membership of local unions and a further 10 letters about membership of the National Union of Students.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information his Department has on the services of student unions available to their members; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by my right hon. Friend to my hon. Friend the Member for

Thurrock (Mr. Janman) on 18 April at column *292*, in which he indicated that it was intended to collect the information requested as part of a fact-finding survey of student unions. A questionnaire is due to be sent to a sample of institutions in the near future.

Public Expenditure

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish a table in the *Official Report*, in the same format as his written reply of 15 July, *Official Report*, columns *373-74*, on receipts classified as charges in respect of his programme expenditure over the years 1982-83 to 1990-91, indicating the receipts in respect of running costs expenditure, together with a supplementary analysis indicating, separately, the amounts of receipts in respect of programme expenditure and of running costs expenditure estimated to have been met from other public expenditure programmes.

Mrs. Rumbold: Receipts against DES running costs expenditure are as follows:

	£ million
1982-83 outturn	1
1983-84 outturn	2
1984-85 outturn	2
1985-86 outturn	2
1986-87 outturn	1
1987-88 estimated outturn	1
1988-89 plans	1
1989-90 plans	1
1990-91 plans	1

None of these receipts is included in other Department's running costs. The remaining information requested is not readily available in respect of local education authority receipts; details of research council receipts are published in the annual appropriation accounts.

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish in the *Official Report* an analysis for the years 1982-83 to 1990-91, consistent with his reply of 15 July, *Official Report*, columns *373-74*, of receipts for *(a)* schools' expenditure, analysed by (i) meals, (ii) milk sales, (iii) rents, (iv) fees and charges and (v) grants, *(b)* further and higher education expenditure, analysed by (i) fee income, (ii) examination fees, (iii) research and consultancy income, (iv) rents and charges and (v) grants, *(c)* miscellaneous expenditure, analysed by (i) income of youth and other educational services and (ii) other fees and charges and *(d)* research councils' expenditure, analysed by (i) charges for commissioned research and (ii) other.

Mrs. Rumbold: The handbooks of education unit costs published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy for each of the financial years 1982-83 to 1985-86 set out a full analysis of revenue income received by local education authorities in England, both by sector of the education service and by type of income, compiled from LEAs' returns to the Department of the Environment of revenue outturn. A handbook giving similar information for the 1986-87 financial year will be published soon. A detailed breakdown of LEA receipts beyond 1986-87 is not available. Details of research council receipts for the years 1982-83 to 1986-87 have been published in the annual appropriation accounts.

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table bringing together on the same basis the totals for receipts on his programme in 1985-86 and 1986-87 implied by his answer of 15 July, *Official Report*, columns *373-74*, with the corresponding totals in the answer of 27 May, *Official Report*, columns *375-76*.

Mrs. Rumbold: The totals for receipts for 1985-86 and 1986-87 implied by my answer of 15 July at columns *373-74*, are, respectively, £1,077 million and £1,224 million; the comparable figures of £999 million and £1,144 million given in my right hon. Friend's answer on 27 May, at columns *375-76*, incorporated part, but not all, of the relevant receipts accruing to the research councils.

Departmental Programmes

Mr. George: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how much has been spent by his Department in each of the past five years on the evaluation of departmental programmes; and what proportion this constitutes of *(a)* the amount allocated for evaluation and *(b)* the Department's total budget.

Mrs. Rumbold: Evaluation can take many forms, including the work of Her Majesty's inspectorate, research projects and ad hoc investigations. A separate costing of the evaluation component of these is not available, but total spending on relevant activities has been:

£ million

	1986-87	*1987-88*	*1988-89*
Her Majesty's Inspectorate (recurrent costs)	18·1	19·9	21·8
Research and development (total)	13·8	14·1	15·6
Total	31·9	34·0	37·4
The DES programme, including central and local government expenditure, has been	15,691·0	17,169·0	17,971·0

University Extra-mural Departments (Funding)

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the transfer of funding responsibility for extra-mural departments in English universities to the Universities Funding Council.

Mr. Jackson: The Universities Funding Council will assume responsibility for funding extra-mural departments in English universities from the beginning of the next financial year. An official working party has considered the implications of a transfer and copies of its report are being sent today to the chairmen of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals and the University Grants Committee. My right hon. Friend will commend the report to the UFC, when it is established.

Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham Girls School

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what was the purpose of the visit by

an architect in his Department to the Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham girls school in Deptford on Tuesday 5 July; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: An occasional professional assistant working for architects and buildings branch at the Department visited the Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham girls school in Deptford on Tuesday 5 July. The visit followed a request from the governors for advice on possible modifications to the school buildings.

University Grants

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will list the grants made available to universities in Great Britain in the financial year 1987-88 on the advice of the University Grants Committee and the Computer Board.

Mr. Jackson: The information requested is as follows:

1987-88
Grants to Universities and Colleges, etc.

	For Recurrent Grants				
	General Purposes	*Overseas Research Student Awards Scheme*	*Restructuring*	*Total Subhead C1*	*Computers Subhead D2*
	£000	*£000*	*£000*	*£000*	*£000*
Aston University	18,221	29	380	18,630	256
Bath University	16,423	42	350	16,815	1,065
Birmingham University	44,203	77	620	44,900	326
Bradford University	17,920	16	335	18,271	234
Bristol University	35,369	38	205	35,612	291
Brunel University	15,281	19	181	15,481	180
Cambridge University	50,367	960	—	51,327	549
City University	14,125	3	344	14,472	102
Durham University	20,049	26	55	20,130	88
East Anglia University	16,873	21	143	17,037	172
Essex University	10,654	32	119	10,805	197
Exeter University	18,742	29	261	19,032	121
Hull University	16,794	6	1,202	18,002	194
Keele University	10,420	12	55	10,487	144
Kent University	12,844	6	42	12,892	207
Lancaster University	16,126	25	88	16,239	174
Leeds University	49,391	167	326	49,884	346
Leicester University	21,102	20	213	21,335	155
Liverpool University	44,197	61	790	45,048	295
London Business School	2,527	6	5	2,538	16
London University, including its Colleges and Schools	274,008	953	2,216	277,177	6,087
Loughborough University of Technology	22,254	24	122	22,400	265
Manchester Business School	1,781	3	—	1,784	46
Manchester University	57,462	123	112	57,697	3,629
Manchester University Institute of Science and Technology	19,977	290	100	20,367	
Newcastle upon Tyne University	37,746	84	578	38,408	379
Nottingham University	33,418	34	141	33,593	367
Oxford University	50,590	1,036	—	51,626	484
Reading University	21,570	65	24	21,659	192
Salford University	16,965	15	966	17,946	226
Sheffield University	38,179	92	921	39,192	291
Southampton University	30,359	82	41	30,482	321
Surrey University	15,394	47	478	15,919	184
Sussex University	17,431	78	165	17,674	147
Warwick University	23,570	31	84	23,685	209
York University	14,444	21	18	14,483	117
University of Wales, including University Colleges and Institute of Science and Technology	86,731	114	5,282	92,127	864
Aberdeen University	26,553	47	369	26,969	256
Dundee University	18,900	47	481	19,428	126
Edinburgh University	54,825	149	610	55,584	617
Glasgow University	53,924	104	1,222	55,250	347
Heriot-Watt University	13,972	28	14	14,014	163
St. Andrews University	15,095	41	92	15,228	116
Stirling University	11,125	20	19	11,164	101
Strathclyde University	30,181	111	66	30,358	285
Other payments	[1]663	[2]180	[3]30	873	[4]815
Total	1,438,745	5,414	19,865	1,464,024	21,749

[1] £613,000 paid direct to the University Central Council on Admissions, £46,000 in respect of the National Engineering Laboratory, East Kilbride and £4,000 to the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals.

[2] £89,000 paid to Cranfield Institute of Technology, £88,000 to the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals for administration of the Overseas Research Student Fees Support Scheme and £3,000 to the Royal College of Art.

[3] £30,000 paid to the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals.
[4] £89,000 fees paid to the Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency (CCTA) for negotiating contracts and £726,000 paid to the Rutherford & Appleton Laboratories (SERC) for networking projects.

1987-88
Grants to Universities and Colleges, etc.

	For Capital Expenditure			
	Universities etc. Subhead A1(1)	*Medical and Dental Schools Subhead A1(2)*	*Equipment and Furniture Subhead A2*[1]	*Computers Subhead B1*
	£000	*£000*	*£000*	*£000*
Aston University			1,564	
Bath University	708		1,476	472
Birmingham University			3,104	231
Bradford University			1,274	48
Bristol University	39		2,465	35
Brunel University			1,261	343
Cambridge University		4	5,733	13
City University			836	191
Durham University	1		1,191	
East Anglia University			876	16
Essex University			674	
Exeter University	207		938	74
Hull University			919	8
Keele University			513	23
Kent University			672	234
Lancaster University			879	38
Leeds University		1	3,271	25
Leicester University		62	1,427	
Liverpool University		26	2,874	47
London Business School			77	
London University, including its Colleges and Schools	2,503	2,280	23,068	1,790
Loughborough University of Technology			1,803	2
Manchester Business School			40	
Manchester University	963	824	4,273	2,004
Manchester University Institute of Science and Technology	429		2,586	
Newcastle upon Tyne University	49	200	2,547	27
Nottingham University		33	2,522	1,580
Oxford University	856	247	5,818	2,671
Reading University	50		1,645	
Salford University	1,640		1,386	107
Sheffield University			2,570	
Southampton University	212	9	3,199	96
Surrey University			1,505	32
Sussex University			1,185	
Warwick University			1,572	
York University			1,055	74
University of Wales, including University Colleges and Institute of Science and Technology	987		5,120	1,178
Aberdeen University		6	1,567	859
Dundee University	1,814		1,214	535
Edinburgh University			3,650	448
Glasgow University	503	25	3,543	203
Heriot-Watt University	3,248		1,915	965
St. Andrews University			756	10
Stirling University			473	10
Strathclyde University	599		2,108	9
Other payments				903[3]
TOTAL	14,767	3,716	109,144[2]	15,300

[1] The sums provided from Subhead A2, earmarked for individual universities as shown, were transferred to a Deposit Account with the Paymaster General from which issues were made as required towards meeting the costs of furniture and equipment. The balance remaining in the Deposit Account at 31 March 1988, which is not liable to surrender to the Consolidated Fund, was £15,997,000. This sum includes £1,163,000 in respect of the Engineering and Technology Programme.
[2] In addition a further £1,178,000 was transferred to the Deposit Account to meet expenditure by Universities for the Engineering and Technology Programme.
[3] Other payments comprise £345,000 fees paid to the Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency (CCTA) for negotiating contracts and £558,000 paid to the Rutherford and Appleton Laboratories (SERC) for networking projects.

1987-88

Grants and loans for long-term capital projects: universities etc., (subhead A1(1))
Details of expenditure on works services costing more than £1,000,000 shown in Table 1 to the Estimate

Project	Provision	Expenditure	Expenditure compared with provision	
			Less than provided	More than provided
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Building projects and purchase of existing buildings:				
1. New and on-going projects originally expected to cost £1 million or more				
Glasgow University: Library III	178	5	173	—
Salford University: Physical Restructuring	1,676	1,634	42	—
Heriot-Watt University				
(a) Department of Building	229	113	116	—
(b) Administration Building	65	102	—	37
(c) Chemical and Process Engineering	775	1,113	—	338
(d) Library Phase II	985	925	60	—
(e) Department of Brewing and Biological Science	1,375	550	825	—
(f) Economics and Social Studies	330	170	160	—
Southampton University: Library	400	207	193	—
UMIST: Library	1,175	429	746	—
Bath University: Building 6 East	830	708	122	—
Dundee University: Library	1,529	1,814	—	285
London University	—	—	—	—
Queen Mary College: Library	1,600	2,224	—	624
Manchester University: Computer Science (ETP)	650	963	—	313
Oxford University: Electrical Engineering/Computer Science (ETP)	684	856	—	172
Bristol University: Veterinary School	800	39	761	—
Cardiff University/UWIST: Joint Faculty Building	725	—	725	—
Sub total	14,006	11,852	3,923	1,769
Other projects	—	2,915	—	2,915
Total (Subhead A1(1))	14,006	14,767	3,923	4,684

Grants and loans for long term capital projects: medical and dental schools, (Subhead A1(2))—1987-88
Details of expenditure on works services costing more than £1,000,000 shown in table 2 to the estimate

Project	Provision	Expenditure	Expenditure compared with provision	
			Less than provided	More than provided
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Building projects and purchase of existing buildings:				
1. New and on-going projects originally expected to cost the UGC £1 million or more				
London University: St. Mary's HMS, Phase 18	230	562	—	332
London University: Institute of Child Care, Cardiac Wing, Remedial Works	620	247	373	—
London University: Royal Postgraduate Medical School, Cyclotron Building, Remedial Works	210	139	71	—
London University: Cardiothoracic Institute, Cardiothoracic Centre, Phase 1	750	—	750	—
London University: Institute of Dermatology, Relocation at St. Thomas' Hospital	775	—	775	—
Manchester University: Royal Infirmary, Phase II	700	772	—	72
London University: Queen Mary College	455	507	—	52
Newcastle University: Royal Victoria Infirmary, Phase V	450	189	261	—
2. New and on-going phased medical projects, the total contribution to all phases expected to be £1 million or more				
London University: St. George's HMS, Block H	45	12	33	—
London University: Royal Postgraduate Medical School, Redevelopment of Hammersmith Hospital, Phase I	220	138	82	—
London University: Royal Postgraduate Medical School, Redevelopment of Hammersmith Hospital Catering Centralisation	310	—	310	—
London University: University College Middlesex HMS Whittington Hospital Redevelopment, Phase I	245	1	244	—
SUB TOTAL	5,010	2,567	2,899	456
3. Projects expected to start in 1987-88 on which the UGC contribution not yet agreed	1,195	—	1,195	—
4. On-going projects not separately identified	4,000	815	3,185	—

Project	Provision	Expenditure	Expenditure compared with provision: Less than provided	Expenditure compared with provision: More than provided
	£000	£000	£000	£000
5. Furniture on Health-controlled schemes	727	330	397	—
6. Sites and Leases	1,655	4	1,651	—
TOTAL (Medical and Dental Schools) (Subhead A1(2))	12,587	3,716	9,327	456
TOTAL (Universities, etc.) (Subhead A1(1) (Table 1))	14,006	14,767	3,923	4,684
TOTAL SUBHEAD A1	26,593	18,483	13,250	5,140

(a) Treasury agreement was given for £7,838,000 of this total amount to be vired from sub-head A1 to C1 for distribution as Capital-in-Recurrent Grant.

Grants for expenditure long-term capital computer projects, (Subhead B1)—1987-88
Details of expenditure on computer projects costing more than £1,000,000 payable under subhead B1

Project	Provision	Expenditure	Expenditure compared with Provision: Less than Provided	Expenditure compared with Provision: More than Provided
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Projects costing £1 million or more[1]				
Aberdeen University (new computer)	1,000	699	301	—
Glasgow University (new computer)	2,040	—	2,040	—
Kings College, London (new computer)	—	583	—	583
Manchester University (new computer national centre)	1,230	1,937	—	707
Nottingham University (new computer)	1,425	1,500	—	75
Oxford University (new computer)	2,950	2,631	319	—
Sub Total	8,645	7,350	2,660	1,365
Projects costing less than £1 million	6,655	7,950	—	1,295
End-year flexibility	—	—	—	—
Total (Subhead B1)	15,300	15,300	2,660	2,660

[1] These purchases are made on the basis of fixed price contracts.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Mr. Jonas Savimbi

Mr. Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether Mr. Jonas Savimbi met any of his Department's officials during his recent visit.

Mrs. Chalker: A Foreign and Commonwealth Office official met Mr. Savimbi informally at a private social occasion.

Africa (Visits)

Mr. Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which countries he intends to visit in the autumn of this year.

Mrs. Chalker: In accordance with normal practice, details of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State's plans will be announced shortly before the visit.

South Africa (Visas)

Mr. Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has on the specific requirements relating to occasions when British citizens need visas to visit South Africa.

Mrs. Chalker: Visa requirements for South Africa are a matter for the South African Government. We understand that British citizens do not require a visa to visit South Africa except in certain specific cases about which the South African authorities will be able to advise.

Soviet Union

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to encourage cultural, scientific and academic exchange between the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union.

Mrs. Chalker: Cultural, scientific and academic exchanges between the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union are increasing. Such exchanges are provided for in the memorandum of understanding signed during my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister's visit to the Soviet Union last year and in the biennial British/Soviet cultural agreement which was signed in January 1987 for the period 1987-89. The staffing of the cultural department in the British embassy in Moscow was strengthened in 1987.

Mr. Raoul Wallenberg

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) when he last raised the case of Mr. Raoul Wallenberg with the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will make further representations to the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics concerning Mr. Raoul Wallenberg; and if he will make a statement;

(3) if he will list those countries that are known to his Department to have made representations to the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics about the case of Raoul Wallenberg; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: Mr. Wallenberg's nationality is Swedish. His disappearance is therefore primarily for the Swedish Government to pursue. Since 1957 the Soviet authorities have said that Mr. Wallenberg died in prison in 1947. Over the years there have been many reports that he was alive and in prison in the Soviet Union considerably later than that, but there has been no conclusive proof. We have frequently pressed the Soviet Union for a full account of Mr. Wallenberg's fate, and shall continue to do so as long as there is doubt as to whether he did in fact die, and if so, how. Increasing openness in Soviet society, particularly as regards matters of history and indications that glasnost may possibly be extended to cover international tragedies such as the Katyn massacre, suggest that it may prove possible before too long to establish the truth about Mr. Wallenberg.

We have not discussed Mr. Wallenberg's fate with other EC Governments or with the Swedish Government. We know that there is widespread international interest in this tragic case, and we are sure that all concerned are as anxious as we are to find out the truth.

Gibraltar Shootings

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if the statement made by Mr. Victor Adams to the special branch regarding the Gibraltar shootings has been made available to the Gibraltar coroner.

Mrs. Chalker: The task of collecting statements falls to the Gibraltar coroner. We understand that the West Yorkshire police have taken a statement from Mr. Adams, in connection with the shooting, on the coroner's behalf.

Nicaragua

Mrs. Mahon: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will make representations to the United States Government concerning the implications for the possibility of a peaceful settlement in Nicaragua of the Administration's policy of support for the contras while that organisation remains committed to the use of violence; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will make representations to the United States administration urging them not to resume lethal aid to the contras in Nicaragua.

Mrs. Chalker: We have regular discussions with the United States administration on a wide range of issues including Central America. They are well aware of our support for a peaceful negotiated solution to the region's problems.

Mrs. Mahon: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the United States Administration urging them to remove economic sanctions against Nicaragua.

Mrs. Chalker: United States economic policy towards Nicaragua is a matter for the two Governments concerned. We have normal economic relations with Nicaragua.

India

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to encourage cultural, scientific and academic exchanges between the United Kingdom and India.

Mrs. Chalker: Cultural, scientific and academic exchanges with India are many. The British Council has four offices in India and is involved with FCO and ODA programmes as well as its own, which have recently included, on the arts side, a major Henry Moore exhibition. Scientific and academic links feature prominently in the council's work and are promoted through the ODA's bilateral technical co-operation programme, under which about £8 million per year is devoted to exchange of persons, consultancies, longer-term training in Britain and the supply of equipment in support of these links. Funds are being made available to increase the number of awards for Indians to study in Britain.

Local Authorities (Twinning)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information his Department has as to the number of local authorities which twin with towns abroad; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: Some 830 local authorities in the United Kingdom are currently twinned with communities abroad.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish in the *Official Report* a list of local authorities which are known by his Department to have twinned with towns abroad together with the names of those towns.

Mrs. Chalker: A list of all twinnings, including those between local authorities and communities abroad, is held in the Library of the House.

Turkey

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations were made to the President of Turkey during his recent state visit, regarding Cypriots who went missing following the Turkish invasion of northern Cyprus in 1974; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: None. We believe that this matter is best dealt with by the intercommunal committee set up for the purpose under United Nations General Assembly resolution No. 32/128.

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations were made to the President of Turkey regarding human rights in Turkey during the recent state visit; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: During President Evren's recent state visit, my right hon. and learned Friend raised the subject of human rights with the Turkish Foreign Minister, and expressed the hope that the progress made in this field in Turkey in recent years would continue.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Licensing Hours

Mr. David Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects that licencees of public houses will be able to implement the hours of opening allowed for under the Licensing Act 1988.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The necessary amendments to secondary legislation will be in place on Monday 22 August and section 1 of the Licensing Act 1988, revised licensing hours, along with sections 3, 5, 9, 11, 13 and 14, will come into force on that date. The commencement date for the remaining sections 12 and 15 will be 1 March 1989.

Prisons

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take action to solve the prison officer staff shortages at Durham prison.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Ten staff have been allocated to Her Majesty's prison Durham from the training courses which finish in August. At the same time, in common with all establishments, Durham is working to ensure that the best use is made of its staff resources under fresh start.

Mr. Irving: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners at Bedford prison are *(a)* two to a cell and *(b)* three to a cell.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: On 10 July, the most recent date for which this information is readily available, 58 prisoners were accommodated two to a cell and 195 prisoners were accommodated three to a cell in cells designed for one prisoner at Her Majesty's prison Bedford.

Forensic Science Service

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any proposals for improving the effectiveness of the Home Office forensic science service; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Work to this end is in hand in the following main areas:

(i) The relationship between the service and its users
User boards have been established at each laboratory, chaired by a chief constable, to improve the relationship between the laboratory and the police forces and courts which it serves.

(ii) Longer-term planning of the future of the service
Each laboratory is drawing up a strategy plan, covering the next three years, in consultation with its user board. These will be considered by the national police advisory board which includes representatives of the police, local authorities and the courts.

(iii) The staffing of the service
Proposals are under discussion for a new structure for the operational laboratories of the service aimed at enhancing their ability to meet the demands on them by increasing the number of officers reporting cases to court and enabling the service to recruit and train the staff it needs. A new director-general is to be appointed shortly.

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the cost of *(a)* the staff inspection of the Chepstow forensic science laboratory, *(b)* the work management exercise at the Birmingham laboratory, *(c)* the staff inspection at the Birmingham laboratory and *(d)* the review of senior staff; and if he will make a statement as to the value for money of these reviews.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The information requested is as follows:

	£
Staff inspection, Chepstow forensic science laboratory	21,752
Work measurement exercise/staff inspection,[1] Birmingham forensic science laboratory	73,283

[1] The work measurement exercise and staff inspection at Birmingham forensic science laboratory were closely related, and their costs cannot readily be separated.

The review of the senior staff of the service included a staff inspection of the senior posts in the operational laboratories, at a cost of £3,197. Other costs of the review cannot readily be identified separately.

These exercises have provided useful information about the staffing and complementing arrangements of the service and have contributed to the development of new proposals aimed at enhancing its effectiveness and improving its efficiency.

Civil Defence

Mr. Thorne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is his present policy in relation to protection of the public in the event of hostilities *(a)* by evacuation, *(b)* by shelter in situ or *(c)* by a combination of both; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: I refer my hon. Friend to the replies I gave to his earlier questions on 25 July.

Mr. Thorne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what powers are available to him to use against local authorities to compel them to meet their statutory civil defence duties; what action he has taken so far; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: Paragraph 4 of the Civil Defence (General) Regulations 1949 (SI 1949 No. 1432) empowers the designated Minister to discharge the functions himself or to require another authority or person to do so, in either case in the name and at the expense of the authority failing or refusing properly to do so. It has not been necessary to use these powers in recent years.

Mr. Thorne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will set out a schedule of his planned programme for implementation of civil defence and protection regulations giving priorities and target dates for specific achievements; how this planned programme is being monitored; what success there has been so far; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: The planned programme for implementation of the Civil Defence (General Local Authority Functions) Regulations 1983 was introduced in October 1986. Initial priority was given to the development by local authorities of detailed operational plans. The programme for the first three years up to October 1989 was set out in Home Office circular No. ES 1/1986, a copy of which is in the Library. Analysis of the returns by local authorities is a continuing process, but our interim judgment is that replies are generally satisfactory and indicate progress in many areas. Progress remains patchy, however, and all authorities still have some way to go.

Mr. Thorne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what are his plans and method for keeping the public informed about civil defence and protection measures *(a)* during a period of increased international tension, *(b)* after hostilities have commenced and *(c)* after nuclear or chemical attack.

Mr. John Patten: Guidance on information services in a war emergency is contained in section 6 of the "Emergency Planning Guidance to Local Authorities", a copy of which is in the Library. Arrangements for issuing information to the public are kept under review, method and content would depend on circumstances at the time.

Mr. Thorne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement about the current progress in local authorities' surveys in their areas into what public buildings could in a crisis be rapidly converted into a measure of protection for the public in time of hostilities.

Mr. John Patten: Comprehensive information on progress in planning for shelter is unlikely to be available centrally until the end of 1989, in line with the monitoring arrangements set out in the Government's planned programme for implementation (PPI) of the Civil Defence (General Local Authority Functions) Regulations 1983. Supplementary guidance on planning shelter surveys was issued in June following pilot studies undertaken jointly by the Home Office and a number of local authorities.

Drink Driving

Mr. Grocott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in the latest year for which figures are available, how many people were convicted of driving with excess levels of alcohol; and in how many cases this was a second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth or, seventh or more than seventh conviction.

Mr. John Patten: In 1986, out of a total of about 107,100 findings of guilt for offences of driving and so on after consuming alcohol or taking drugs, 87,600 offences were of driving with alcohol in the blood, breath or urine above the prescribed limit. This information is published in table 5 of "Offences Relating To Motor Vehicles, England and Wales 1986, Supplementary Tables", copies of which are in the Library. The figure for 1987 will be published later this year. Information on previous convictions of these offenders is not available centrally.

Child Abuse

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what are the figures for each of the last five years, broken down by sex, of persons convicted of child abuse, and of the sentences given by the courts, in England and Wales.

Mr. John Patten: I will write to the hon. Member.

Illegal Abortions

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the total number of convictions in England and Wales for procuring an illegal abortion in 1987.

Mr. John Patten: Information for 1987 is not yet available, but records held centrally show that there were two such convictions in 1986.

Summer Time

Mr. Rathbone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is yet in a position to announce his conclusions on consultation about harmonising summer time with other members of the European Community.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Government's recent survey was directed towards gathering factual information about three options for summer time. The Government would not wish to reach conclusions without wider debate on the data collected which reflect differing views on the economic and social effects of any change.

Prisons (Ethnic Surveys)

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of Her Majesty's prison officers have refused to fill in ethnic survey forms; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: At 1 May 1988, the latest figures available, about 70 per cent. of prison service unified grades VI to VIII has not responded to ethnic surveys. A further questionnaire will be sent shortly to those who have not responded. This has been publicised in office notices and in the "Prison Service News".

Police (Assaults)

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish the figures collected by police forces in *(a)* Gwent, *(b)* South Wales and *(c)* North Wales on the frequency of assaults on police in each of the most recent five years available.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The numbers of assaults on police officers during 1983 to 1987 as published in the annual reports of the chief constables of Gwent and North Wales are as follows:

Assaults on police officers

	1983	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*
Gwent	135	130	139	166	195
North Wales	81	60	76	91	207

Statistics of assaults on police officers in South Wales during this period are not available.

Kent Fire Brigade

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has on the contributions made by *(a)* Eurotunnel Limited and *(b)* Transmanche Limited to Kent county council for equipment and services provided by Kent fire brigade.

Mr. John Patten: Any arrangements between the county council and the other bodies named in respect of contributions for equipment and services provided by Kent fire brigade are a matter for them to decide. We do not have information about the size of any such contributions. Under the Fire Services Act 1947 the county council is precluded from requiring payment for firefighting services.

Illegal Immigrants

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will set out the criteria used when

considering applications to remain in the United Kingdom from persons who have been continuously in the United Kingdom for at least 10 years and *(a)* who are illegal entrants and *(b)* against whom a deportation order has been issued.

Mr. Renton: Each such case is considered on its own merits.

Risley Remand Centre

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what disciplinary action has been taken against those staff responsible for the management failure identified in his answer of 21 July, in relation to Risley remand centre.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Disciplinary action was not called for, but as indicated in my reply of 21 July, at column 775to an earlier question from the hon. Member, suitable steps have been taken to remedy the management failures identified at Risley.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the Civil Service grade of Mr. David Thompson while he was governor of Risley remand centre; and what is his current grade.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Mr. David Thompson was a member of prison service unified grade 1 whilst he was governor of HMRC Risley and remains in that grade in his new post.

Mr. Churchill: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many remand prisoners currently held at Risley remand centre have been held without bail for *(a)* six to eight months, *(b)* nine to 11 months, *(c)* 12 to 14 months, *(d)* 15 to 17 months and *(e)* 18 months or more; what are the comparable figures for the United Kingdom as a whole; and what steps he proposes taking to rectify it.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 19 July 1988]:* The readily available information is given in the following table. Following the experimental introduction of statutory time limits for custody, my right hon. Friend extended them last April to apply to all of Wales and 13 English counties, including Cheshire and Greater Manchester. We hope that custody time limits will be in force throughout England and Wales by 1990. Other measures we are taking are described in the Green Paper "Private Sector Involvement in the Remand System" (Cm. 434, July 1988).

Estimated population of untried and convicted unsentenced prisoners in Prison Department establishments in England and Wales on 30 June 1987;
by length of time since first remand into a Prison Department establishment

Length of time since first remand into Prison Department establishments[2]	*Estimated population*[1] *Risley*[3]	*England and Wales*[3,4]
Up to 6 months	806	9,530
Over 6 up to 9 months	43	800
Over 9 up to 12 months	10	220
Over 12 up to 15 months	2	90
Over 15 up to 18 months	—	20
Over 18 months	—	15
TOTAL[5]	861	[5]10,670

[1] Based on records held centrally which are approximate: detailed checking of individual cases would involve disproportionate cost.
[2] Excludes any time spent in prison cells before reception on remand into a Prison Department establishment; includes any subsequent time that may have been spent on bail.
[3] Provisional figures.
[4] Rounded estimate; the components do not add up to the total because they have been rounded independently.
[5] Excludes 580 prisoners held in police cells.

Leeds Prison

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the number of suicides and attempted suicides at Her Majesty's prison, Leeds, in the period August 1987 to June 1988.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: There have been two apparent suicides, yet to be confirmed as such at inquests, and five recorded incidents of attempted suicide at Her Majesty's prison Leeds in the period August 1987 to June 1988.

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he will take to ensure that procedures for identifying potential suicides can be carried out effectively in Her Majesty's prison, Leeds, as set out in F1996; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: All inmates received at Leeds prison are screened on the day of arrival in order to identify those who may be at risk of suicide.

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what were the number of prisoners in Her Majesty's prison, Leeds on 19 July; and how many were *(a)* young, *(b)* long term and *(c)* remand prisoners.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: On July 19, 1,407 persons were held in Her Majesty's prison, Leeds. The latest available information on the type of prisoner held is given in the following table:

Population of Her Majesty's prison, Leeds, on 30 June 1988

	Number
Remand	
aged 21 and over	461
aged under 21	276
all remand	737
Sentenced	
Young offenders sentenced to	
Up to 3 years	42
Over 3 years	6
Adults sentenced to	
Up to 4 years	412
Over 4 years	166
All sentenced	626
Civil prisoners	4
All	1,367

Prisoners (Psychiatric Treatment)

Mr. Grocott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of the prison population received psychiatric treatment in each of the last five years.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The number of inmates who have received psychiatric treatment is not recorded centrally.

Amusement Machines

Mr. Gorst: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what conclusion he has reached on research into the use by young people of amusement-with-prizes machines; what action he now proposes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten We have now considered the report of the Home Office research and planning unit (RPU) on the research which my right hon. Friend announced in answer to a question from Mr. Geoff Lawler, the then Member for Bradford, North, on 6 May last year, at column *436*. We have also considered the report which the chairman of the Gaming Board arranged at the request of my right hon. Friend. That report has been prepared by inspectors of the board on their findings following a number of visits to amusement arcades. In addition, the Department has been greatly assisted by reports and other comments which the interested organisations have submitted.

Copies of the reports of the RPU and the Gaming Board inspectorate have today been placed in the Library. The RPU report concludes that, although many young people spend money on amusement machines, there is almost no evidence of dependency, and that there is no reliable evidence at all of a causal link between playing machines and delinquency. The overall findings of the Gaming Board inspectorate, though inevitably more tentative because of the nature of their survey, are consistent with the RPU report.

The Government recognise the concern felt about cases where dependency, though most exceptional, does occur. We also recognise the concern felt about the effect on amenities of the presence of amusement machines, mainly in arcades but also in other premises. We have concluded in the light of the research that further legislative controls are not justified. There is, however, a need to consider how best to warn young people of the potential hazards of excessive use of amusement machines and to provide help to those at risk. We should also seek ways in which parents of any children running into serious trouble might be helped.

The Government therefore propose to take the following steps:

To enter into consultation at once with all the interested organisations and other bodies on how we can best deal with the few cases of genuine dependency.

To pursue with the British Amusement Catering Trades Association and others the possibility of guidance which might be prominently displayed near the entrance to all arcades and possibly other premises with machines.

To consult the local authority associations about the contribution which the education and youth services may make.

With a view to making fuller use of the existing powers to protect amenity interests we shall seek comments from the local authority and trade associations on draft model bye-laws controlling, among other things, the opening hours of amusement arcades; and we will remind local authorities of the considerable powers available to ban amusement-with-prizes machines in premises other than amusement arcades, such as fish-and-chips shops.

Haverigg and Lindholme Prisons

Mr. Summerson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has received any report on the disturbances at Her Majesty's prison, Haverigg and Her Majesty's prison, Lindholme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: I have today received a report of the inquiries conducted by Mr. Gordon Lakes CB MC, the deputy director general of the prison service, into the serious disturbances at HMP Haverigg on 5-6 June 1988 and at HMP Lindholme on 15-16 July 1988.

Mr. Lakes has examined the circumstances and analysed the issues arising from both incidents and finds that there are no simple explanations for what occurred. In both cases small numbers of determined troublemakers were able to exploit opportunities to create serious unrest and cause damage to property.

At Haverigg 12 members of staff sustained minor injuries and three prisoners were injured, none seriously. At Lindholme no violence was directed at the staff and none was injured but 18 prisoners reported minor injuries.

Mr. Lakes has made a large number of detailed recommendations for remedial action at both establishments including local operational improvements, enhanced contingency plans and revised security procedures. He has also identified a number of wider issues which require further review including physical aids to internal control in converted camps, refined allocation procedures and improved monitoring of prisoner populations.

The prison service has already acted upon a number of the recommendations and I shall ensure that all lessons to be learnt are promulgated through line management channels without delay.

I will place a summary of the results of these inquiries in the Library in due course.

Asylum

Mr. Janman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is his policy on the granting of settlement to asylum seekers who are given exceptional leave to remain in the United Kingdom and on the admission of their families; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: Policy in this area has recently been reviewed. In many cases settlement will not be at issue since those granted exceptional leave will return to their own countries when circumstances allow. In the remainder a person given exceptional leave will normally be granted settlement on application after seven years' residence in the United Kingdom, subject to the general provisions of paragraphs 97 to 100 of the immigration rules. In certain circumstances settlement may be granted earlier than, or withheld after, seven years. Exceptional leave will normally be granted in stages of one year, three years and three years, although this pattern may also be varied. Applications from the spouse and minor children of a person on exceptional leave to join him or her will usually be granted after four years, subject to the general requirements of the immigration rules on the admission of spouses and dependants. An application for family reunion may be granted at an earlier point if there are compelling compassionate circumstances.

Turkish President (Visit)

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis on the arrival of

General Evren on 12 July giving (i) the total cost of policing the event, (ii) the number of officers involved and (iii) the number of persons arrested or held by the police.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 18 July 1988]:* I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that the additional costs of policing the arrival of General Evren amounted to about £25,000; 1,981 police officers were assigned to duties in connection with the event, and 10 arrests were made.

Animals (Experiments)

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the benefits, either for humans or animals, which have come about as a direct result of Professor Ian Steele-Russell's brain damage experiments on rats, rabbits and monkeys over the last 25 years.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 24 March 1988]:* I wrote to the hon. Member on 26 July. A copy of the letter has been placed in the Library.

WALES

Child Care

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what action he is taking to implement the recommendations within his area of responsibility of the European Commission's childcare network report "Caring for Children—Services and policies for Childcare and Equal Opportunities in the United Kingdom."

Mr. Grist: The conclusions and recommendations of this report cover a wide range of issues in the areas of child care, equal opportunities education and training, employment, taxation and public expenditure, some of which go beyond the Department's responsibilities. Officials will be studying the report and considering its implications.

Ports (Employment)

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many people were employed in ports, and in associated employment, in Wales in *(a)* 1958, *(b)* 1968, *(c)* 1978 and *(d)* 1988.

Mr. Peter Walker: Data for Wales are not held in the format requested but the following information is available.

1968 Standard Industrial Classification—1978

	Number
Sea transport	2,994
Port and inland water transport	4,242
Miscellaneous transport services (includes other forms of transport)	3,959

1980 Standard Industrial Classification—1984

	Number
Sea transport	896
Supporting services: sea transport	2,976

Source: Census of Employment.

RNAD Milford Haven

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what assessment he has made of the implications for the Welsh economy of the proposed closure of Milford Haven royal naval arms depot; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: As the hon. Gentleman knows, the Ministry of Defence has released its consultative document which proposes the closure of RNAD Milford Haven. My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Defence will, however, consider all representations received from the work force, trades unions, local authorities and other interested parties before a final decision is taken. I am, of course, aware of the impact which closure of the depot would have on the area and if a decision is taken to close RNAD Milford Haven my Department will be discussing the future of the site with the Ministry of Defence and the public authorities concerned.

Chernobyl Fallout (Cancer Deaths)

Mr. Flynn To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to the answer of 25 July to the hon. Member for Newport, West, if he will provide details of the form in which statistics for the calculation of future cancer deaths from Chernobyl fallout in Wales are available.

Mr. Grist: I shall write to the hon. Gentleman and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Historic Buildings

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish a table showing *(a)* the number and *(b)* the corresponding cost of historic buildings purchased by his Department, or by CADW, in order to preserve them and safeguard them in each year since 1979.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: No historic buildings have been purchased on behalf of the Secretary of State for Wales since 1979. But, the following ancient monuments have been acquired for the purpose of their preservation in that period:

Monument	*Date acquired*	*Purchase price* £
Natatio Site, Caerleon	2 October 1981	2,000
Haverfordwest Priory	31 January 1982	Gift
Penyrwrlodd Long Cairn	7 December 1982	2,000
Caerwent (Basilica, Forum and Amphitheatre site)	15 March 1984	44,000
Segontium, Cae Mawr	30 July 1984	8,500
Caerwent Wall (part)	9 April 1987	4,000

In addition, the following ancient monuments have been taken into the guardianship of the Secretary of State, while remaining in other ownership since 1979:

Monument	*Date taken into guardianship*
Careg Coetan Burial Chamber	30 September 1981
Caer Gybi Roman Wall	27 April 1982
Carswell Old House	31 December 1982

Homeless People

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is his latest estimate of the number of people who are homeless in Wales as a result of mortgage default.

Mr. Grist: Current information on the number of homeless persons is not held centrally. However, during 1987 2,833 persons were accepted as homeless by local authorities due to mortgage default.

Migration

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was the rate of inward and outward migration in each district authority area in Wales during 1987-88.

Mr. Grist: Information at a county district level is not available. However, movements as recorded by the registration of patients with NHS doctors in different family practitioner committee areas, which correspond in Wales to the administrative counties, are given in the following table:

Rate[1] of movement between each FPC and the rest of the United Kingdom year ended December 1987

	Inward	*Outward*
Clwyd	34	27
Dyfed	38	29
Gwent	21	21
Gwynedd	41	33
Mid Glamorgan	18	21
Powys	51	36
South Glamorgan	39	34
West Glamorgan	21	22

[1] Rate is the number of movements recorded per 1,000 population resident mid 1987. Movements within each FPC area are not included.

Source: NHSCR and Office of Population Censuses and Surveys.

Sewage Works

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list for each year since 1974 the percentage of Welsh water authority sewage treatment works that have failed to meet their effluent discharge standards.

Mr. Grist: The figures for the most recent years are as follows:

Year	*Percentage failure*
1985-86	19
1986-87	18
1987-88	17

Prior to this the annual performance measurement specified in consents differed and comparable figures are therefore not available.

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the names of those Welsh water authority sewage treatment works that failed to meet their effluent discharge standards in 1987, the measures that are proposed for each of these works to bring them up to standard, and the year by which it is anticipated they will have been brought up to standard.

Mr. Grist: The works concerned are listed in the table. The Welsh water authority has a rolling programme covering improvements to works. This programme is kept under continual review by the Department.

Brithdir	Broadstone
Maesteg	Catbrook
St. Briavels	Llantilio Crosenny
Wilton	Llandewi Rhyddeth
Walford (CD)	Newland
Llangarron (HH)	Rockfield
Abbey Dore	Staunton on Wye
Llanwarne (MP)	Eardisley
Garway Fairview	Llanbister
St. Owens Cross	Newbridge on Wye
Weston Penyard	Cradoc (New Plant)
Hereford Roth	Christchurch
Stock Edith	Presteign
Acton Green	Stanford Bishop
Pewcombe	Kewderchurch
Shobden	Little Dewchurch
Norton	Pontrilas
Weycock Cross	Pandy
Bonvilston W	Chester
Draethen	Flint
Pennybont	Burton
Carway	Llanbedr DC
Llangynderyrn	Nantglyn
Lampeter	Denbigh
Llanfair Clydogau	Henllan
Maes y Groes	Reswley
Northrop	Ross (New)
Mold	Talley
Drury	Rhandirmwyn
Gresford	Cwmffrwd
Queensferry	Cilycum
Mold (FP)	Bronwydd
Hope	Llanelli
Five Fords	Bury Port
Glynceiriog	Marlas
Frongysllte	Pennard
Chirk	New Chapel
Chirk Bank	Cross Inn and Webo
Sesswick	Llanybyther
Sarnau	Corsgoch
Llanfaes A	Dihewyd
Llangefni	Devils Bridge
Betws Yn Rhos	Bowcath
Talybont (PB)	Rosemaket
Caernarfon	Narberth
Tyddyn Hywel	Kilgetty
Llawiestyn	Carwen
Llanfrothen	Rhaydypandy
Pewmorfa	Talgarrec
Llandelwyn	Kidwelly
Dolgellau	Miskin (Disosed)
Bryncrug	Ponthir
Darowen	Drope
Raglan	Llanbedr
St. Weonards	

Press Releases

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many press releases have been issued by his Department in the 12 months beginning in July 1987 and in each of the previous five years.

Mr. Peter Walker: The number of Welsh Office press releases issued by my Department in the 12 months beginning in July 1987 and in each of the previous five years was:

	Number
July 1987-June 1988	904
July 1986-June 1987	759
July 1985-June 1986	720
July 1984-June 1985	618
July 1983-June 1984	549
July 1982-June 1983	489

Departmental Programmes

Mr. George: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much has been spent by his Department in each of the past five years on the evaluation of departmental programmes; and what proportion this constitutes of *(a)* the amount allocated for evaluation and *(b)* the Department's total budget.

Mr. Peter Walker: All programmes for which I am responsible are evaluated, but the costs of evaluation are not separately identified.

Eye Malformations

Mr. Gwilym Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement about the study that has been carried out by the steering committee of the small area health statistics unit in relation to eye malformations in Torfaen.

Mr. Grist: Following receipt of detailed proposals for the conduct of such a study the views of the steering committee were invited. Their advice has recently been received. After careful consideration the steering committee concluded that this matter should not be subject to further examination by the unit. In reaching this view the steering committee took account of intrinsic difficulties in obtaining reliable data and on the absence of any evidence associating eye malformations with incinerator emissions. In the light of that and of the overall results of the valuable and substantial researches that Professor Laurence has carried out in the past for the Department, on congenital malformations in Torfaen, we have taken the view that investment in such a further study is not justified at this time.

However, the Department routinely monitor a variety of data on human health problems including the incidence of congenital malformations. If this monitoring suggests that there are grounds for proceeding with a study at any stage that we shall ensure that appropriate measures are put in hand to determine what further investigations might be useful.

Cancer (North Wales)

Sir Anthony Meyer: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if Professor Hubert Campbell has not completed his investigation of the data relating to the incidence of cancer on the north Wales coast for the period 1974 to 1983; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: Professor Campbell has provided an analysis of the results of his investigation. He makes it clear that in his view there is nothing new in the reported incidence of cancers in north Wales; he notes that the high incidence has been known for at least 70 years.

As a result of his examination of the data for all cancer registrations, covering the period 1974-83 Professor Campbell finds there was an excess of 5 per cent. in cancer registrations over the whole period on the north Wales coast when compared with the whole of Wales. The greater part of these registrations were in women and the sites involved were the lung, colon, rectum, stomach, breast and uterus. Professor Campbell considers that this pattern is the same as that which was known to affect north Wales many years ago; it is his view that it would be impossible to identify an actiological agent.

Professor Campbell gave special attention to the data relating to thyroid cancers and leukaemias. It appears that there were 28 more cases than would be expected by reference to the whole of Wales of thyroid cancer amongst women of the age of 25 years and over, resident in Clwyd in the five years from 1974-78. Professor Campbell considers that this is something which should be investigated. As far as leukaemias are concerned Professor Campbell identifies 65 more cases than would be expected by reference to the whole of Wales over the period 1974-83 on the north Wales coast. He indicated that these cases were confined to people over the age of 65. He considers a number of hypotheses to explain this. Save in two cases, which might be amenable to long-term research, he identifies no grounds for action. It is however, Professor Campbell's view that the most likely explanation for the raised incidence of leukaemias, might be found in the diagnostic practice amongst clinicians in north Wales. He recommends that this hypothesis be examined. Secondly Professor Campbell considers that a study of genetic factors might also be worthy of further long-term research.

I am very grateful to Professor Campbell for the work he has done and I shall be asking the steering committee for the small areas health statistics unit, under whose auspices Professor Campbell's investigation was undertaken, for its advice on what further work should now be commissioned in the light of Professor Campbell's analysis and recommendations, and specifically in relation to the three studies he suggests.

I shall place a copy of the report of Professor Campbell's work in the Library of the House.

Public Expenditure

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish a table in the *Official Report*, in the same format as the written reply of 7 July, *Official Report*, columns *687-81*, on receipts classified as charges in respect of his programme expenditure over the years 1982-83 to 1990-91, indicating the receipts in respect of running costs expenditure together with a supplementary analysis indicating, separately, the amounts of receipts in respect of programme expenditure and of running costs expenditure estimated to have been met from other public expenditure programmes.

Mr. Peter Walker The information is estimated to be as follows:

£ million

	1982-83	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*1987-88*	*1988-89*	*1989-90*	*1990-91*
Receipts in respect of Departmental Running Costs[1]	−0·6	−0·7	−1·1	−1·0	−1·2	−0·9	−0·9	−1·0	−1·0
Receipts met from other expenditure programmes[2]									

	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91
(i) Programme expenditure (mainly EC receipts)	−29·0	−36·0	−32·9	−39·3	−59·9	−70·3	−51·0	−53·6	−56·1
(ii) Departmental Running Costs	−0·4	−0·6	−0·7	−0·7	−0·9	−0·7	−0·7	−0·8	−0·9

[1] Including refunds of VAT.
[2] Excluding refunds of VAT and including receipts from the National Insurance Fund in respect of the Medical Reference Service.

House Sales

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what consideration he has given to the likely benefits to Welsh people that might follow the introduction to England and Wales, in whole or in part, of the Scottish system of governing house sales; what discussions he has had on this possibility; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist *[holding answer 26 July 1988]:* I have not considered or discussed such a possibility; reform of the legal system, which is common to England and Wales, is primarily a matter for my right hon. noble and Learned Friend the Lord Chancellor.

Valleys Programme

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list those indicators which led him to conclude that Caerphilly should be included within the boundaries of the area benefiting from the valleys programme, but that Bedwas and Machen should be excluded.

Mr. Peter Walker *[holding answer 26 July 1988]:* I refer the hon. Gentleman to the replies I gave him on 21 June and 19 July.

Slurry Tank, Ciliau Moor Common

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales by what authority he gave retrospective consent to the siting of a slurry tank on Ciliau moor common.

Mr. Grist *[holding answer 21 July 1988]:* In deciding whether to give my consent under section 23 of the National Trust Act 1971 to the siting of a slurry tank on Ciliau moor common I was not prevented from giving consent despite the fact that the works had commenced.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether work on the construction of a slurry tank on Ciliau moor common progressed during the time in which planning consent was being sought.

Mr. Grist *[holding answer 21 July 1988]:* No planning consent was sought. I am informed by the local authority that no specific permission is required because permission is deemed to have been given under class 6 of the General Development Order 1977. I am unable to say whether work was in progress during the time I was considering the application under section 23 of the National Trust Act 1971 for consent to the siting of the slurry tank on Ciliau moor common.

CIVIL SERVICE

Ethnic Monitoring

Mr. Janner: To ask the Minister for the Civil Service (1) whether he will now institute an ethnic monitoring procedure through to the appointment stage, in accordance with the code of the Commission for Racial Equality, in respect of all the schemes for recruitment run by the Civil Service Commission;

(2) whether he has instituted an ethnic monitoring procedure within the Civil Service Commission, in accordance with the code of the Commission for Racial Equality;

(3) whether he will now institute ethnic monitoring procedure in accordance with the code for racial equality so that he may in future be able to give the numbers and percentages of ethnic minorities among permanent appointments to the Civil Service at grade 7 level or above.

Mr. Luce: The Commission for Racial Equality's code of practice recommends that employers should regularly monitor the effects of selection decisions in order to assess whether equal opportunity is being achieved. The code recognises that the need for detailed information and the methods of collecting it will vary according to circumstances.

The Civil Service Commission currently monitors through to the appointment stage all its major schemes of recruitment. In specialist areas, where recruitment schemes frequently attract small, sometimes very small, applicant fields, the commission has adopted a more selective procedure. It has used the results of comprehensive monitoring of applications to identify those schemes where there are sufficient applicants of known ethnic origin, and within that sufficient ethnic minority applicants, for monitoring through to appointment to produce useful results. The results of the first year's monitoring were set out in the Civil Service Commissioners' annual report for 1987.

The results of monitoring are being used to help the commissioners set priorities for improving equality of opportunity in recruitment. The commissioners are currently considering to what extent, within available resources and consistent with their priorities for further action, they can extend monitoring through to appointment. I shall write to the hon. and learned Member once they have completed their consideration.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Minister for the Civil Service which quasi-governmental or other organisations which come under the aegis of the Cabinet Office and of the Office of the Minister for the Civil Service, respectively, have instituted procedures for ethnic monitoring, in accordance with the code for racial equality; and which have not.

Mr. Luce: Two advisory bodies come under the aegis of the Cabinet Office and seven under the OMCS. These advisory bodies do not employ staff on their own account. Their secretariats are provided by the Cabinet Office and are subject to departmental ethnic monitoring procedures.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Minister for the Civil Service in which grades the two people from ethnic minorities specified as grades 1 to 7 in his Department are; and whether either or both of these people are women.

Mr. Luce: The two are a senior medical officer (grade 5 equivalent) and a grade 7 (statistician). They are both male.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Minister for the Civil Service in which grades the people from ethnic minorities specified as employed SEO or HEO in his Department from ethnic minorities are; and whether either or both of these people are women.

Mr. Luce: They are both HEOs, one male and one female.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Minister for the Civil Service in which grades the people from ethnic minorities specified as EO in his Department from ethnic minorities are; and whether either or both of these people are women.

Mr. Luce: The three EOs are two males and one female.

Equal Opportunities

Mr. Janner: To ask the Minister for the Civil Service whether he will now update policy statements on equal opportunities issued in 1984.

Mr. Luce: I see no need to update policy statements at this stage.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Minister for the Civil Service what practical evidence there is in his Department of the increase in awareness at all levels of potential problems of equal opportunity and of the willingness to overcome them resulting from the policy statements issued in 1984.

Mr. Luce: By the increased understanding shown by staff at all levels when these matters are raised and discussed and the more ready acceptance of adaptations to working practices such as part-time working.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Minister for the Civil Service by what methods his Department is constantly looking for ways to develop and improve its equal opportunities programme.

Mr. Luce: By reference to examples of best practice and other published information, by attendance at seminars involving both public and private sector organisations, and by discussion and consultations within the Department.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Minister for the Civil Service who is carrying out current initiatives to develop and improve his Department's equal opportunities programme in connection with alternative working patterns and recruitment reviews, respectively.

Mr. Luce: The Cabinet Office personnel services branches.

Departmental Monitoring Exercises

Mr. Janner: To ask the Minister for the Civil Service what study his Department is making of the results of the monitoring exercises of recruitment, promotion and training; and whether he will place copies of the results of those exercises in the Library.

Mr. Luce: My Department is studying the results of the monitoring exercises in order to assess whether equal opportunity is being achieved. I will consider whether to place the results of the exercises in the Library.

THE ARTS

Admissions

Mr. Butler: To ask the Minister for the Arts what information he has on total admissions to arts events and institutions in the latest available year.

Mr. Luce: For the performing arts, the Policy Studies Institute's research publication "The Economic Importance of the Arts in Britain" provides an estimate of some 49 million attendances at theatres and concerts in 1984-85. Information held on the Museums Association database suggests that some 73 million visits were made to museums and galleries in 1986.

Employment

Mr. Butler: To ask the Minister for the Arts what information he has on direct employment in the arts sector of the economy in the latest available year.

Mr. Luce: Figures published this year by the Policy Studies Institute suggest that some 189,000 people were directly employed in the arts in 1986. There were also considerable numbers who were in employment ancillary to the arts, or self-employed on arts work.

Horniman and Geffrye Museums

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will make a statement on his negotiations with the Horniman and Geffrye museums on their future funding and constitutions.

Mr. Luce: The Government have announced that the Horniman and the Geffrye museums will be established as independent charitable trusts able to take full advantage of all sources of funding and with an assurance of Government support following the abolition of the inner London education authority. Discussions on future arrangements for the museums are under way.

Sponsorship

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Minister for the Arts what information he has on the amount of sponsorship of the arts provided by *(a)* private sector firms, *(b)* public sector organisations other than local authorities, *(c)* local authorities, *(d)* trade unions and *(e)* private individuals.

Mr. Luce: Private sector firms currently contribute some £30 million annually by way of sponsorship. The most recent figure available for local authority spending on arts, museums and galleries is £202·2 million, in 1983-84. Information is not held centrally on sponsorship by public sector organisations (other than local authorities); by trades unions; or by private individuals.

Museum Education Service

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will make a statement on the future of the museum education service in London following the abolition of the Inner London education authority.

Mr. Luce: On the abolition of the Inner London education authority, each inner London borough will become responsible for the education service in its area.

Boroughs, individually and jointly, are discussing with the ILEA and the Department of Education and Science a number of areas where cross-borough provision may continue to be appropriate.

Scottish Arts Council (Funding)

Mr. Robert Hughes: To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will list separately in the *Official Report*, the total funding by the Scottish Arts Council to local authorities, and groups operating from within the boundaries of local authorities in Aberdeen, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee, in each of the last 10 years.

Mr. Luce: I shall write to the hon. Member and place a copy of the letter in the Library.

Books (VAT)

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will give the latest estimates of the cost to national and local libraries of value-added tax on books at the current standard rate.

Mr. Luce: The British Library and local authority libraries in England are the only libraries for which I have responsibility. If books were subject to value added tax at the current standard rate, the approximate annual cost to the British Library based on current expenditure would be £550,000. There would be no cost to public libraries because, under present arrangements, local authorities are able to reclaim value added tax incurred in respect of their library activities.

Radical Scotland

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will set out the criteria under which the Scottish Arts Council disburses grants; and how these criteria have been applied in the case of grants to Radical Scotland.

Mr. Luce *[holding answer 21 July 1988]:* The two main criteria which the Scottish Arts Council uses in the assessment of an arts body are the artistic quality of its work and the efficiency of its management. The council satisfies itself that these criteria are met by all arts organisations to whom a grant is made. I am drawing my hon. Friend's concern about Radical Scotland to the attention of the chairman of the Scottish Arts Council.

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Minister for the Arts what is the current level of grant from the Scottish Arts Council to Radical Scotland.

Mr. Luce *[holding answer 21 July 1988]:* The current Scottish Arts Council grant to Radical Scotland is £900 for the literary content of six issues of the publication.

Scottish Arts Council

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Minister for the Arts what guidance he has issued to the Scottish Arts Council on the criteria under which they disburse grants to magazines and similar publications; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce *[holding answer 21 July 1988]:* I do not issue any guidance. The Scottish Arts Council and the Arts Council of Great Britain have similar criteria for grant allocation.

ENVIRONMENT

Licensed Premises

Sir John Farr: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will consider issuing guidance to planning committees faced with applications to change licensed premises into a private residence.

Mr. Chope: No. Local planning authorities should be able to decide such proposals, on the planning merits of the particular case, in the usual way against the background of the relevant planning policies.

Sports Facilities (Safety)

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans his Department has to ensure that adequate safety standards are maintained in any changes in management in sports and leisure centres, arising from the recent statement.

Mr. Moynihan: Under the Government's proposals to bring compulsory competitive tendering to the management of local authority sport and leisure facilities, local authorities would be responsible for drawing up the tender specifications setting out, amongst other things, what safety requirements must be met. Moreover, the Health and Safety at Work etc., Act 1974 already imposes a general duty to take reasonable measures with respect to health and safety on those who are, to any extent, in control of non-domestic premises, which include public sports and leisure facilities. This general duty is enforceable by the Health and Safety Executive and would continue to apply regardless of whether a facility was managed by a local authority's own employees or by a contractor. With regard to the safety of spectators at sports facilities, the requirement of the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 and the Fire Safety and Safety at Places of Sport Act 1987 would not be affected by the competitive tendering proposals.

British Coal Properties (Sales)

Mr. Lofthouse: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what public subsidy was made available for the purchase of former British Coal properties by housing associations or local authorities; and what steps have been taken to monitor the identities of the purchasers of these properties.

Mr. Trippier Earlier this year, £1·25 million was paid by the Housing Corporation to a consortium of registered housing associations purchasing British Coal properties in Nottinghamshire. No specific Exchequer subsidy has been made available for similar purchases by local authorities. The identity of those to whom properties are sold is a matter for British Coal, but under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, all tenants have the right to know who their landlord is.

Water Charges

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on his proposals for the regulation of water charges.

Mr. Moynihan: The arrangements for the regulation of charges are described in a policy letter dated 3 March 1988 (reference WRP1), copies of which have been placed in the Library.

District Councils (Rate Support Grant)

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list all district councils in England and Wales which will receive no rate support grant in respect of the 1988-89 financial year.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: All district councils will receive domestic rate relief grant. The following English district councils are not expected to receive any block grant on the basis of the most recent estimate made under section 66(1) of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980:

South Bedfordshire
Wokingham
South Buckinghamshire
Chiltern
Milton Keynes
Wycombe
Basildon
Harlow
Thurrock
Hart
Redditch
St. Albans
Stevenage
Three Rivers
Welwyn Hatfield
Selby
Bassetlaw
Oxford
Epsom and Ewell
Guildford
Reigate and Banstead
North Warwickshire
Crawley

The position in Wales is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Ivory Imports

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make it his policy to introduce a total ban on the import of all worked ivory into the United Kingdom.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: A total ban on the import of all worked ivory would be a matter for discussion with our EC partners. Import is strictly controlled under EC regulation 3626, which implements the convention on international trade in endangered species in the Community.

Local Authority Direct Labour Organisations

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has to review the competition rules for local authority direct labour organisations' building and maintenance work.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: My right hon. Friend has today published a consultation paper proposing that all building and maintenance work other than highways and sewerage work should be subject to competition from next April, and that the present exemption for direct labour organisations with not more than 30 employees should be reduced to five employees. The present regulations, made under part III of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980, have been in force since 1983 and the Government feel that there is no longer a case for any competition-free allowance for this work. Some authorities already expose all their maintenance and minor construction work to competition. We estimate that an extra £400 million of work would be exposed to compulsory competition each year. A 30-employee de minimis threshold no longer seems justified. This could allow an authority to carry out work worth £600,000 a year without competition.

Copies of the paper are being distributed widely, including to all local authorities, and have been placed in the Library.

Rates

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the average rate bills for 1988-89 for each of the following categories *(a)* all households whose head is on income support, *(b)* all households whose head is aged 25 or more and on income support and *(c)* all households whose head is aged less than 25 and on income support for each region of England and Wales and for Scotland.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The information requested is not available.

Council House Sales

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to review the implementation by local authorities of the right-to-buy provisions of the Housing Act 1980; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: The Department keeps a close watch on complaints from tenants experiencing difficulty or delay in exercising the right to buy. Eleven local authorities where there have been serious shortcomings are required to report monthly on their performance.

Richmond Yard

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to his answer of 21 July, what is the precise nature of the internal management purposes to which he refers in relation to the Property Services Agency's valuation of Richmond yard.

Mr. Chope: Planning and managing the disposition of in-house resources.

Arts Organisations (Rate Revenue)

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what has been the revenue from arts organisations to local government rates for each of the past 10 years.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Based on rateable values for libraries, museums, art galleries etc. and theatres and music halls in England gross rate yields from these organisations are estimated as follows:

	£ million
1979-80	10
1980-81	12
1981-82	16

	£ million
1982-83	18
1983-84	19
1984-85	21
1985-86	23
1986-87	26
1987-88	27
1988-89	29

Local authorities have the power to reduce or remit the payment of rates chargeable in respect of organisations whose main objects are concerned with education, social welfare, science, literature or the fine arts. The amount actually paid in rates by these organisations may therefore be less than the figures quoted.

Ordnance Survey

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish in the *Official Report* a reconciliation of *(a)* the turnover of the Ordnance Survey in 1986-87 as shown by note 2 to its trading accounts (HC 380 of 1987-88) with *(b)* the analysis of receipts in the 1986-87 Appropriation Accounts for class XX, vote II (HC 107-XII of 1987-88).

Mr. Moynihan: The information requested is as follows:

	£'000s	£'000s
Trading accounts turnover		31,199
Add VAT	2,135	
Non trading receipts	421	
		2,556
Less increase in debtors	44	
Decrease in copyright in advance	3	
		47
Appropriation account receipts		33,708

Turnover is explained in note 1(h) to the 1986-87 trading accounts and is exclusive of VAT.

Appropriation of account receipts are sums actually received by the Department. It is therefore necessary in reconciling the turnover and receipts to allow for movements in debtors and copyright in advance.

Trees

Mr. Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what further assistance he will provide to promote the replacement planting of amenity trees lost in the storm of 15-16 October 1987.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many trees were planted in each month since September 1987.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: We estimate that £1·4 million was spent on aiding the planting of approximately 500,000 amenity trees under the initial task force trees programme (including site preparation and certain other costs) and a similar sum on grant-aiding tree surgery to some 30,000 trees. Other amenity planting took place in this period under the existing programme of aid administered by the Countryside Commission, and planting in woodlands where it was grant aided, or undertaken directly, by the Forestry Commission.

Complete figures are not available, and it is not possible to give a breakdown by month. However, much planting has also been undertaken by private individuals, voluntary bodies and local authorities at their own expense.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a further statement on the progress of measures his Department has taken to replace trees destroyed in the October 1987 hurricane.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The Government have already made substantial sums available for the replacement planting of amenity trees, both in rural and in urban areas, through a special unit of the Countryside Commission, task force trees. In 1987-88 £3 million was allocated for this purpose and in January my noble Friend the Minister of State announced that a further £800,000 would be provided for the current financial year to supplement the commission's regular programme of assistance for planting.

At that time, my noble Friend also said that the Government would make a further statement of their intentions in good time for the start of the next planting season. Accordingly, following detailed discussions with the Countryside Commission, we have decided to make available to task force trees an additional allocation of £2·5 million to implement the next phase of restoration. Of this, £200,000 is to be spent in the current financial year and the remainder in 1989-90.

We see this additional aid as part of a longer-term programme of restoration, of which further details will be announced in due course.

The Government are conscious of the damage caused by the storm to historic parks and gardens, and both English Heritage and task force trees are providing appropriate assistance. For 1989-90, in addition to the further resources for task force trees, we shall be making available £500,000 to English Heritage to enable it to continue its programme of grant assistance for the clearance and replanting of parks and gardens of outstanding architectural or historic interest.

Housing Association Hostels

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to announce his proposals for the future funding of housing association hostels.

Mr. Trippier: My Department has published today a consultation paper on the future funding of housing association hostels and special needs projects. Comments from all interested organisations and individuals will be welcome by 30 September.

Planning Enforcement

Mr. Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the arrangements for the review of planning enforcement powers which he announced recently.

Mr. Ridley: I am pleased to announce that Mr. Robert Carnwath QC has agreed to prepare a report for me on this subject. His terms of reference are:—

"To examine the scope and effectiveness of provisions, in Part V and XII of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971, relating to enforcement of planning control, including appeals to the Secretary of State, and to make recommendations for improvements to the present provisions or for alternative provisions."

I have asked that the report be completed by early in 1989.

Mr. Carnwath will be seeking views from representative bodies on the matters included in the terms of reference. Anyone wishing to offer such views should do so in writing to Planning and Development Control Division 2, Tollgate house, Houlton street, Bristol BS2 9DJ.

Crown Suppliers

Mr. Page: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement about the privatisation of the Crown Suppliers.

Mr. Chope: I announced on 3 February the Government's intention to sell those of the Crown Suppliers' businesses which can be undertaken on a normal commercial basis. Such businesses can be carried out more efficiently in the private sector and should provide an improved source of competitive supplies for the public sector. I have excluded from the package for sale only those of TCS activities which are not run on commercial lines; which raise questions of security; or which, because of the very specialised nature of the business, exceptionally provide better value for money within the public sector.

The package for sale will therefore include the Crown Suppliers' businesses of selling furniture, furnishings, floor coverings, domestic appliances, electrical, mechanical and laboratory equipment, building materials and vehicles, together with its associated repair, design and technical services. It will also include the transport hire business and the interdepartmental dispatch service between Government Departments. All these are businesses which are commonly carried out by private firms with which I hope the Crown Suppliers will be able successfully to compete.

For security reasons, I have decided to exclude from the sale the design and procurement of security furniture and equipment and the car service which transports Ministers and senior officials in London.

On value-for-money grounds, the Crown Suppliers' fuel business will not be sold. I accept that the extremely specialised nature of fuel procurement is such that the Crown Suppliers, once privatised, would be unlikely to be able or willing to secure as low prices as it can at present. The business will therefore be retained in Government, and the possibility of establishing it as an executive agency will be examined.

Also on value-for-money grounds, I envisage that the expertise necessary to procure those few highly specialised items of equipment where the Property Services Agency is the only customer and there is a single supplier should be retained in the agency, since in these circumstances there are no additional cost advantages to be gained fron using the Crown Suppliers to find sources of supply or to purchase in bulk for a number of customers.

Finally, the special unit in the Crown Suppliers which provides services to the Palace of Westminster and other royal palaces and civil residences in Whitehall and elsewhere is not presently run on strictly commercial lines; it is not therefore suitable for inclusion in this sale, although I would not wish to rule out contracting out part of the work of the section in due course.

When the Crown Suppliers is sold, staff working on the activities being privatised will be protected by the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 1981 which, inter alia, provide for the automatic transfer of staff with their jobs to the new employer. Staff in those groups for whom there may be prospects of alternative employment within the Civil Service will be asked whether or not they wish to remain in the Civil Service or stay with the Crown Suppliers. We shall use our best endeavours to meet their wishes where they are consistent with the smooth transfer of functions, but I cannot guarantee that we shall be able to satisfy all preferences.

I shall now be consulting the trade unions on these proposals and working up detailed plans for the sale. A number of efficiency improvements are being made so that the Crown Suppliers will be structured and ready for the challenge of privatisation.

Red List Substances

Mr. Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he will publish detailed proposals for controlling red list substances in relation to the aquatic environment, first announced last November and outlined to Environment Ministers at the second international conference on the North sea.

Mr. Ridley: The Government have today published a consultation paper setting out its detailed proposals for tightening controls over the input of the most dangerous substances to water—the so-called red list. The consultation paper explains the selection scheme developed by my Department to identify those substances which are thought to pose the greatest threat to our water environment and the system of controls through which it is proposed to minimise the amounts of these substances reaching our inland and coastal waters. The initial red list contained 26 substances selected on the basis of their toxicity, persistence and capacity for bio-accumulation.

Industrial processes discharging significant amounts of red list substances will be prescribed for control by Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution and will have to satisfy the inspectorate that the process will be operated using best available technology not entailing excessive cost in order to minimise the amounts of these substances discharged. In addition, discharges will continue to have to satisfy environmental quality objectives which water authorities set for the receiving waters.

Where these substances reach water from indirect or diffuse sources, the Government will be asking water authorities to initiate more rigorous environmental monitoring, and will be seeking ways of applying existing controls over their marketing and use more effectively.

These proposals represent a further move in United Kingdom policy towards a more precautionary approach to the protection of the aquatic environment and will constitute a key element in our implementation of the measures agreed by Ministers at last November's second international conference on the North sea. Although these proposals relate primarily to the water environment, they are consistent with the wider policies for integrated pollution control, which are the subject of a separate consultation paper also being published today. The Government also see the proposals as having general implications for the development of European policy on the control of dangerous substances to water. The Government hope to start implementing these proposals on an interim basis during the second half of 1989.

The consultation paper is being sent to the CBI, the Chemical Industries Association, the Water Authorities

Association, representation of various trade organisations and other interested parties. Copies are available from the Vote Office and in the Library.

Pollution Control

Mr. Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what proposals he has for legislation to fulfil the remit given to Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution in the action plan following the "Scrutiny Report Inspecting Industry: Pollution and Safety" to develop an integrated approach to pollution control.

Mr. Ridley: I have today issued a consultation paper which sets out proposals for a new statutory framework which gives expression to the cross-media approach to pollution control which underlay the creation of HMIP in April 1987. They also reflect the concept of "best practicable environmental option" developed by the Royal Commission on environmental pollution, notably in its fifth and 12th reports. The Government will take account of views expressed during consultations before reaching conclusions on these proposals.

Hazardous Waste

Mr. Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he will implement the directive on transfrontier shipment of hazardous waste.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: It is unfortunately not possible, as we had wished, to apply the transfrontier directive to all special wastes as defined in the Control of Pollution (Special Waste) Regulations 1980. The 1980 regulations control the movement of a wider range of difficult wastes than the minimum required by European law and it appears that there is no basis in United Kingdom law to apply the transfrontier directive other than to that minimum.

I accordingly intend to lay in the next few weeks regulations to implement the transfrontier directive in respect of special wastes containing polychlorinated biphenyls and those substances listed in the annex to directive 78/319 (toxic and dangerous waste), except organic and chlorinated solvents which are specifically excluded from the transfrontier directive. This will implement the transfrontier directive in full. Details of the revised basis of implementation are being sent to local authority associations, industry and other interested parties.

Imports of other special wastes will continue to be subject to the special waste regulations but I am investigating the possibility of further measures under United Kingdom law to tighten the controls applicable to such imports.

East London River Crossing

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he intends to announce his decision on the planning application for the line of the road and the east London river crossing; and if he will make a statement on its relationship with the London City airport.

Mr. Channon: I have been asked to reply.

I am pleased to announce that, in conjunction with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment, I have decided that the A406 east London river crossing will be built with a new bridge across the Thames. This follows our consideration of the report from the inspector who conducted local public inquiries between September 1985 and December 1986.

The inspector recommended that the Department of Transport's scheme, including a new cable-stayed bridge across the Thames, should be built. He rejected alternative tunnel options.

We have decided to defer a decision on the design of the bridge. The inspector considered that a dual three-lane standard would eventually be needed. With the design originally proposed, it would not be possible to provide three full-width lanes. We also accept the inspector's recommendation that the design should incorporate a segregated cycleway. We considered late objections, forwarded to us by the inspector without comment, from Eurocity Express and the Air Transport Users Committee. These objections concerned the height of the towers of the proposed Thames bridge, which would limit options for future use of London City airport.

I am therefore asking the consultants for the scheme to investigate whether there is an alternative design for the bridge which would be practicable, acceptable and within the broad order of costs of the Department's proposed bridge, and which would satisfy the objectives of the scheme, and keep open options for future use of the airport.

The inspector recommended a number of modifications to the Department's proposals. One of these was his proposal to provide about 400 m of cut-and-cover tunnel through part of Oxleas wood and to delete the south-facing slip roads at the Shooters hill interchange. Having carefully weighed the advantages and disadvantages of the inspector's proposal, we are not satisfied that the additional cost of the tunnel and the loss of benefits from deletion of the slip roads are justified. We have decided not to accept this recommendation.

Those parts of the orders relating to the line and most of the side road orders will now be made. The inspector also recommended that the draft compulsory purchase orders should be made, and that the three certificates for exchange land should be granted. We have deferred decisions on these.

Copies of the inspector's report and our decision letter are being placed in the Library.

Homeless People

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he is planning to issue any guidance to local authorities concerning the sale of accommodation for homeless people to developers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* Local authorities are well aware of the rules governing sale or disposal of housing land and property. The general consents of 2 June 1981 gave local authorities powers to make certain disposals without reference to this Department; and other disposals require special consent under sections 32 to 34 of the Housing Act 1985. Whether a particular sale of accommodation used for homeless people needs the Secretary of State's consent would depend upon the terms of disposal.

Ordnance Survey (Bristol Railway)

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if the railway line omitted from the current Ordnance Survey maps for the Bristol area, but which is visible to travellers on the M5 south of that town, will be included in the next printing; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: The decision to omit such features is made by the owning authority for reasons of security. The need to impose restrictions on published material is regularly reviewed to ensure that detail is not unnecessarily withheld. As a result of a recent review, following the privatisation of the royal ordnance factories, it has been decided that this railway line will be shown on the next edition of the Ordnance Survey maps of the area.

Planning Consents

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what guidance he has issued to local planning authorities regarding the degree of change to the terms of an original consent, or the degree of flexibility in those terms that many allow before requiring a new consent.

Mr. Chope: I take it that the hon. Member is referring to changes to proposals before the grant of full planning permission. My Department's circular 22/80 "Development Control—Policy and Practice" advises local planning authorities that provided that the amendments do not materially change the character of the development proposed, it is sensible and time-saving to allow applicants to amend applications for approval of reserved matters, or small details of full applications for planning permission, thus avoiding the need for a fresh planning application.

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many planning applications to change a scheme which had already received planning consent were notified in 1987; and what percentage of these were successful *(a)* at local authority level and *(b)* on appeal to the Secretary of State.

Mr. Chope: The information requested is not available centrally.

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what percentage of all planning applications in 1987 were successful *(a)* at local authority level and *(b)* on appeal to him.

Mr. Chope: In 1987, local planning authorities granted permission for 85 per cent. of planning applications decided by them. The number of cases in which permission was granted on appeal to the Secretary of State in 1987 was equivalent to 1·4 per cent. of planning applications decided by local planning authorities in that year.

Tenanted Residential Property (Planning Permission)

Mr. McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he proposes to take to *(a)* prevent applicants for planning permission for works to tenanted residential property from making false statements about their intentions for the future of the tenants and *(b)* provide tenants with rights to safeguard their position during the planning process.

Mr. Chope: A grant of planning permission cannot remove the legal rights of any tenant of the land to which the permission relates, nor is protection of those rights a function of the planning system. A tenant may make representations to the local planning authority about the land use planning implications of a planning application and the authority may impose planning conditions giving effect to the applicant's undertakings in so far as they relate to land-use planning matters.

Football Supporters (Membership Scheme)

Mr Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many representations he has received concerning the proposed compulsory membership scheme for football supporters; and if he will list the organisations in favour of, and opposed to, the scheme.

Mr. Moynihan: I have received 130 representations about the national membership scheme from members of the public, nine from organisations. I have also received a large number of proposals to implement the scheme from computer companies and others. I could not list those who have written in by name without their consent to do so.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment which organisations he has consulted or proposes to consult in connection with the compulsory membership scheme for football supporters.

Mr. Moynihan: I am chairing a working party to examine the details of the proposed national membership scheme for football supporters. The Football League, the Football Association, the police, the Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency and other Government Departments are represented on it. I have asked the National Federation of Football Supporters Clubs to let me have in writing any points it would like the working party to take into account. I will shortly be issuing a similar invitation to the Football Supporters Association.

It is our intention to bring proposals to Parliament for legislation to give statutory backing to the scheme.

Common Land

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if, in the light of the report of the Common Land Forum of September 1986, he will bring forward legislation to amend the law on common land; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley: I announced on 29 January 1987 that the Government accept the case for legislation based broadly on the forum's report and intend to introduce a comprehensive commons Bill at a suitable opportunity when parliamentary time permits.

General Development Order

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he proposes to publish the revised and consolidated town and country planning General Development Order.

Mr. Ridley *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* We propose to lay a revised and consolidated General Development Order in time for it to come into effect later this year.

Empty Properties

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his estimate of the number of properties for rent which are empty in each of the categories of *(a)* local authority housing, *(b)* housing association housing and *(c)* Government Department housing; and what is his estimate of the percentage that this represents of the total number of properties in each such group.

Mr. Ridley *[holding answer 26 July 1988]:* Estimates derived from local authorities' annual housing investment programme returns for 1987 are as follows:

Vacant dwellings[1] at 1 April 1987: England
Number and percentage of stock

	000's	*Percentage*
Local authorities[2]	108·6	2·5
Housing associations	12·9	2·7
Other public sector[2]	15·6	5·8

[1] Excluding dwellings subject to demolition or closing orders.
[2] Local authorities vacant housing in overspill estates is included in the host authorities under "other public sector" which also includes housing owned by new towns, county councils, Government departments, nationalised industries and other public bodies. Many of these are vacant because of operational requirements, notably those owned by the Ministry of Defence, and others have been acquired for demolition (for example, by the Department of Transport). Government is encouraging the sale of housing which is not required and many of those that are vacant are in the process of disposal.

SCOTLAND

Supply Estimates

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give details of the miscellaneous items covered in the proposed increase for 1988-89 of class XVI, vote 14, N9(7) miscellaneous.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The provision for N9(7) miscellaneous expenditure in the current year is £2,902,000 compared with £601,000 in 1987-88. This increase is due mainly to the inclusion of £2·199 million to provide for expenditure on centrally financed AIDS-related projects.

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give details of the additional printing and stationery envisaged by the projected increase in expenditure under Supply Estimates 1988-89, class XVI, vote 14, (N9.6 stationery, printing, etc.)

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The provision for N9(6) stationery, printing, and so on in the current year is £100,000 compared with £55,000 in 1987-88. This increase is to cover the estimated costs of producing and issuing to all general medical practitioners a consolidated version of the regulations governing general medical practitioners' terms and conditions of service and the revised drug tariff which will be issued to all general practitioners. Provision has also been made for the recurring costs of a large number of other health-related publications.

Housing Revenue Account

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish in the *Official Report* a summarised housing revenue account, consistent with table 16.1 of Cm. 288-II, for each of the years 1982-83 to 1990-91 for *(a)* Scottish local authorities, *(b)* the Scottish Special Housing Association housing and *(c)* new town development corporations in Scotland.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The information requested for the years 1982-83 to 1988-89 is shown in the tables. Projections of housing revenue account income and expenditure are not available for 1989-90 and 1990-91.

Table 1—Scottish local authority summarised housing revenue accounts

	[1]*1982-83* £ million	[1]*1983-84* £ million	[1]*1984-85* £ million	[1]*1985-86* £ million	[2]*1986-87* £ million	[2]*1987-88* £ million	[3]*1988-89* £ million
Loan charges	416	399	414	431	424	435	469
Non-loan charges[4]	260	269	295	280	301	317	335
Total expenditure[5]	675	668	699	711	725	751	805
Rents	414	448	470	511	570	632	685
Subsidy (HSG, RFC)	229	195	202	165	121	84	77
Other income[5]	32	25	27	35	34	36	43
Total income	675	668	699	711	725	751	805

Notes:
[1] Figures for 1982-83 to 1985-86 are based on audited accounts.
[2] Figures for 1986-87 to 1987-88 are near actual outturns.
[3] Figures for 1988-89 are authorities estimates.
[4] The main item of expenditure in management and maintenance.
[5] Total may not add up due to rounding.

Table 2—Scottish special housing association summarised housing revenue accounts

	1982-83[1] £ million	*1983-84*[1] £ million	*1984-85*[1] £ million	*1985-86*[1] £ million	*1986-87*[2] £ million	*1987-88*[2] £ million	*1988-89*[3] £ million
Loan charges	51	55	58	62	65	67	69
Non-Loan charges[4]	29	27	27	28	33	34	34
Total expenditure[5]	80	83	85	90	97	101	103
Rents	52	57	60	64	70	74	78
Subsidy	26	23	23	23	24	24	22
Other income	3	3	2	3	3	3	3
Total income[5]	80	83	85	90	97	101	103

Notes:
[1] Figures for 1982-83 to 1985-86 are based on audited accounts.

[2] Figures for 1986-87 to 1987-88 are near actual outturns.
[3] Figures for 1988-89 are estimates.
[4] The main item of expenditure is management and maintenance.
[5] Totals may not add up due to rounding.

Table 3—Scottish new town development corporations summarised housing revenue accounts

	1982-83[1] *£ million*	*1983-84*[1] *£ million*	*1984-85*[1] *£ million*	*1985-86*[1] *£ million*	*1986-87*[1] *£ million*	*1987-88*[2] *£ million*	*1988-89*[3] *£ million*
Loan charges	48	49	51	52	53	47	49
Non-Loan charges[5]	18	19	19	20	21	23	23
Total expenditure[4]	66	68	70	72	74	70	72
Rents	33	35	36	38	40	42	44
Subsidy	32	33	32	33	33	27	28
Other income	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total income[4]	66	68	70	72	74	70	72

Notes:
[1] Figures for 1982-83 to 1986-87 are based on audited accounts.
[2] Figures for 1987-88 and 1988-89 are estimates.
[3] The main item of expenditure is management and maintenance.
[4] Totals may not add up due to rounding.

Illegal Abortions

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the total number of convictions in Scotland for procuring an illegal abortion in 1987.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: None.

Wild Birds

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Newham, North-West of 18 July, *Official Report*, columns *510-11*, if he will indicate in respect of the total number of bird deaths reported to his Department between 1 January 1979 and 30 June 1988, the percentage represented by those known to have been killed by the use of poisoned bait.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: 75 per cent.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Newham, North-West of 18 July, *Official Report*, columns *510-11*, if he will indicate for each species of bird listed those cases reported to his Department by owners or occupiers of land and those reported by other parties.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information asked for is not available, in that reports are very often made at second hand and the records held by my Department's wildlife incident investigation service do not always contain information as to the persons making the first report of the finding of carcases of birds.

Training (Expenditure)

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will provide an estimate of the expenditure by industry on training in each of the years 1979 to 1987, inclusive.

Mr. Lang: This information is not collected.

Labour Statistics

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the total number of people classified as employees in employment for each quarter December 1986 to March 1988 inclusive, as defined prior to the introduction of the concept of the civilian work force in employment in June 1988.

Mr. Lang: The table gives the latest estimates of the number of employees in employment, the definition of which has not been affected by the introduction of the concept of the civilian work force in employment.

Employees in employment

Thousands

Scotland	*Unadjusted for seasonal variation*	*Seasonally adjusted*
1986		
December	1,874	1,874
1987		
March	1,862	1,876
June	1,886	1,880
September	1,879	1,871
December	1,877	1,878
1988		
March	1,868	1,882

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will estimate the impact of the new work force definition of including training scheme participants as employees on *(a)* the monthly percentage unemployment rate and *(b)* the number of employees in employment.

Mr. Lang: For Scotland as a whole the unemployment rate on the work force basis is, on average, 0·2 percentage points lower than the unemployment rate calculated on the previous basis, which did not include participants on work-related Government training programmes in the denominator. The definition of employees in employment has not been changed.

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give an estimate of the impact the new adult training programme and withdrawal of general entitlement to benefit for young people under 18 years, will have on the monthly unemployment figures, claimant count, after November.

Mr. Lang: Plans are for some 41,000 filled places under employment training in Scotland, in comparison to some 35,000 under existing adult programmes. It will of course take some time for employment training to become fully established.

As regards income support changes, there are currently around 21,000 claimants aged under 18 on average

included in the count for Scotland, of whom some 14,000 are school leavers who are already excluded from the seasonally adjusted series. The majority of these will no longer be entitled to benefit.

Heatwise, Glasgow

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received from Heatwise, Glasgow, concerning the employment training programme; and what response he has given.

Mr. Ian Lang: I visited Heatwise in Glasgow on 11 July and am fully aware of the serious problems the company faces as a consequence of the decision by Glasgow district council not to participate in employment training. For the sake of the long-term unemployed I hope that Glasgow district council, and other local authorities which have adopted a similar stance, will reconsider their position and join the new programme.

Apprenticeships

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the total number of apprenticeships in Scotland in each of the years 1979 to 1987, inclusive.

Mr. Lang: I regret that the information is not available in the precise form requested. The table shows the number of apprentices and other trainees in manufacturing industry in Scotland since 1981. In 1988, as a percentage of all manufacturing employees, the number of apprentices and other trainees was higher in Scotland than in any other Great Britain region.

Apprentices and Trainees in Scottish Manufacturing Industries 1981-1988

Year	*Apprentices (000s)*	*Other trainees (000s)*	*All trainees (000s)*
1981	13·6	4·2	17·8
1982	12·3	4·8	17·1
1983	11·9	2·8	14·7
1984	8·3	2·6	11·0
1985	8·3	2·8	11·1
1986	6·3	2·7	9·0
1987	5·8	2·8	8·6
1988	6·1	4·9	11·0

Notes:

1. The figures refer to March of each year.
2. Many of those receiving initial skills training under YTS, specifically those without a contract of employment, are not counted as employees and so do not appear in the above table.
3. With the move away from traditional apprentice training in many industries some long duration schemes of a type which previously could have involved apprenticeships may now be classified as "other training".

Training Programmes

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the total number of people included in "Employers in Employment" who were participating in Government training programmes for each quarter from December 1986 to March 1988 inclusive, prior to the introduction of the concept of the civilian work force in employment.

Mr. Lang: I assume that the hon. Member is referring to employees in employment.

Estimates of the number of people participating in Government training programmes included in the employees in employment statistics for Scotland for each quarter from December 1986 to March 1988 inclusive are shown in the table.

	Number
December 1986	41,000
March 1987	40,000
June 1987	39,000
September 1987	41,000
December 1987	40,000
March 1988	41,000

Road Accidents

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many cases of culpable homicide were prosecuted under sections 1, 2 and 3 of the Road Traffic Act in 1987.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: In 1987, 30 people were prosecuted under section 1 of the Road Traffic Act 1972 for causing death by reckless driving. Since, under sections 2 and 3 of the Act, the consequences of the driving do not form part of the charge, no information is available in the criminal statistics on whether or not charges under these sections arose out of an incident in which a death occurred. However, cases of reckless driving involving a death are almost invariably prosecuted under section 1 rather than section 2 or 3.

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list in the *Official Report* the number of *(a)* fatalities and *(b)* serious injuries caused by road traffic accidents in (i) each regional authority, (ii) each district authority and (iii) each parliamentary constituency in Scotland for the years 1985, 1986 and 1987.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The information requested for 1985 and 1986 is included at tables 23 and 26 of "Road Accidents Scotland", for 1985 and 1986 respectively, copies of which are available in the Library. The figures for 1987 are as follows:

Region/district	*Fatal*	*Serious*	*Slight*	*Total*
Borders	23	282	430	735
Tweeddale	1	46	54	101
Ettrick/Lauderdale	7	92	153	252
Roxburgh	5	74	135	214
Berwickshire	10	70	88	168
Central	26	284	734	1,044
Clackmannan	2	42	93	137
Stirling	14	109	262	385
Falkirk	10	133	379	522
Dumfries and Galloway	26	225	544	795
Wigtown	5	45	125	175
Stewartry	3	50	77	130
Nithsdale	7	65	203	275
Annandale/Eskdale	11	65	139	215
Fife	33	308	973	1,314
Kirkcaldy	8	11	394	513
North East Fife	10	99	258	367
Dunfermline	15	98	321	434
Grampian	72	484	2,086	2,642
Aberdeen	10	137	822	969
Moray	7	84	299	390
Banff and Buchan	10	84	361	455
Gordon	24	110	353	487

Region/district	Fatal	Serious	Slight	Total
Kincardine and Deeside	21	69	251	341
Highland	22	391	665	1,078
Caithness	3	61	67	131
Sutherland	—	29	44	73
Ross and Cromarty	4	89	105	198
Skye and Lochalsh	1	32	87	120
Lochaber	4	28	102	134
Inverness	4	93	190	287
Badenoch and Strathspey	6	42	48	96
Nairn	—	17	22	39
Lothian	73	1,165	2,552	3,790
Edinburgh	38	658	1,787	2,483
West Lothian	15	217	348	580
Midlothian	11	152	219	382
East Lothian	9	138	198	345
Strathclyde	203	2,771	8,303	11,277
Glasgow	52	897	2,963	3,912
Argyll and Bute	12	141	340	493
Dumbarton	13	114	316	443
Clydebank	3	74	192	269
Bearsden and Milngavie	4	32	126	162
Strathkelvin	6	83	268	357
Cumbernauld and Kilsyth	7	38	115	160
Monklands	8	126	362	496
Motherwell	9	149	401	559
Hamilton	7	132	320	459
East Kilbride	1	66	192	259
Eastwood	5	44	123	172
Clydesdale	17	105	311	433
Renfrew	15	233	714	962
Inverclyde	7	115	332	454
Cunninghame	11	154	430	595
Kilmarnock and Loudoun	7	98	266	371
Kyle and Carrick	17	107	389	513
Cumnock and Doon Valley	2	63	143	208
Tayside	67	692	1,063	1,822
Dundee	17	190	359	566
Angus	15	190	257	462
Perth and Kinross	35	312	447	794
Orkney	3	24	28	55
Shetland	4	32	57	93
Western Isles	4	50	51	105
Scotland	556	6,708	17,486	24,750

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many fatal accident inquiries were held in connection with road traffic accidents in 1987; and if he will give a breakdown by region.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Figures are available only for the number of fatal accident inquiries so far instructed in road traffic deaths occurring in 1987. Thirty two such fatal accident inquiries have been instructed. The regional breakdown is set out in the table.

Number of fatal accident inquiries instructed as a result of road traffic deaths occurring in 1987

Region	Number
Highland	2
Grampian	5
Tayside	6
Fife	1
Lothian	7
Central	1
Borders	2
Dumfries and Galloway	1
Strathclyde	7
Orkney	0
Shetland	0
Western Isles	0

Walter Howden

Mr. Ron Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what recent correspondence he has received from Walter Howden, an inmate of Saughton prison, about his term of imprisonment; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Mr. Howden petitioned my right hon. and learned Friend on 4 May 1988 and was given a reply on 16 June. A review of Mr. Howden's suitability for release on life licence is in train.

East Craigs Seed Testing Station

Mr. Ron Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what recent representations he has received from trades unions about the future of East Craigs seed testing station, Edinburgh; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The Scottish branch of the Institution of Professional Civil Servants formally submitted comments on the report on "The Plant Variety Testing and Seed Certification Systems in the United Kingdom" on 18 July. These comments will be fully taken into account by the agriculture Ministers in deciding on their response to the many recommendations contained in the report.

Forestry Commission

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the total staff complement of the Forestry Commission in each year since 1973.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The figures were as follows:

Year	Number of Staff in Post
1973	8,527
1974	8,298
1975	8,304
1976	8,252
1977	8,077
1978	8,168
1979	8,323
1980	8,129
1981	7,952
1982	7,545
1983	7,249
1984	6,836
1985	6,273
1986	5,967
1987	5,798
1988	5,528

Departmental Programmes

Mr. George: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much has been spent by his Department in each of the past five years on the evaluation of departmental

programmes; and what proportion this constitutes of *(a)* the amount allocated for evaluation and *(b)* the Department's total budget.

Mr. Rifkind: Evaluation is an integral part of the process of managing programmes. It is therefore not possible to identify separately the resources involved.

Education (Expenditure)

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the total expenditure on secondary education in Scotland in each of the years 1979 to 1987 inclusive, in cash and real terms and by central Government and the local education authority section.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The available information is given in the following table:

Expenditure on secondary education

£ million

Year	Central Government		Local Authorities	
	At outturn prices	*At 1987-88 prices*	*At outturn prices*	*At 1987-88 prices*
1979-80	1·8	3·2	342·9	602·2
1980-81	3·2	4·8	415·2	614·9
1981-82	3·3	4·4	471·9	636·0
1982-83	3·9	4·9	506·4	637·1
1983-84	4·3	5·1	534·4	642·1
1984-85	4·1	4·8	549·3	632·0
1985-86	4·4	4·7	565·3	613·8
1986-87	4·9	5·1	608·9	639·5
1987-88	5·5	5·5	653·6	653·6

Notes:

1. The figures shown are for current expenditure only. Information on capital expenditure by local authorities cannot be split between primary and secondary.
2. The outturn figures have been revalued to 1987-88 prices by application of the GDP deflator.
3. The 1987-88 outturn figures are estimated. For other years actual outturn figures have been given.
4. The central Government expenditure relates mainly to the assisted places scheme and in earlier years to assistance to grant-aided schools.

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give an estimate of the amount of finance given to local authority secondary education section in Scotland by industry and commerce in each of the years 1979 to 1987, inclusive.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I regret that this information is not available.

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the total amount of expenditure on non-advanced further education in Scotland in each of the years 1979 to 1987, inclusive.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: It is not possible to distinguish between expenditure by further education colleges on non-advanced courses and on advanced courses (higher national certificate and higher national diploma). Information on total further education expenditure is as follows:

	£ million
1979-80	82·6
1980-81	102·0
1981-82	115·3
1982-83	134·2
1983-84	151·7
1984-85	158·0
1985-86	155·6
1986-87	161·4
1987-88	181·0

Health Authorities (Revenue)

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will estimate how long it will take to achieve revenue equalisation, as envisaged by the Scottish health authorities revenue equalisation formula.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The timetable will depend upon a number of factors, notably the movement in boards' SHARE targets, themselves dependent upon other changes, for example in population.

City Technology Colleges

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what are the education and training objectives of the city technology concept in Scotland;

(2) if he has any proposals to introduce city technology colleges in 1988-89, 1989-90 and 1990-91;

(3) if he will give the estimated expenditure for the development of city technology colleges in 1988-89, 1989-90 and 1990-91;

(4) when he last met representatives of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, the Confederation of British Industry, the Scottish Trades Union Congress or Strathclyde regional council to discuss the setting up of city technology colleges;

(5) if he has met representatives of private sector industry about the setting up of city technology colleges;

(6) whether any public finance will be used to meet the capital or revenue costs of city technology colleges;

(7) if any private individuals or private sector organisations have agreed to contribute finance to the setting up of city technology colleges; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: My right hon. and learned Friend and I wish to encourage the establishment with private sector sponsorship of technology colleges in Scotland, and are giving close consideration to proposals to achieve this objective.

Secondary Schools

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many pupils obtained O-grades or higher certificate in secondary schools in each of the years 1979 to 1987, inclusive.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Details of pupils obtaining SCE higher grade and published annually in the Scottish Examination Board report, copies of which are held in the House of Commons Library. The report also contains information on numbers of S4 pupils obtaining ordinary/standard grades.

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many pupils sat O-grades or higher certificate in secondary schools in each of the years 1979 to 1987, inclusive.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information requested is published annually in the Scottish Examination Board report, copies of which are held in the House of Commons Library.

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many pupils attended secondary school in each of the years 1979 to 1987, inclusive.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The number of pupils attending education authority and grant-aided secondary schools is as follows:

	Number
1979	421,970
1980	419,370
1981	415,760
1982	410,050
1983	401,420
1984	387,200
1985	361,210
1986	344,930
[1]1987	327,800

[1] provisional figures.

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the total number of pupils in years 4, 5 and 6 in secondary schools in Scotland in each of the years 1979 to 1987, inclusive.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The number of pupils in years 4, 5 and 6 in education authority and grant-aided secondary schools is given in the table.

	S4	*S5*	*S6*	*Total*
1979	92,050	40,210	13,970	146,230
1980	91,060	43,300	14,790	149,150
1981	92,220	47,380	17,270	156,880
1982	87,210	52,330	18,980	158,520
1983	85,810	50,950	19,970	156,730
1984	81,260	50,550	19,130	150,940
[1]1985	78,650	47,380	17,900	143,930
[1]1986	77,250	48,410	17,670	143,330
[2]1987	70,940	48,970	18,650	138,560

[1] Education authority only, stage totals estimated.
[2] Provisional figures.

Students

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) if he will give the total number of students in Scotland who obtained ordinary national certificates, higher national certificates and city and guilds examination awards in each of the years 1979 to 1987, inclusive;

(2) if he will give the total number of students in Scotland presented for ordinary national certificates, higher national certificate and city and guilds in each of the years 1979 to 1987, inclusive.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: This information is not readily available.

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the total number of students in local authority further education colleges in Scotland in each of the years 1979 to 1987, inclusive.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information is shown in the following table:

Students in local authority further education colleges

Session	*Number*
1979-80	161,300
1980-81	182,000
1981-82	173,600
1982-83	184,600
1983-84	193,800
1984-85	202,200
1985-86	186,900
1986-87	196,800

This information includes full-time and part-time students on advanced and non-advanced courses in day colleges and evening centres.

Hip Replacement Operations

Mr. Maclennan: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the number of those awaiting a hip replacement operation in each of the health board areas.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: This information is not available centrally; information is collected only on individual specialties—in this case orthopaedic surgery.

Mr. Maclennan: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the average waiting time for a hip replacement operation in each of the health board areas.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The mean waiting times for a hip replacement operation in each health board are as follows. These relate to patients who were treated and discharged in 1986, and are the latest available.

	Mean waiting time (days)
Argyll and Clyde	127·1
Ayrshire and Arran	182·5
Borders	138·0
Dumfries and Galloway	179·6
Fife	196·9
Forth Valley	165·9
Greater Glasgow	126·9
Grampian	214·5
Highland	270·8
Lanarkshire	151·1
Lothian	184·2
Orkney	—
Shetland	—
Tayside	252·9
Western Isles	—

I expect the longest waiting times to be reduced by the additional allocation which I have made for this purpose.

School Leavers

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the total number of pupils in Scotland leaving S4 with no certificate in each of the years 1979 to 1987 inclusive.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The total number of pupils in Scotland leaving S4 with no Scottish Examination Board certificate is as follows: data for 1986-87 are not yet available.

	Number
1978-79	24,450
1979-80	23,720
1980-81	20,900
1981-82	18,990
1982-83	16,380
1983-84	16.040
1984-85	14,140
1985-86	11,320

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the total number of pupils in Scotland leaving S4, S5 and S6 in each of the years 1979 to 1987 inclusive.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The total number of pupils in Scotland leaving S4, S5 and S6 is as follows:

	S4	S5	S6	Total
1978-79	51,200	25,970	14,560	91,740
1979-80	49,720	26,530	15,480	91,720
1980-81	44,100	27,000	16,380	87,480
1981-82	40,090	29,370	19,140	88,610
1982-83	36,590	33,470	20,930	90,990
1983-84	35,340	32,670	21,730	89,740
1984-85	32,260	32,680	20,890	85,820
1985-86	31,000	31,410	20,660	83,080
1986-87	28,530	31,230	20,580	80,340

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give an estimate of the number of pupils leaving S4, S5 and S6 in secondary schools in Scotland in the years 1988-89, 1989-90 and 1990-91.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The estimates requested are as follows:

Projected number of secondary school leavers

Thousands

	S4[1]	S5	S6	Total
1988-89	26·9	26·7	19·4	73·0
1989-90	25·4	24·7	18·3	68·4
1990-91	24·7	23·4	17·1	65·2

[1] includes a small number from S3

Charities

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what action he is taking in the light of the recommendations of the report, "Efficiency Scrutiny of the Supervision of Charities," relating to the establishment of a register of charities in Scotland.

Lord James Douglas Hamilton: My right hon. and learned Friend intends to issue in the next few days a consultative memorandum seeking views on a range of options, including the possibility of establishing a register of charities, to improve the supervision of charities in Scotland.

Forestry

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to his answer of 8 March, *Official Report*, column *148*, if he will list the names, locations and areas of all of the grant scheme applications which were referred by regional advisory committees to the forestry commissioners in the four years to 31 March 1987; and if he will list in each case *(a)* whether the commissioners gave approval for forestry grant aid, *(b)* the area of land approved and *(c)* the consultee sustaining an objection to the application.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 18 July 1988]:* The information is set out in the following table.

Applications referred to the Forestry Commissioners in the four years to 31 March 1987

Name	County/Region	Area of Original Application Gross Area (Hectares)	Area Proposed for Planting (Hectares)	Approved by Commissioners	Refused by Commissioners	Area Approved for Planting (Hectares)	Objectors
Marmers Wood	Cambridgeshire	1·5	1·5		Refused		Cambridgeshire County Council
Black How	Cumbria	231·9	190·9	Approved		190·9	Cumbria County Council
Thornholme Farm	Cumbria	243	239		Refused		Countryside Commission
							Lake District Special Planning Board
Alwinton Farm	Northumberland	31·5	26	Approved		26	Countryside Commission
Callaly	Northumberland	450	299	Approved		299	Northumberland County Council
Wandysteads Farm	Northumberland	150·6	133	Approved		133	Northumberland County Council
Stone Gill Foot	Yorkshire	263	215		Refused		Yorkshire Dales National Park Committee
							Countryside Commission
Cymersu Farm	Dyfed	177	158		Refused		Nature Conservancy Council
							Dyfed County Council
							Ceredigion District Council
Coed-y-Cerrig	Gwent	4·3	4·3		Refused		Nature Conservancy Council
Dolwgan Isaf	Gwynedd	132	132		Refused		Countryside Commission
							Snowdonia National Park Authority
Hendrewallog	Gwynedd	92	88	Approved		88	Welsh Water Authority
Cefn Gywngul	Mid Glamorgan	42	42		Refused		Rhondda Borough Council
Fforch Orchy	Mid Glamorgan	168	155		Refused		Rhondda Borough Council
Blaen Nedd Isaf	Powys	29·3	28	Approved		20	Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
Lluest Dolgwiail	Powys	392	345		Refused		Powys County Council
							Welsh Water Authority
Nant-Y-Brain	Powys	397	390		Refused		Brecknock Borough Council
							Powys County Council
							Nature Conservancy Council
							Countryside Commission
Nether Phawhope	Borders	210	163		Refused		Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland
Priesthill	Borders	185	170	Approved		170	Borders Regional Council
Shielknowe Farm	Borders	204	204		Refused		Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland
Acharn Farm	Central	1,320	705	Approved		581·5	Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland
Auchineden	Central	157·8	157·5	Approved		140	Strathclyde Regional Council Water Department

Name	County/Region	Area of Original Application Gross Area (Hectares)	Area Proposed for Planting (Hectares)	Approved by Commissioners	Refused by Commissioners	Area Approved for Planting (Hectares)	Objectors
Kinnell Block 1	Central	378	378		Refused		Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland
Nether Glenny	Central	261·8	255		Refused		Stirling District Council Lake of Menteith Fisheries Board
Shielbrae Farm	Central	456	444	Approved		444	Central Regional Council Department of Water and Drainage
Creag Meagaidh	Highland	1,114	900	Approved		530	Nature Conservancy Council
Backmoor Wood	Strathclyde	56·2	53·6		Refused		Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland
Barachander	Strathclyde	830	672		Refused		Strathclyde Regional Council Water Department Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland
Barachander (Re-submission)	Strathclyde	830	670		Refused		Strathclyde Regional Council Water Department Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland
Coulter Allers	Strathclyde	19·1	19·1		Refused		Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland
Loch Mor	Strathclyde	348	267	Approved		267	Strathclyde Regional Council Water Department Argyll and Bute District Council
Narachan Hill	Strathclyde	988	920	Approved		920	Strathclyde Regional Council Water Department
North Tarsan	Strathclyde	96	95	Approved		95	Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland
Wardlaws Farm	Strathclyde	32·4	32·4		Refused		Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland
Balquhandy and Skymore Hill	Tayside	191·5	179·6	Approved		179·6	Perth and Kinross District Council Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland
Glen Lochay	Tayside	207	186		Refused		Nature Conservancy Council Stirling District Council Central Regional Council

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many applications for forestry grants were referred to the regional advisory committee for each Forestry Commission conservancy in the year to 31 March; how many were resolved by voluntary withdrawal or amendment; how many were referred to the forestry commissioners; and how many of those were awarded grant approval by the forestry commissoners.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 18 July 1988]:* The information is contained in the following table for the year ended 31 March 1988:

Conservancy	Number of applications referred to Regional Advisory Committees	Number of applications resolved by voluntary withdrawal or amendment of application	Number of applications referred by Regional Advisory Committees to Forestry Commissioners: Applications approved	Applications refused	Applications still under consideration
North England	3	—	—	1	2
East England	—	—	—	—	—
West England	—	—	—	—	—
Wales	5	—	1	2	2
North Scotland	24	5	4	1	14
Mid Scotland	8	2	5	—	1
South Scotland	3	2	—	—	1
Totals	43	9	10	4	20

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what species of birds will be displaced by the afforestation of 1,029 hectares of land recently approved for planting in Caithness and Sutherlnd; whether any of those species are listed in annex I of the European Community directive, 79/409/EEC, on the conservation of wild birds; and what advice he received from the Nature Conservancy Council with regard to the afforestation of this land.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 26 July 1988]:* The birds most likely to be displaced on the 1,059 hectares recently cleared for planting by my right hon. and learned Friend are common moorland species such as skylarks, meadow pipits and curlews. As far as is known, the only species of bird listed in annex I of the European Community directive 79/409/EEC which will be affected is golden plover. The numbers of golden plover are relatively low in the areas to be planted and more abundant on the 1,426 hectares to be left unplanted as a result of my right hon. and learned Friend's decision. The Nature Conservancy Council's advice was that all the land should be left unplanted because of its ecological importance.

In reaching his decision my right hon. and learned Friend gave careful consideration to the council's advice and to the implications for employment, in accordance with his interim views on the balance between nature conservation and forestry in Caithness and Sutherland as set out in his answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) on 25 January 1988, at columns *71-73.*

Small Business

Mr. David Shaw: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the achievements of his Department and his policies in helping small businesses over the last 12 months compared with the previous 12 months; and if he will publish the performance indicators by which his Department monitors those achievements and the statistical results of such monitoring.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 19 July 1988]:* In recognition of the important role that small firms play in the Scottish economy the Government have introduced a number of schemes of support available from the Scottish Development Agency, the Highlands and Islands Department Board and from the Industry Department for Scotland, where policy responsibility lies. In addition to providing services specific to Scotland, the SDA, HIDB and the Industry Department for Scotland are responsible for the delivery and monitoring in Scotland of United Kingdom services on behalf of other Departments, including the Department of Employment and the Department of Trade and Industry. 1987 saw the achievement of a net increase in the number of registered companies in Scotland by over 2,500 and VAT returns indicate that during the period 1980-85 there was a net increase of nearly 10,000 in the number of new businesses operating in Scotland.

The following describes the services available to small firms in Scotland during the periods 1986-87 and 1987-88 and some of their achievements.

Regional Assistance

IDS made offers to small firms in Scotland of regional selective assistance of £7 million in 1986-87 and £4 million in 1987-88. Under the revised regional development grant scheme, approvals to small firms in 1986-87 amounted to £47 million and £48 million in 1987-88. Information on the grant offered to small firms under the original RDG scheme is not available.

Better Business Services and Better Technical Services Schemes

During the periods in question, the BBS scheme was administered by IDS, SDA and the HIDB. The scheme allows small companies to have access to subsidised professional business advice and in 1986-87 some 7,947 offers of assistance were made with an associated value of £3 million. In 1987-88 some 9,597 offers of assistance were made with an associated value of £2·9 million. The BTS scheme was available in Strathclyde and parts of Tayside region and allowed small companies to have access to subsidised professional advice of a technical nature. In 1986-87 some 1,295 offers of assistance were made with an associated value of £0·75 million. In 1987-88 1,720 offers were made with an associated value of £1 million. Support under the BTS scheme ceased on 31 March 1988.

Scottish Development Agency

SDA support for small business includes the provision of financial assistance, premises and a wide range of advisory services, including the small firms service in Scotland and the administration of DTI's consultancy initiatives, under the enterprise initiative. During 1986-87 the SDA had contact with 21,682 small companies. Some £2 million was invested in 716 small firms creating or safeguarding some 670 jobs. In addition, some 845 small companies received assistance with the costs of attending promotional events. Sixty four small companies were provided with technical advice, while 36 received assistance with market research studies. In the year 1987-88, the agency had contact with 19,125 small firms. Some £2·7 million was invested in 692 small firms creating or safeguarding 800 jobs. In addition, 875 small companies received assistance with the 16costs of attending promotional events. Sixty small firms were provided with technical advice while 30 companies received assistance with market research studies.

Highlands and Islands Development Board

As well as delivering the small firms service in its area, the HIDB undertakes a wide range of activities in support of businesses, most of which are small, to help them overcome the difficulties of operating in this peripheral and rural part of the UK. The measures taken include financial support to business, provision of factories and assistance with business advice and training. In 1986-87, the board approved 1,247 offers of financial assistance with an associated value of £19·2 million. This generated private sector investment of some £57·8 million and created or safeguarded 2,400 jobs. For the period 1987-88 the board approved 1,063 offers of financial assistance with an associated value of £14·4 million. This generated private sector support of £44·4 million and created or safeguarded 2,700 jobs. In the period 1986-87, the HIDB completed 2,777 sq m of factory floor space. In this period some 2,654 jobs were housed in HIDB factories. In the period 1987-88, the HIDB completed 6,409 sq m of factory floor space. In this period, some 2,920 jobs were housed in HIDB factories.

Local Enterprise Trusts

Local enterprise trusts have proved to be an important feature of the various schemes of support on offer to small businesses in Scotland. The Government have recognised the important contribution which they make in local communities and, in partnership with the private sector, the Scottish Development Agency gave financial support amounting to £0·56 million to 36 enterprise trusts in 1986-87, the latest year for which figures are available. This represented some 20 per cent. of the total funds employed by the trusts. During 1986-87 the 36 trusts had, between them, contact with 20,000 clients from which 2,500 new small businesses were formed. Companies assisted by enterprise trusts created some 6,000 new jobs and some 5,000 jobs were supported or maintained. The SDA bases its financial assistance on its appraisal of each trust's annual management plan which contains details of the previous year's projects and objectives for the future year.

Deregulation

The Scottish Office is participating fully in the deregulation initiative. This has resulted in an improved awareness within the Scottish Office of the needs of business and has led to the introduction of a more systematic approach to assessing the financial and other pressures imposed on business by regulation. Scotland will be the first area of the United Kingdom to set up a pilot project which will provide small businesses with a single access point for advice on Government regulations. The pilot will commence on 1 August.

Public Purchasing

In each of the last two financial years, IDS has organised a number of seminars for small businesses to increase awareness of the opportunities that exist for selling their goods and services to the public service, and how to go about it. These were attended by several hundred small Scottish companies.

Departmental Advertising

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the latest figure for the estimated expenditure by his Department on press and public relations during 1988-89.

Mr. Rifkind *[holding answer 21 July 1988]:* The estimated running cost of the Scottish information office in 1988-89 is £1·8 million.

Gartcosh Steel Mill

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if his Department is now in a person to assess the economic impact on central Scotland of the closure of the Gartcosh steel strip mill.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 25 July 1988]:* Comprehensive information on the economic consequences for central Scotland of the closure of the Gartcosh cold rolling mill is not available and could not be derived from regularly available statistical sources. However, I note with satisfaction that over the period June 1987 to June 1988 the numbers of unemployed in Lanarkshire fell by over 5,000. This amounted to a drop in the unemployment rate of more than three percentage points, which is even more substantial than the decline for Scotland as a whole.

Court and Escort Duties

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he has proposals to reduce the amount of time that police and prison officers spend on court and escort duties.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 26 July 1988]:* The Scottish Home and Health Department, in consultation with the Crown Agent, the Scottish Courts Administration and the police, is currently considering whether the resources devoted by the police and prison services to these duties could be reduced without damage to the administration of justice and the security of prisoners. Among the aspects being studied are the scope for civilianisation of court posts and the arrangements for citing police officers as witnesses.

Housing

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the kind of centrally held information gathered by his Department regarding *(a)* homelessness in general, *(b)* young homeless people, *(c)* housing for the disabled and *(d)* housing and the elderly.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* Information on homelessness is gathered by the Scottish Development Department from local authorities on a case return basis for each applicant household. This details category of priority need; reasons for loss/threatened loss of accommodation; whether temporary accommodation pending inquiries was provided; circumstances of the household; and type of accommodation secured. Age of applicant households is not collected. Information on homeless households in short stay accommodation is collected quarterly from local authorities.

Statistical returns collected annually from local authorities give the level and type of provision at 31 March each year, both of special needs housing and bed spaces for the elderly and disabled.

Shareholdings

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list all shareholdings in public and private companies still held by his Department or by the Scottish Development Board.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 12 July 1988]:* No shares are held by the Scottish Office. Shareholdings held by the Scottish Development Agency and the Highlands and Islands Development Board are as follows:

Scottish Development Agency

Company	*Cost* £
Aberdeen Petrol	15,000
Afton Dyers	15,000
Albyn	25,000
Aqualife Ltd.	10,000
Armstrong Pack	15,000
Assep Ltd	40
Atlantic Freshwater PLC	125,000
Automatic Truck	50,000
Baby Deer Ltd.	40,000
Babygro Holding	2,565
Bannerman Henry	50,000
Bathgate Invest	50
Bauteil Holdings Ltd	274,156
Berkeley Computer Services Ltd.	35,125
Biggar Meats	50,000
Biomac	20,000
Blair Engineering Ltd.	50,000
Bluemink	150,000
Cairntech	39,000
Caledonian Arenas PLC	125,000
Caledonian Brewing Co. Ltd.	85,000
Caledonian Transgenics Ltd.	106,000
Campbell of Selkirk Ltd.	60,000
Carnscot	25,000
Carron Phoenix	19,024
Carron Plastics	60,000
Carronhall Ltd.	100,000
Carruthers	35,600
Chemflake International Ltd.	167,561
Chessbourne International Ltd.	250,000
Clyde Helicopters Ltd	65,000
Coastal Seafood	25,000
Consort Conservation Ltd.	7,500
Controlled Therapeutics Corporation	556,078
Contrology	50,000
Crosslees Investments Ltd.	144,575
Cruachem	298,570
Damon Biotech	362,054
Deeside Game	15,000
Design GRP Group Ltd.	57,500
Digital Art	12,000
Domain Power	200,000
Drysdale & Gibb	20,000
Dunclare	88,436
Dust Jewellery Ltd.	125,000
Eastern Photocolour Ltd.	50,000
Echo Hotel Ltd.	1,000,000
Edin Instruments Ltd.	225,604
Elena Mae Ltd.	75,000
Eskfood Ltd.	60,000
Exacta Holdings Ltd.	577,506
Farmdata Ltd.	59,528
Fenton Barns	60,000
Fife Silica Sands Ltd.	266,000
Findlay J.	50,000
Fleming Thermodynamics	70,000
Forth Valley Foods Ltd.	150,000
FSA Limited	70,000
Garrion Homes	70,000
Gilcomston	15,000
Glasgow Garden Festival Ltd.	100
Glasgow Heart	70,000
Gleddoch Hotels Ltd.	80,000
Graphic Information Systems Ltd.	243,016
Graphic Print	30,000
HAQ Bros.	25,000
Highland Forest Products Ltd.	900,000
Highland Metals	94,999
Hughes, DM Ltd.	2,500
Industrial Systems & Control	50,000
Instrument and Microelectronic Systems	100,000
Integrated Ceramic Components Ltd.	418,069
Intellemetrics	103,251
International Microelectronics Products	643,342
International Twist Drill Ltd.	305,000
Inveresk Research International Ltd.	325,000

Company	Cost £
In-Europe Electronics	444,000
J. K. Peters & Co. (Trees) Ltd.	250,000
JLG Industries	250,000
Kames Fish	3,043
Kerse Engineering Ltd.	25,000
Kineticon Ltd.	300,000
Kingston Spinners	219,500
Kinshar Ltd.	50,000
Kishorn Windows (Scotland) Ltd.	199,995
Kitchen versions Ltd.	1,700
Kynoch, G&G PLC	250,000
Lasalle Ltd.	245,840
Le Choc Motif	25,000
Liebnitz Lann Limited	40,000
Lothian Coated	5,000
M & M Indust	188,500
Mackinnon International Knitwear Ltd.	40,000
Magnum Signs	25,000
Marenac Ltd.	100,000
McCrindle Pipe	70,000
McCrindle & Sons	70,000
McLaggan Smith Mugs Ltd.	25,000
McMurray	10,000
Memex Information Systems Ltd.	150,000
Milbro Caledon	5,000
Murray Electron	250,000
MMEW Ltd.	40,000
MRM Engineering	20,000
National Hyperbaric Centre	120,711
New Scotland Insurance Group PLC	1,000
North Cape	39,999
North Face	30,000
North Sea Assets plc	427,461
Northern Circuits Ltd	30,000
Novotech Microsystems Ltd	10,000
N. S. C. (Cartons) Ltd	60,000
Office Workstations Ltd	132,668
Omega Diagnost	20,000
Optima Holdings Ltd	100,000
Paton Holdings	120,000
Penman Engineering Ltd	24,489
Peoples	177,992
Polytun Growers	50,000
Precision Chemicals (Manufacturing) Ltd	35,000
Premier Brand Canning Ltd	48,540
Prep Foods Ltd	35,000
Prestwick Holdings plc	123,250
Professional Advisers Cost Engineering Ltd	170,000
Promat Engineering	75,000
Protofeed Ltd	75,000
Pure Malt Products Ltd	150,000
Qualitube Ltd	62,500
Rejaport Ltd	100,000
Rhino Toughened	75,000
R. D. S. Group Ltd	280,625
Sheider	50,000
Scintronix Ltd	250,000
Scot Consultants International Ltd	10,000
Scot Cree Ltd	20,000
Scottish Development Finance Ltd	100
Scotforms	30,000
Scottish Studio	15,000
Scottsdale Leisure Ltd	70,001
Scott/Bellshill	40,000
Scotwest	30,000
Seametrix	40,000
Shanks and McEwan Group plc	225,015
Shield Immunologicals Ltd.	250,000
Shoebrokers	35,000
Sinclair Spitz	50,000
Smith and Telford	250,629
Software Engineering Systems Ltd.	35,000
Sonsub Ltd.	150,000
Spencer, T. Ltd.	50,000
Stanley Mills	19,000
Stenhouse Ltd.	10,000
Stirling Diagnostics	6,666
Sterling University	33,000
Strathclyde Lifting Services Ltd.	25,000
Strathclyde Proc.	375,000
Studio Ink	30,000
Swiftlogic Ltd.	60,000
Swilken Golf	10,000
Scottish Exhibition Centre Ltd.	7,400,000
S. P. Technology	20,000
Tachanalysis	30,000
Tait Thomas	365,000
Tarbert Fyne Foods Ltd.	180,000
Tarquin Photo	12,189
Tayside Canners Ltd.	100
Tayside Plastics	10,000
Textile Rental	15,000
The Lodge On The Loch Ltd.	50,001
The Mycalex Company Ltd.	35,000
Thistle Foods	25,000
Thor Ceramics	25,000
Timber Terminal	30,000
Trilion plc	105,000
Turnbull	20,000
Valve Instrumentation and Pipe Ltd	21,000
Weathermac	35,000
West George Street (375) Ltd.	250,000
Whitecross	25,000
Wistley Ltd.	175,000
Woods G. F. and Co. (Edinburgh) Ltd.	30,000
Wright and Jobson	19,812
Wrights Trowmill	40,000
W. H. Perkins Ltd.	175,000
Yarmadillo Ltd.	158,698
Zot Engineering Ltd.	19,000

Highlands and Islands Development Board

Company	Cost (£)
Acair Ltd.	2,000
All Seasons Craobh Haven Ltd.	1,000
Ardanaiseig Hotel Ltd.	25,000
Atlantic Freshwater plc	15,000
Barra Fish Meal and Oil Co. Ltd.	6,000
Barratlantic Ltd.	13,700
Barbuilean Nurseries Ltd.	14,000
Borrowdale Hotel (South Uist) Ltd.	3,000
S. G. Brolly and Bros. Ltd	10,000
Caithness Glass Holdings Ltd.	60,300
Caithness Glass plc	280,000
Caley Cruisers Ltd.	18,000
Callandish Ltd.	5,000
Castlewynd Studios Ltd.	20,000
Pat Cheney Jewelley Ltd.	10,000
Clansmen Holdings Ltd.	105,411
W. K. Cook Engineering (Evanton) Ltd	120,000
Craignish Salmon Ltd.	24,625
Craignish Salmon (Marketing) Ltd.	6,000
Crannog Ltd.	10,000
The Crinan Hotel (Argyll) Ltd.	30,000
Dalriada Hotels (Tarbert) Ltd.	9,500
Esplanade West (Oban) Ltd.	30,000
Fort William (Cruachem Hotel) Ltd.	15,000
Gaeltec Ltd.	50,536
Gairloch Construction Co. Ltd.	30,000
Gairloch Seafoods Ltd.	8,000
Glenscot Salmon Ltd.	25,000
Hambleside Manufacturing Ltd.	75,000
Harden Associates Ltd.	75,000
Hebridean Seafare Ltd.	60,000
Highland China (Scotland) Ltd.	23,533
Highland Fish Farmers Ltd.	41,800
Highland Heathers Ltd.	56,000
Highland Venison Marketing Ltd.	60,000
T. M. Hunter Ltd.	100,000
Icescot Ltd.	50,000
I.G.L. (Scotland) Ltd. (formerly Mark Templeman and Sons (Scotland) Ltd.)	260,000

Company	Cost (£)
Inverlever Nurseries Ltd.	15,000
Islay Creamery Co. Ltd.	8,000
Isle of Jura Salmon Ltd.	80,000
Jamieson's Spinning (Shetland) Ltd.	35,000
Kinloch Damph Ltd.	15,000
Kintyre Data Processing Ltd.	8,000
Knipoch House Hotel Co. Ltd.	94,500
Lamont Country Highland Lodges Ltd.	30,000
Liebnitz-Lann Ltd.	5,000
W. H. MacKay & Son Ltd.	150,000
MacLennan Salmon Co. Ltd.	25,000
George V. McLeod (Hotels) Ltd.	35,000
Muileann Beag A' Chrotail Ltd.	26,000
Mull & West Highland Narrow Guage Railway Company Ltd.	22,000
John F. Munro (Contractors) Ltd.	10,000
Murray Seafoods Scotland Ltd.	20,000
Nevisprint Ltd.	50,000
Nontox Ltd.	14,000
Norfrost Ltd.	60,000
Norscot Hotels plc	503,060
Orkney Meat Ltd.	10,000
Osprey Electronics Ltd.	9,000
Pairc Salmon Ltd.	20,000
Priority Hotels Ltd.	10,000
R. K. Carbon Fibres Ltd.	120,000
Rotary Precision Ltd.	20,000
Sea Farm (Kerry) Ltd.	10,000
Seafield Vegetable Growers Ltd.	50,000
Searchglen Ltd.	4,000
Shallseis Ltd.	10,000
Shetland Cold Store Ltd.	25,000
Shian Fisheries Ltd.	10,000
Shetland Fish Ltd.	77,752
Stags Head Hotel (Fort William) Ltd.	20,000
Strathspey Railway Co. Ltd.	7,750
Tamoor Hotel Ltd.	20,000
T. M. M. S. Holdings Ltd.	80,000
Uist Isles Woollen Co. Ltd.	58,000
Underwater Centre Ltd.	120,000
Visitor Centres Ltd.	30,000
Westend Shellfish Ltd.	10,000
Western Isles Salmon Ltd.	3,000
Whiteness Development Co. Ltd.	10,000
Williamson Hotels Ltd.	36,000
L. Williamson (Shetland) Ltd.	66,000
Woodfibres Ltd.	20,000
K. V. Wooster International Ltd.	20,000

Press and Public Relations

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the total spending by his Department on press, public relations and advertising, respectively, in 1987-88.

Mr. Rifkind *[holding answer 21 July 1988]:* The running cost of the Scottish information office in 1987-88 was £2·1 million, of which the paid publicity cost was £1 million. A breakdown of cost in the form requested is not available.

Scottish Film Council

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to the reply of 27 January, *Official Report*, column *296*, concerning the proposed amalgamation of the Scottish Film Council with the Scottish Arts Council, if he has now reached a conclusion on this matter.

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects to respond to the representations received on his consultative paper on the future constitution of the Scottish Film Council; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answers 13 May and 20 July 1988]:* I shall write to the hon. Member and my hon. Friend.

Crossroads (Scotland) Care Attendant Schemes

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he or his Ministers have met or intend to meet representatives of Crossroads (Scotland) care attendant schemes to discuss continued central Government funding for their schemes.

Mr. Forsyth *[holding answer 22 June 1988]:* Officials of the Scottish Office and the Training Commission met representatives of Crossroads on 20 July. There are at present no plans for further meetings.

Medical Clinical Research

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last discussed the state of medical clinical research in Scotland and its priorities with representatives in Scotland of *(a)* the British Medical Association, *(b)* the Medical Research Council, *(c)* the Medical Academic Staff Committee, *(d)* Scottish universities and *(e)* medical students and researchers.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 30 June 1988]:* My right hon. and learned Friend has not met any of these groups to discuss that topic in particular, but the subject of university medical teaching and research was touched on in the course of a discussion he had with representatives of the British Medical Association on 6 June. I met representatives of the British Medical Association on 25 July. The Scottish Home and Health Deaprtment has also had discussions with the principals of Scottish universities with medical schools on the common interest between the universities and the Health Service, in which the research interest was mentioned, and regularly meets the Medical Research Council to discuss priorities for research.

Lennox Castle Hospital

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has as to the current bed occupancy of wards 7 and 8 at Lennox Castle hospital.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 18 July 1988]:* I have had inquiries made of the Greater Glasgow health board.

At present five of the 24 places in wards 7 and 8 are occupied. Revenue funds for the full use of these wards have been made available by the board, but the board is making a careful assessment of patients to ensure that residents who stand to benefit most from the new wards are allocated to them. A clinical exercise of this nature takes time, and the board expect that full occupancy of wards 7 and 8 will be achieved by mid-September and December respectively.

Teachers

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the number of teachers in (i) mathematics, (ii) history, (iii) English, (iv) sciences and (v) physical education in *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* Glasgow and *(c)* Strathclyde, for each year since 1974.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 14 July 1988]:* The full-time equivalent numbers of teachers in education authority secondary schools are given in the table. Information for 1974 to 1978 is not readily available.

Teacher full-time equivalent

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
Mathematics									
Glasgow	518	503	500	485	..	499	..	..	396
Strathclyde	1,563	1,567	1,583	1,617	..	1,658	..	..	1,479
Scotland	3,245	3,254	3,285	3,343	..	3,406	..	..	3,025
History									
Glasgow	272	268	259	246	..	218	..	..	153
Strathclyde	833	801	774	746	..	706	..	..	578
Scotland	1,713	1,668	1,618	1,566	..	1,494	..	..	1,285
English									
Glasgow	630	607	569	551	..	537	..	..	415
Strathclyde	1,771	1,754	1,703	1,717	..	1,732	..	..	1,502
Scotland	3,636	3,623	3,524	3,519	..	3,511	..	..	3,073
Sciences									
Glasgow	656	650	641	632	..	627	..	..	504
Strathclyde	2,126	2,157	2,169	2,201	..	2,200	..	..	1,912
Scotland	4,411	4,487	4,508	4,545	..	4,561	..	..	4,128
Physical Education									
Glasgow	354	345	338	322	..	291	..	..	241
Strathclyde	997	981	965	952	..	912	..	..	794
Scotland	2,073	2,058	2,002	1,965	..	1,902	..	..	1,697

.. not available.

EMPLOYMENT

Public Expenditure

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish a table in the *Official Report*, in the same format as his written reply of 7 July, *Official Report*, columns *697-98*, on receipts classified as charges in respect of his programme expenditure over the years 1982-83 to 1990-91, indicating the receipts in respect of running costs expenditure together with a supplementary analysis indicating, separately, the amounts of receipts in respect of programme expenditure and of running costs expenditure estimated to have been met from other public expenditure programmes.

Mr. Cope: The following tables supplement the information on programme expenditure given in the reply to the hon. Member on 7 July 1988, at columns *697-98*. For the years 1982-83 to 1990-91 they give a breakdown of receipts received and expected by the Department of Employment group: table 1 shows receipts in respect of running costs which originate as departmental running costs and table 2 gives other receipts in respect of running costs.

Table 1—Receipts against running costs which originate as departmental running costs (£ million)

	1982-83 outturn	1983-84 outturn	1984-85 outturn	1985-86 outturn	1986-87 outturn	1987-88[1] outturn	1988-89 plans	1989-90 plans	1990-91 plans
Receipts relating to fees for training in skillcentres at request of Training Commission and Employment Service	2	10	72	78	70	66	60	42	28
Receipts relating to fees for professional and executive recruitment services in respect of supervisors for the Community Programme	—	—	—	—	—	2	1	1	1
Departmental totals	2	10	72	78	70	68	61	43	29

[1] Estimated.

Table 2—Breakdown of other Individual Running Costs Receipts (£ million)

	1982-83 Outturn	1983-84 Outturn	1984-85 Outturn	1985-86 Outturn	1986-87 Outturn	[1]1987-88 Outturn	1988-89 Plans	1989-90 Plans	1990-91 Plans
Receipts relating to administrative costs of the Community programme	2	8	8	16	21	21	24	24	24
Receipts relating to fees for training in skillcentres	2	1	9	10	11	15	26	28	30
Receipts relating to recoveries from National Insurance Fund of the cost of staff in the Employment Service dealing with long-term unemployed.	6	4	3	3	3	8	4	3	3
Receipts from the sale of COIC publications.	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	1	1
Receipts relating to fees for professional and executive recruitment services.	6	8	9	9	9	8	4	4	4
Receipts relating to contributions from the Redundancy and Maternity Pay Funds towards the cost of Industrial Tribunals	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	2
Receipts relating to recovery of administrative costs from the Redundancy and Maternity Pay Funds.	5	6	6	6	7	7	5	6	6
Receipts from the Agencies and other Government Departments	5	5	4	4	6	16	16	17	17
Receipts relating to fees for licensing employment agencies and other minor services.	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1
Receipts relating to recoveries from Department of Health and Social Security of the cost of administration of unemployment benefit and associated payments.	182	237	213	274	293	311	319	335	343
Receipts relating to the licensing of nuclear installations.	3	3	1	3	4	5	5	5	5
Other HSC fees and receipts.	2	2	3	2	2	3	3	3	3
Receipts relating to refund from Maternity Pay Fund for statutory payments made to civil servants.	3	3	4	4	4	2	—	—	—
Departmental Totals	221	281	266	335	365	401	412	427	441

[1] Estimated

Note:

Because of rounding the sum of the components does not always equate with the totals.

Discrimination

Mr. Grocott: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he has any plans to introduce *(a)* legislation forbidding or *(b)* guidelines discouraging discrimination in employment on the grounds of age; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: The Government do not believe that legislation of this nature would be beneficial or practical, and there are no plans to issue official guidelines at the present time.

Chief Inspector of Factories

Mr. Strang: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment when he last met with the new chief inspector of factories; and what subjects were discussed.

Mr. Nicholls: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has not met the chief inspector of factories designate.

Single European Market (Tourism)

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the effect upon tourism of the completion of the European market in 1992.

Mr. Lee: The completion of the European single market in 1992 is likely to have a significant impact on tourism. Increased liberalisation of intra-Community transport will present great opportunities for travel between member states. The removal of internal barriers should encourage United Kingdom operators to expand into the European market as well as European companies to operate in the United Kingdom. This should further stimulate tourism within the Community.

Factory Inspectors

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will provide a breakdown of the number of factory inspectors now in post as between the general and specialist categories.

Mr. Nicholls: On 1 July 1988 (the last date for which figures are available) the Health and Safety Executive employed 596 factory inspectors and 211 specialist inspectors in the technology division which now gives technical support to HSE as a whole.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on current levels of unemployment in the north-west.

Mr. Lee: In June 1988 seasonally adjusted unemployment excluding school leavers was 331,200 in the north-west, compared with 398,900 in June 1987, a fall of 67,700 over the last 12 months.

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what has been the reduction in unemployment each month since May 1986; and what has been the increase in the number of persons in employment for each of these months.

Mr. Lee: Following is the available information. Table A shows the level of seasonally adjusted unemployed claimants, excluding school leavers, in the United Kingdom for each month together with the change over the previous month from May 1986. Estimates of total employment are not available monthly. Table B gives the quarterly numbers and changes in the work force in employment in the United Kingdom for each quarter month since June 1986.

Table A
Unemployed claimants in United Kingdom: May 1986 to June 1988
Seasonally adjusted excluding school leavers

thousands

	Number	*Change over month*
1986		
May	3,200·1	5·2
June	3,208·8	8·7
July	3,210·3	1·5
August	3,206·3	−4·0
September	3,185·7	−20·6
October	3,163·5	−22·2
November	3,150·7	−12·8
December	3,120·7	−30·0
1987		
January	3,112·2	−8·5
February	3,066·5	−45·7
March	3,037·3	−29·2
April	3,021·4	−15·9
May	2,950·9	−70·5
June	2,922·2	−28·7
July	2,873·1	−49·1
August	2,825·5	−47·6
September	2,772·2	53·3
October	2,713·6	−58·6
November	2,650·8	−62·8
December	2,613·9	−36·9
1988		
January	2,564·7	−49·2
February	2,532·6	−32·1
March	2,504·0	−28·6
April	2,453·1	−50·9
May	2,414·2	−38·9
June	2,375·3	−38·9

Table B
Workforce in employment in United Kingdom: June 1986 to March 1988
Seasonally adjusted

thousands

	Workforce in employment[1]	*Change since previous quarter*
June 1986	24,746	+50
September 1986	24,883	+137
December 1986	24,982	+99
March 1987	25,080	+98
June 1987	25,291	+211
September 1987	25,449	+158
December 1987	25,578	+129
March 1988	25,697	+119

[1] The work force in employment comprises employees in employment, the self-employed, Her Majesty's Forces and participants in work-related Government training programmes. This last group is not seasonally adjusted.

Channel Tunnel

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the employment implications for the regions of the United Kingdom outside the south-east of the completion of the Channel tunnel.

Mr. Lee: All parts of the United Kingdom should benefit from employment opportunities generated, directly and indirectly, by the operation of the Channel tunnel. I hope that firms in all areas will be able to utilise the tunnel's facility for easier freight transport into Europe, thus putting them in a better position to compete in the European market. I also expect the Channel tunnel to be of considerable benefit to tourism.

Tourism

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the Government's contribution to the British Tourist Authority and the three tourist boards in the current financial year; if he will break down the expenditure by end use; and if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each year since 1968 the percentage increase in the number of (i) US and (ii) other visitors together with an index of the Government contribution by way of grant-in-aid in terms of 1987 prices; based on 1968 as 100.

Mr. Lee: Estimated Government funding for the British Tourist Authority and the English, Scottish and Welsh tourist boards in the current financial year is as follows:

(£ million)	*Grant in Aid*	*54 Scheme*
BTA	23·8	—
ETB	12·4	13·2
STB	6·8	3·1
WTB	5·9	3·5
Totals	48·9	19·8
Total Government Contribution		68·7

A breakdown of expenditure by end use will not be available until respective annual accounts are produced next year; the accounts for 1987-88 have recently been laid before the House.

The following table shows visit levels to the United Kingdom since 1968 with the percentage increase for United States and other visits for each year in parentheses. Visitor levels are in thousands.

Year	Total visits	United States visits		Other visits	
1968	4,828	851		3,977	
1969	5,821	1,136	(+33)	4,685	(+18)
1970	6,692	1,567	(+38)	5,125	(+9)
1971	7,131	1,647	(+5)	5,484	(+7)
1972	7,459	1,716	(+4)	5,743	(+5)
1973	8,167	1,605	(−6)	6,562	(+14)
1974	8,543	1,411	(−12)	7,132	(+13)
1975	9,490	1,417	(0)	8,073	(+2)
1976	10,808	1,585	(+12)	9,223	(+14)
1977	12,281	1,814	(+14)	10,467	(+13)
1978	12,646	1,964	(+8)	10,682	(+2)
1979	12,486	1,719	(−12)	10,767	(+1)
1980	12,421	1,695	(−1)	10,727	(0)
1981	11,452	1,716	(+1)	9,736	(−9)
1982	11,636	1,726	(+1)	9,910	(+2)
1983	12,464	2,317	(+34	10,147	(+2)
1984	13,644	2,764	(+19)	10,881	(+7)
1985	14,449	3,166	(+15)	11,283	(+4)
1986	13,897	2,288	(−28)	11,609	(+3)
1987	15,445	2,800	(+22)	12,645	(+9)

Source: The International Passenger Survey.

The following table shows levels of grant in aid funding to BTA and the English, Scottish and Welsh tourist boards (excluding the section 4 scheme) since 1969-70, along with an index of this contribution using 1969-70 as 100, based on 1987-88 prices. It is not possible to use 1968 as a base as BTA and the national tourist boards were only established under the Development of Tourism Act 1969 and thus the 1969-70 financial year was the first year in which they were operating.

Grant-in-aid (£ million) in 1987-88 prices

Year	£ million	Index
1969-70	9·778	100
1970-71	22·599	231
1971-72	33·503	343
1972-73	31·525	322
1973-74	36·099	369
1974-75	33·131	339
1975-76	35·302	361
1976-77	36·557	374
1977-78	37·852	387
1978-79	40·062	410
1979-80	40·768	417
1980-81	40·632	416
1981-82	42·494	435
1982-83	47·142	482
1983-84	41·351	423
1984-85	41·773	427
1985-86	39·702	406
1986-87	44·460	455
1987-88	45·265	463

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether the British Tourist Authority succeeded in raising the additional $800,000 it was originally seeking from the tourist trade in 1986.

Mr. Lee: The British Tourist Authority attracted £3·93 million in trade funding for marketing in 1986-87 in addition to the operations originally planned. Of this, £215,000 was in respect of a special advertising campaign to restore levels of visitors from North America. This was carried out in consultation with British Airways and other firms in the industry which also contributed substantial resources to related marketing efforts.

Accidents

Mr. Doran: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) what is the definition of serious injury used in the reporting of accidents in industries covered by the Health and Safety Executive's inspectorate;

(2) what changes in the definition of serious injury used in the reporting of accidents in industries covered by the Health and Safety Executive's inspectorate have been made in the last 10 years;

(3) what is the definition of serious injury used in reporting of accidents in the coalmining industry;

(4) what changes in the definition of serious injury used in reporting accidents in the coalmining industry have been made in the last 10 years.

Mr. Nicholls: The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1985 require the following injuries and conditions suffered by any person as a result of an accident arising out of or in connection with work to be notified forthwith to the enforcing authority and subsequently reported on an approved form:

(a) fracture of the skull, spine or pelvis;
(b) fracture of any bone:
  (i) in the arm or wrist, but not a bone in the hand; or
  (ii) in the leg or ankle, but not a bone in the foot;
(c) amputation of:
  (i) a hand or foot; or
  (ii) a finger, thumb or toe, or any part thereof if the joint or bone is completly severed;
(d) the loss of sight of an eye, a penetrating injury to an eye, or a chemical or hot metal burn to an eye;
(e) either injury (including burns) requiring immediate medical treatment, or loss of consciousness, resulting in either case from an electric shock from any electrical circuit or equipment, whether or not due to direct contact;
(f) loss of consciousness resulting from lack of oxygen;
(g) decompression sickness (unless suffered during an operation to which the Diving Operations at Work Regulations 1981 apply) requiring immediate medical treatment;
(h) either acute illness requiring medical treatment, or loss of consciousness, resulting in either case from the absorption of any substance by inhalation, ingestion or through the skin;
(i) acute illness requiring medical treatment where there is reason to believe that this resulted from exposure to a pathogen or infected material;
(j) any other injury which results in the person injured being admitted immediately into hospital for more than 24 hours.

The regulations do not contain the terms "serious injury"; the Health and Safety Executive normally refers to "major injury" in this context.

The regulations came into force on 1 April 1986 and repealed the Notification of Accidents and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1980. The 1980 regulations defined "major injury" as:

(a) fracture of the skull, spine or pelvis;
(b) fracture of any bone:—
  (i) in the arm, other than a bone in the wrist or hand;
  (ii) in the leg, other than a bone in the ankle or foot;
(c) amputation of a hand or foot;
(d) the loss of sight of an eye; or

(e) any other injury which results in the person injured being admitted into hospital as an in-patient for more than 24 hours, unless that person is detained only for observation.

Both sets of regulations apply to all work activities including coalmining.

The 1980 regulations repealed a number of provisions applying to different industries. Section 116 of the Mines and Quarries Act 1954 required notification of accidents causing "serious bodily injury" but the term was not defined. Otherwise, prior to 1 January 1981 when the 1980 regulations came into force, there was no separate requirement for notifying major injuries.

Labour Statistics (Basildon)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the total number of *(a)* male and *(b)* female unemployment in the constituency of Basildon; and what were the figures for each quarter since 1983.

Mr. Lee: The following information is in the Library. The table shows the total number of male and female unemployed claimants in the Basildon parliamentary constituency quarterly from July 1983 to April 1988, together with figures for June 1988 (the latest available date). Unemployment statistics for constituencies are available only from June 1983.

Number of unemployed claimants—Basildon parliamentary constituency

	Male	*Female*
1983		
July	4,451	1,697
October	4,484	1,888
1984		
January	4,822	2,012
April	4,623	1,964
July	4,815	1,988
October	4,926	2,046
1985		
January	5,125	2,148
April	4,978	2,092
July	4,722	1,969
October	4,583	1,909
1986		
January	4,793	2,000
April[1]	4,657	1,957
July	4,432	1,882
October	4,277	1,882
1987		
January	4,508	1,929
April	4,120	1,804
July	3,651	1,625
October	3,316	1,561
1988		
January	3,163	1,563
April	2,818	1,376
June	2,431	1,275

[1] The figures are affected by the change in the coverage of the count in March 1986.

Employment Act 1988

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what guidance his Department issues on the application of section 26 of the Employment Act 1988 to claimants who decline a place on a training scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: The question refers to section 26 of the Employment Act 1988 which has no direct effect on unemployment benefit claimants. Section 27 does relate to unemployment benefit claimants and it is assumed that the hon. Gentleman intended to inquire about section 27 of the Employment Act which amends section 20 of the Social Security Act 1975.

All decisions applying to section 20 of the Social Security Act are given by the statutory independent adjudicating authorities.

Instructions to benefit office staff require that where it appears that a claimant has voluntarily left a course of approved training without good cause or was discharged because of unsatisfactory conduct he should be given an opportunity to make a statement and the matter should be referred to the independent adjudicating authorities.

Social Science Research

Mr. George: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how much has been spent by his Department in each of the past five years on social science research; what percentage this constitutes of total departmental expenditure and of the Department's research budget; and how much of the research has been undertaken *(a)* within his Department, *(b)* by universities and polytechnics and *(c)* by independent research organisations.

Mr. Lee: The figures in the table are for the Department of Employment group (which includes for this period the Department of Employment, the Training Commission, formerly the Manpower Services Commission, and the Health and Safety Executive), and are based on information provided for the annual review of Government-funded research and development (the latest available figures being for 1986-87). The available information relates to gross expenditure on research and development including that performed elsewhere in central Government, for research and development in total and for social science and humanities.

	1982-83	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*
Expenditure on social science and humanities research £ million	4·8	6·7	7·4	14·9	19·9
—as a percentage of total departmental expenditure	0·3	0·3	0·3	0·5	0·6
—as a percentage of total R and D expenditure	40·0	43·5	46·0	73·3	76·8
Expenditure on social science and humanities research undertaken:					
—within Department £ million	1·0	1·4	1·3	1·3	1·5
—by universities and polytechnics £ million	2·1	1·8	2·6	5·6	9·9
—by industrial research associations and non-industrial research institutes £ million	1·0	2·1	1·2	3·0	1·6

New Businesses

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what initiatives his Department is taking to encourage people to set up new businesses; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Cope: The main factor which has encouraged people to set up new businesses is the favourable economic climate which the Government have helped to create through their policies of controlling inflation and reducing rates of taxation. The increase in the number of businesses registering for VAT in 1987 was the highest since 1979 and the number of self-employed people has increased by over 1 million since that date.

This Department has a range of policies designed to encourage people to set up their own business and to give direct support where appropriate. The enterprise allowance scheme pays unemployed people an allowance of £40 per week for 12 months while they are setting up a business. Over 360,000 people have now benefited from this scheme, and 110,000 places have been provided for the current financial year.

The loan guarantee scheme also helps new businesses to raise finance and half of the loans arranged through the scheme are for start-ups.

People planning to set up in businesses can obtain information and business counselling from the Department's small firms service and the network of local enterprise agencies, many of which receive support from this Department.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what has been the net increase in the number of new businesses in *(a)* Basildon and *(b)* England and Wales since 1983.

Mr. Cope: Between December 1983 and December 1987 the number of businesses registered for VAT in the United Kingdom increased by 121,000. Separate figures for this period are not available for England and Wales or Basildon.

Small Businesses

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish in the *Official Report* those Government measures of particular help to small businesses which are the subject of current legislation or are planned; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Cope: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury to my hon. Friend the Member for Dover (Mr. Shaw), on 21 July 1988, at column *732*, which sets out some of the specific measures of help to small businesses in the Finance Bill.

In addition, new companies legislation is planned which will include a number of deregulatory measures of particular help to small companies. These include a simplification of the filing requirements for annual accounts and returns and a measure to enable private companies, with the agreement of their shareholders, to opt out of certain statutory requirements such as the holding of annual general meetings.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list those measures his Department has promoted since 1983 which are of particular help for small businesses; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Cope: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer to his related question today to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, and the reply my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Dover (Mr. Shaw) on 27 July 1988.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what representations he has received requesting further assistance to small businesses; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Cope: From time to time representations are made to me about assistance to small firms. A large number of businesses take advantage of the help that is available from this Department and others which is intended to enable them to operate more efficiently and to grow.

Unemployment Benefit

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people suspended from receipt of unemployment benefit in the Bradford travel-to-work area in the last year to date have appealed against suspension; how many such appeals have been heard; how many appeals have been upheld; how many refused; in how many decisions are outstanding; and what is the average waiting time for an appeal hearing.

Mr. Lee: Information is not available in the precise form requested, as there is no right of appeal against suspension of benefit. However, in the Bradford travel-to-work area, of those persons disallowed unemployment benefit between 1 July 1987 and 30 June 1988, 1,201 lodged an appeal. Examination of the available records indicates that 651 appeals have been heard in the same period and 195 appeals are outstanding.

Information on the average waiting time for an appeal hearing in the Bradford travel-to-work area is included with that for north-east region. At December 1987 (the latest date for which figures are available) the average time between the date on which an appeal against an unemployment benefit decision was lodged and the date on which it was heard was 23·5 weeks.

Information is not readily available on the number of appeals which were allowed or disallowed in the period and this could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) how many people have been suspended from unemployment benefit in the Bradford travel-to-work area since 1 January; how many were suspended during the same period of 1987; how many in each period were suspended for the maximum period; and what proportion of the total of those receiving unemployment benefit were represented by those suspended for the maximum period;

(2) how many people have been suspended from unemployment benefit in the United Kingdom since 1 January; how many people were suspended during the same period of 1987; how many in each period were suspended for the maximum period; and what proportion of the total of those receiving unemployment benefit were represented by those suspended for the maximum period.

Mr. Lee: No figures are held on the number of people who have been suspended from receiving unemployment benefit. However, the following table shows the number of

persons whose benefit was disallowed in the Bradford travel-to-work area and the United Kingdom between 1 January and 30 June 1987 and 1988:

Number of disallowances of benefit in the Bradford travel-to-work area and the United Kingdom

Period	*Bradford travel-to-work area*	*United Kingdom*
1 January 1987 to 30 June 1987	24,177	518,843
1 January 1988 to 30 June 1988	22,269	n/a

n/a Figures not yet available.

Departmental Programmes

Mr. George: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how much has been spent by his Department in each of the past five years on the evaluation of departmental programmes; and what proportion this constitutes of *(a)* the amount allocated for evaluation and *(b)* the Department's total budget.

Mr. Cope: The process of evaluation of individual programmes is often part of the work itself. I regret therefore that the information as requested is not available.

ENERGY

Life Jackets

Mr. Prescott: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when his Department received the report of the Robert Gordon institute of technology on the effectiveness of life jackets and survival suits used in the North sea offshore industries; what request he received for the publication of the report; and why it has been delayed.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The report was submitted to my Department in November 1987.

Following my reply to the hon. Member for Warrington, North (Mr. Hoyle) on 28 April 1988, at column *219*, a copy of the report was placed in the Library of the House. Members of the oil industry advisory committee of the Health and Safety Commission have requested publication. One manufacturer of immersion suits has also formally requested publication.

Since the report was submitted consultations have taken place between my Department, the Department of Transport and standards-setting organisations.

Additional copies of the report are to be produced and made more widely available.

Recruitment and Promotion Policy

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what measures he has implemented to ensure that recruitment and promotion policy in his Department does not directly or indirectly discriminate against applicants who were mature students or women returning to work following a career break due to child care.

Mr. Parkinson: The criteria against which recruits are evaluated are designed not to discriminate, either directly or indirectly, against mature students or women returning to work—for example, advertisements do not contain upper age limits, and do mention returning to work and our flexible approach to hours of working and provision for part-time working. Promotion within the Department is on merit, although in some cases a minimum seniority is required. It is the practice for the chairman of a promotion board to evaluate its decisions, at the various stages, to ensure that equal opportunity policies are being implemented.

Sellafield (Reprocessing)

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if, in light of his statement on the wind-down of the fast reactor programme, 21 July, *Official Report*, column 1288, he will make a statement on (i) the continued necessity for the reprocessing of Magnox spent fuel at Sellafield for the separation of plutonium for the fast reactor core at Dounreay and (ii) the continued necessity for the reprocessing of advanced gas-cooled reactor spent fuel and pressurised water reactor spent fuel from electricity board reactors at the thermal oxide reprocessing plant at Sellafield for the separation of plutonium for the fast reactor fuel core at Dounreay.

Mr. Michael Spicer: As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State made clear in his statement, we are retaining a position in fast reactor technology. There is a continued need for reprocessing at Sellafield, and BNFL has contracts placed for Thorp.

European Parliament (Committees)

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what are the departmental responsibilities regarding *(a)* responding to invitations by the energy committee of the European Parliament to submit written or oral evidence before any of its investigations involving a United Kingdom interest, *(b)* responding to invitations by any special committee of inquiry of the European Parliament to submit written or oral evidence on topics involving United Kingdom interests and *(c)* responding to reports by the energy committee of the European Parliament on matters directly concerning United Kingdom nuclear facilities.

Mr. Parkinson: On matters falling within the responsibility of my Department I would decide, after consulting the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and other Departments concerned, whether to respond to invitations by the energy committee or any special committee of inquiry of the European Parliament to submit evidence on topics involving United Kingdom interests. There is no formal procedure under which a member state can respond to reports by committees of the European Parliament.

Solar Energy

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) what research his Department is undertaking into the development of solar energy; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what support his Department is giving for increased use of solar energy; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Passive solar design of buildings is the best way to utilise solar energy in the United Kingdom. My Department is supporting a comprehensive research and development programme aimed at encouraging its integration into building design by the mid-1990s. This

programme is designed to generate convincing information about the benefits of passive solar design in both housing and non-domestic buildings. Thirty-seven projects worth over £6·5 million are under way in the programme, with nearly £2 million expected to be spent in 1988-89.

Our programme has three main activities. Field studies, which will provide evidence of the energy and financial and non-financial benefits of passive solar design from measurements in real buildings throughout the United Kingdom; design studies, which provide an opportunity for design practices to explore passive solar techniques in a wide range of buliding types and produce a range of exemplar designs; and supporting R and D to improve the understanding of the operation of particular design features.

Information resulting from these studies will be put into a form that will aim to persuade building developers, designers and users to apply the principles in practice. The programme is also seeking to identify the most appropriate ways of ensuring that the results of the programme are effectively transferred to the industry nationwide.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) what representations his Department has received supporting greater use of solar energy; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what representations his Department has received opposing the greater use of solar energy; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My Department has received widespread support for its passive solar design R and D programme and its aim to encourage the integration of the technology into building design by the mid-1990s. Many of the leading design practices are playing an active part in our programme and are incorporating the technology into new buildings, both domestic and non-domestic, throughout the United Kingdom. We have received no representations opposing the greater use of solar energy.

New Businesses

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what initiatives his Department is taking to encourage people to set up new businesses; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Parkinson: For an explanation of the way my Department's activities encourage people setting up new businesses, I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Dover (Mr. Shaw) on 19 July 1988, at columns *557-58*, and to the work of the British Coal Enterprise Ltd. in particular.

Departmental Programmes

Mr. George: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how much has been spent by his Department in each of the past five years on the evaluation of departmental programmes; and what proportion this constitutes of *(a)* the amount allocated for evaluation and *(b)* the Department's total budget.

Mr. Parkinson: The Department regards evaluation as an important part of its programmes in order to ensure that value for money is being achieved and that the work and results are in accordance with the Department's objectives. This evaluation takes many forms, including internal reviews, market research, where appropriate, to measure programme effectiveness, reviews involving bodies like the advisory council on research and development and other external advisers, and reviews undertaken by or involving other parts of Government, for example, the Treasury, the Cabinet Office and inter-departmental reviews.

Evaluation is encouraged as an integral part of the Department's programmes and costs are included with those of individual programmes or are part of Departments' administrative costs. There are no separately identifiable figures for the costs of such evaluation over the past five years.

Sullom Voe Oil Terminal

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether he has received any preliminary reports on the blast at the Sullom Voe oil terminal on 1 July; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Morrison: My Department has no statutory responsibility for the operation of installations at the Sullom Voe oil terminal, except for agreeing the suitability of the metering equipment, and flaring and venting consents. My officials were informed of the blast on 4 July in the course of discussions of other matters with the operator of the terminal. Safety matters at the terminal are for the Health and Safety Executive.

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether he intends to publish any reports received by him concerning the blast at Sullom Voe oil terminal on 1 July.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I have had no reports, except for a routine report by officials that the blast had occurred, and would affect progress on recommissioning of the Ninian fractionation train, which has been out of commission because of corrosion problems.

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what information he has received concerning the cause and extent of corrosion damage at Sullom Voe oil terminal; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Morrison: My Department has been monitoring the course of repairs to corroded pipework at the terminal, in performance of its duties for assessing the requests that have arisen for increased gas flaring consents while the fractionation trains have been out of commission.

The operators have indicated that rain water penetrating defective lagging led to the corrosion. They hope to recommission the first fractionation train soon.

Fast Reactor Programme

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy, pursuant to his statement on the fast reactor programme on 21 July, *Official Report*, column 1288, what changes have been made to the policy of his Department regarding a proposed European demonstration reprocessing plant to be sited at Dounreay vis-à-vis the evidence submitted to the local public inquiry in 1986; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The report of the public local inquiry into the planning application made by the UKAEA and BNFL is being considered by the Secretary

of State for Scotland. It remains for the European Fast Reactor Collaboration to decide what reprocessing facilities it requires, and when.

Petroleum Exploration Licences

Mr. Michael Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether he will arrange a further opportunity for holders of old-style onshore petroleum exploration licences to convert them into new-style licences.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I have today placed in the Libraries of both Houses the text of a notice to be published in the London and Edinburgh Gazettes as soon as possible inviting applications for landward petroleum exploration licences. The invitation is directed only to those with exploration licences awarded under the previous 1976 or 1982 Petroleum Production Regulations and I have specified that applications may be made between 10 am and 12 noon on 18 October 1988.

Old-style exploration licences do not permit exploration drilling to be undertaken. The opportunity which I am now giving will enable the holders of old-style licences to apply for a new exploration licence with a view to proceeding to the drilling stage. Holders of old-style licences expiring within the next 12 months who expect to want to undertake exploration drilling are advised to take advantage of this opportunity, since it is unlikely that there will be any further conversion opportunities until the second half of 1989.

Any wells to be drilled on new licences will also need the agreement of the landowner and occupier, and the consent of the local planning authorities. In certain cases an environmental impact assessment may also need to be prepared.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Child Minders

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will consider giving tax relief on the cost of a child minder.

Mr. Norman Lamont: No.

Company Cars

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the annual value of the concession to company cars.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I assume the hon. Member is referring to the fact that the company car scales do not fully reflect the value to an employee of having the private use of a company car. Despite the doubling of the scales for 1988-89, that continues to be the case, by a substantial margin, as my right hon. Friend indicated in his Budget statement. But it is not possible to estimate any additional tax yield from changes without detailed assumptions about the level of each of the scales and the extent to which the rules which currently relate to them would continue to apply.

Child Care

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what action he is taking to implement the recommendations within his area of responsibility of the European Commission's childcare network report, "Caring for Children—Services and Policies for Childcare and Equal Opportunities in the United Kingdom".

Mr. Norman Lamont: I have noted the report's recommendations.

Amusement Machines

Mr. Ashdown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will provide an estimate for the last four years for which figures are available of *(a)* the income received from licences for amusement-with-prizes machines and *(b)* the income received from tax on profits made by amusement-with-prizes machines.

Mr. Lilley: Information in respect of income tax from profits earned on amusement-with-prizes machines is not available. Estimates of gaming licence duty accruing are as follows:

	£ million
1984-85	37·7
1985-86	44·1
1986-87	51·4
1987-88	[1]63·9

[1] Provisional.

National Income

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will list the amount and share of income going to the following tax units for each year since 1978-79, revalued at 1978-79 prices *(a)* the top 1 per cent., *(b)* the next 2 to 5 per cent., *(c)* the next 6 to 10 per cent. and *(d)* the next 10 to 20 per cent. and subsequent deciles;

(2) if he will list the tax take for each of the following income groups for each year since 1978-79, revalued at 1978-79 prices *(a)* the top 1 per cent., *(b)* the next 2 to 5 per cent., *(c)* the next 6 to 10 per cent. and *(d)* the next 10 to 20 per cent. and subsequent deciles;

(3) if he will detail the percentage shares of income tax paid for each year since 1977-78, by *(a)* the top 1 per cent., of taxpayers *(b)* the next 2 to 5 per cent., *(c)* the next 6 to 10 per cent. and *(d)* the next 10 to 20 per cent. and subsequent deciles.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The available information is in the table. The analyses are for single people and married couples paying income tax in each year. The quantiles are determined by reference to income tax liability. Estimates are based on the surveys of personal incomes for years up to 1985-86 and projections of the 1985-86 survey for subsequent years; the latter are therefore provisional. For years before 1985-86, estimates of gross income exclude employees' contributions to occupational pension schemes and some investment income on which tax is deducted at source.

I regret that quantile estimates of gross income before tax for the years 1979-80 to 1982-83 could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Table 1

Gross incomes before tax at 1978-79 price levels
Quantile group of taxpayers[1] (per cent.)

£ billion

Year	Top 1	2-5	6-10	10-20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60-70	70-80	80-90	Bottom 10
1978-79	5·0	9·9	9·3	15·0	12·6	10·9	9·6	8·5	7·3	6·0	4·9	3·8
1983-84	5·8	11·0	9·9	15·3	12·4	10·7	9·2	8·0	6·7	5·8	4·7	3·6
1984-85	6·2	11·6	10·3	15·8	12·7	10·9	9·4	8·3	7·1	6·0	4·9	3·7
1985-86[2]	7·2	12·2	10·8	16·9	13·7	11·5	9·9	8·6	7·3	6·3	5·3	4·0
1986-87[2]	7·6	12·8	11·4	17·7	14·3	12·0	10·3	8·8	7·6	6·4	5·4	4·0
1987-88[2]	8·0	13·5	12·0	18·8	15·0	12·5	10·7	9·3	7·8	6·6	5·5	4·1
1988-89[2]	8·7	14·5	12·8	20·1	16·0	13·4	11·5	9·9	8·4	7·1	5·9	4·4

Table 2

Share of gross income before tax
Quantile group of taxpayers[1] (per cent.)

Per cent.

Year	Top 1	2-5	6-10	10-20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60-70	70-80	80-90	Bottom 10
1978-79	4·9	9·7	9·0	14·6	12·3	10·7	9·4	8·2	7·1	5·8	4·7	3·7
1983-84	5·6	10·7	9·6	15·0	12·0	10·4	8·9	7·8	6·5	5·6	4·6	3·5
1984-85	5·8	10·9	9·6	14·8	11·9	10·2	8·8	7·8	6·6	5·6	4·6	3·5
1985-86[2]	6·4	10·7	9·5	14·8	12·1	10·1	8·7	7·5	6·4	5·5	4·7	3·5
1986-87[2]	6·0	11·0	10·0	15·0	12·0	10·0	9·0	8·0	6·0	5·0	5·0	3·0
1987-88[2]	7·0	11·0	10·0	15·0	12·0	10·0	9·0	8·0	6·0	5·0	5·0	3·0
1988-89[2]	7·0	11·0	10·0	15·0	12·0	10·0	9·0	8·0	6·0	5·0	5·0	3·0

Table 3

Income tax liabilities at 1978-79 price levels
Quantile group of taxpayers[1] (per cent.)

£ billion

Year	Top 1	2-5	6-10	10-20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60-70	70-80	80-90	Bottom 10
1978-79	2·3	2·6	2·1	3·2	2·5	2·0	1·7	1·4	1·1	0·8	0·4	0·1
1979-80	2·0	2·5	2·0	3·0	2·4	2·0	1·7	1·3	1·1	0·7	0·4	0·1
1980-81	2·1	2·6	2·0	3·1	2·4	2·0	1·7	1·4	1·0	0·6	0·4	0·1
1981-82	2·3	2·7	2·1	3·2	2·4	2·0	1·6	1·4	1·1	0·7	0·5	0·1
1982-83	2·4	2·8	2·1	3·1	2·4	2·0	1·6	1·3	1·0	0·8	0·4	0·1
1983-84	2·4	2·9	2·3	3·4	2·6	2·1	1·7	1·3	1·0	0·7	0·4	0·1
1984-85	2·4	2·9	2·2	3·2	2·4	1·9	1·6	1·3	1·0	0·7	0·4	0·1
1985-86	2·9	3·1	2·3	3·3	2·4	2·0	1·6	1·3	1·0	0·7	0·4	0·2
1986-87[3]	3·1	3·2	2·3	3·3	2·5	2·0	1·6	1·3	1·0	0·7	0·4	0·2
1987-88[3]	3·3	3·3	2·3	3·3	2·5	2·0	1·6	1·3	1·0	0·7	0·4	0·1
1988-89[3]	2·7	3·3	2·3	3·3	2·5	2·0	1·6	1·3	1·0	0·7	0·4	0·1

Table 4

Quantile shares of income tax
Quantile group of taxpayers[1] (per cent.)

Per cent.

Year	Top 1	2-5	6-10	10-20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60-70	70-80	80-90	Bottom 10
1977-78	11·9	13·0	10·1	15·0	12·0	10·0	8·1	7·2	5·1	4·4	2·5	0·8
1978-79	11·2	12·8	10·5	15·7	12·3	9·9	8·8	6·7	5·4	4·0	2·0	0·7
1979-80	10·4	13·0	10·4	15·7	12·4	10·4	8·6	6·8	5·6	3·7	2·3	0·7
1980-81	10·9	13·5	10·4	16·1	12·3	10·2	8·5	7·1	5·2	3·3	1·8	0·7
1981-82	11·3	13·5	10·6	15·6	12·1	9·9	8·1	6·7	5·3	3·8	2·4	0·7
1982-83	11·7	13·7	10·5	15·5	12·1	9·9	8·2	6·6	5·2	3·7	2·2	0·7
1983-84	11·4	14·0	10·8	16·2	12·5	10·1	8·1	6·4	4·9	3·5	1·9	0·6
1984-85	11·8	14·6	11·1	15·7	11·9	9·6	7·8	6·3	4·9	3·5	2·1	0·7
1985-86	13·8	14·5	10·7	15·4	11·6	9·3	7·6	6·1	4·7	3·4	2·1	0·7
1986-87[3]	14·0	15·0	11·0	15·0	11·0	9·0	7·0	6·0	5·0	3·0	2·0	1·0
1987-88[3]	15·0	15·0	11·0	15·0	11·0	9·0	7·0	6·0	5·0	3·0	2·0	1·0
1988-89[3]	13·0	15·0	11·0	15·0	12·0	9·0	8·0	6·0	5·0	3·0	2·0	1·0

[1] Counting married couples as one and combining their incomes.
[2] Provisional; includes estimates of occupational pension schemes and some investment income on which tax is deducted at source.
[3] Provisional.
Note: Figures may not sum to 100 per cent. due to rounding.

P11D Declaration

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received regarding the raising of the lower limit for the P11D declaration; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Moray (Mrs. Ewing) on 17 May at column *435*.

Disposable Wealth

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many adults in the United Kingdom had disposable wealth in 1979 *(a)* over £5,000 but less than £10,000, *(b)* over £10,000 but less than £20,000 and *(c)* over £20,000; and if he will give details of the numbers for equivalent amounts in real terms for each year since 1980.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The available estimates are published in "Inland Revenue Statistics" (IRS). The latest estimate of the distribution of marketable wealth for 1979 is given in summary form in IRS 1984 table 4.8 with a fuller distribution of identified wealth in IRS 1983 table 4.12. Estimates have not been made in real terms but estimates in current prices are to be found as follows:

	IRS	*Table*
Marketable wealth:		
1980	1986	4.7
1981-85	1987	7.5
Identified wealth:		
1980	1984	4.12
1981	1985	4.11
1982	1986	4.11
1983	1987	7.1
1984	1986	Appendix D1
1985	1987	7.3

Estimates for 1984 and 1985 are provisional. "Identified wealth" is wealth whose distribution can be estimated directly from capital transfer tax statistics.

Taxable Benefits

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) whether he will bring up to date his reply of 6 April 1987 *Official Report*, column *78*, concerning taxable benefits together with an estimate of *(a)* the amount by which the scale charges for company cars fall short of the true value of the benefit and *(b)* the estimated yield from taxing the full value;

(2) what is his estimate of the real and the taxable value of benefits subject to *(a)* special and *(b)* general rules, together with the estimated revenue therefrom.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The available information, based on projections from data relating to 1985-86, on the taxable value of benefits and the tax yield arising are as follows:

Benefit provided by the employer —1988-89	*Taxable value*	*Tax yield £ million*
Cars and free fuel for private use	2,400	700
Private medical insurance	260	80
Other expense payments and benefits	360	120
TOTAL	3,020	900

My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer indicated in his Budget statement that independent studies had suggested that the 1987-88 scale charges represented only about one quarter of the value of the benefit of a company car. But it is not possible to estimate any additional tax yield from changes without detailed assumptions about the level of each of the scales and the extent to which the rules which currently relate to them would continue to apply.

The taxable value of free fuel for private use provided by an employer is calculated by reference to a set of scale charges. For private medical insurance premiums and most other expense payments and benefits—the main exceptions being beneficial loans and accommodation provided by an employer—the taxable value is the cost to the employer of providing the benefit. The taxable value of beneficial loans is calculated by reference to the difference between the official rate of interest (which broadly reflects commercial rates) and the actual rate of interest paid; accommodation provided by an employer is taxed by reference to the annual value of the accommodation, less any rent paid. The Inland Revenue does not collect information on any other basis of valuation.

Taxation

Mr. Grocott: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of total taxation income tax and national insurance contributions combined constituted in 1979 and in each subsequent year.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Following is the information:

Income tax and national insurance contributions as a percentage share of total taxes and national insurance contributions

	Per cent.
1979-80	45·4
1980-81	45·6
1981-82	44·5
1982-83	44·4
1983-84	44·6
1984-85	43·3
1985-86	43·5
1986-87	44·4
1987-88	43·7

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for an employee on *(a)* average earnings and *(b)* 10 times average earnings the marginal rate of income tax and national insurance contributions.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 25 July 1988]:* The table shows the marginal rate of income tax and NIC of a married man on *(a)* average earnings and *(b)* 10 times average earnings under the 1988-89 tax and NIC regimes. The calculations assume that the man's earnings are his only source of income and that he has no reliefs or allowances other than the married man's allowance. Average earnings are those for full-time males paid at adult rates whose pay is unaffected by absence and are estimated at £244·70 per week in 1988-89.

Marginal rate of income tax and NIC[1]

	Per cent.
Average earnings	34
10 times average earnings	40

[1] Assuming contracted in to SERPS.

Social Security Expenditure

Mr. Grocott: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of total expenditure social security, health and personal social services combined constituted in each year from 1979 to date.

Mr. Major: The table shows, for the financial years 1979-80 to 1988-89, public expenditure (net of receipts) on

social security, health and personal social services as a percentage of the public expenditure planning total, excluding privatisation proceeds, the adjustment made to bring the sum of individual estimated outturns in line with the Treasury's view of the likely overall outturn (1987-88) only and the reserve (1988-89) only.

	Percentages
1979-80 outturn	39·9
1980-81 outturn	41·2
1981-82 outturn	43·3
1982-83 outturn	44·5
1983-84 outturn	44·9
1984-85 outturn	44·7
1985-86 outturn	46·5
1986-87 outturn	47·4
1987-88 estimated outturn	[1]47·6
1988-89 plans	47·8

Source: Table 5.11, The Government's Expenditure Plans, 1988-89 to 1990-91, Cm. 288-I.

[1] The figure for 1987-88 does not include the additions to health authority cash limits provided for in Spring Supplementary Estimates.

Age Allowances

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing (i) the gain to the Exchequer in the current financial year at present rates of tax of abolishing the age allowances and (ii) the cost of retaining them without the income limit.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The yield in a full year at 1988-89 levels of income of abolishing the age allowances for taxpayers aged 65 and over is estimated to be about £400 million. If the age allowances were retained and the income limit abolished, the cost to the Exchequer would be £190 million.

The estimates are based on a projection of the 1985-86 survey of personal incomes and are therefore provisional.

Tax Allowances

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for direct tax allowances and reliefs listed in table 6.5 of Cm. 288-I, his estimate of the cost in a full year at current rates of incomes and tax for items which will cost the Exchequer £10 million or more.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I regret that the estimates could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the estimated direct revenue cost in income tax at the standard and higher rates in a full year at current rates of mortgage interest relief, life assurance pensions relief, retirement annuity premium relief and investment income relief of occupational pension funds.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Available estimates are as follows. The cost of mortgage interest relief in 1988-89 is based on the actual mortgage interest rate between April and July and on the assumption that mortgage interest rates remain at the recently announced levels of 11·5 per cent. from August. All estimates are provisional.

	Estimated direct revenue cost 1988-89 £ million
Mortgage interest relief	4,750
—of which relief at the excess over the basic rate	300
Life assurance premium relief	470
Employees' contributions to occupational pension schemes allowed as a deduction for income tax purposes	1,700
Employers' contributions to occupational pension schemes not treated as taxable benefits in kind in the hands of the employees	2,600
Retirement annuity premium relief	450
—of which relief at the excess over the basic rate	100
Relief on investment income of occupational pension funds (assuming relief at the basic rate)	4,400

National Savings

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* tables showing for those above and for those below pensionable age, the estimated number of tax units in receipt of more than £200 gross in national savings accounts and bonds and the average amount received, together with his estimates for 1988-89; and if he will divide the figures to show the amounts for those above and those below pensionable age by range of total income up to a lower limit of £100,000 and distinguishing between single persons, one-earner and two-earner married couples.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I regret that the information requested could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mortgages

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing by range of income and tax status an estimate of the saving to the Exchequer in a full year by setting off investment income against mortgage interest qualifying for relief under the mortgage interest relief at source scheme.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The extent of any saving would depend upon the precise rules proposed for offsetting investment income against payments of mortgage interest and, in particular, on the way in which this restriction would impinge on the system of mortgage interest relief at source (MIRAS).

Stamp Duty

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* his estimate of receipts from stamp duty in the current financial year and in 1987-88 for transactions in *(a)* housing and *(b)* shares.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The information is as follows:

	1987-88 £ million	*1988-89 £ million*
(a) Residential property	800	1,000
(b) Shares	965	600

Overseas Debt

Mr. Lord: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the United Kingdom's progress in implementing the debt initiative for the most debt-ridden countries put forward by him.

Mr. Lilley: The United Kingdom has converted aid loans into grants for 14 African countries and has taken part in Paris Club reschedulings for 10 sub-Saharan African countries which have resulted in repayment periods of 15 to 20 years. Reducing interest rates on rescheduled officially guaranteed debts is one of the options included in the agreement at the Toronto economic summit. The United Kingdom will choose this option when the agreement is implemented.

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the amount of the debts owed to the United Kingdom by less-developed countries, the annual interest payments due, the current account deficits of those countries, the extent of any debt write-offs in the past 12 months and the proportion of each less developed country's debt owed to the United Kingdom.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 25 July 1988]:* At end-December 1986 £1,225 million was outstanding from less-developed countries to the Overseas Development Administration. The Export Credits Guarantee Department's amounts at risk are published in its "Summary of Audited Trading Results 1986/87." United Kingdom commercial banks' claims on developing countries are listed in the Bank of England's quarterly bulletin. Comprehensive figures on other private debts are not available.

In April 1988 the International Monetary Fund, in its world economic outlook, estimated that in 1987 developing countries had a surplus of $4·4 billion on the current accounts of their balance of payments.

In the calendar year 1987 the ODA wrote off £26·2 million in claims on developing countries. This comprises £24·7 million charged to the aid programme in respect of conversion of aid loans to grants and other exceptional debt relief and £1·5 million in refinancing grants.

It is not possible to calculate the amount of annual interest payments due to the United Kingdom or the proportion of developing countries' debt owed to the United Kingdom.

Taxpayers

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people make up the 1 per cent. of taxpayers who pay the most tax; and at what level of income does this 1 per cent. begin.

Mr. Norman Lamont: It is estimated that in 1988-89 the top 1 per cent. of income tax payers comprises 210,000 single people and married couples, each with total income of at least £50,000.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people in the tax district which serves Nottingham are in the top 1 per cent. of taxpayers.

Mr. Norman Lamont: A tax district serves the residents of a number of places, according to who is their employer. Information about the amount of income tax payable is not compiled for smaller areas of residence than counties.

Millionaires

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has of the number of millionaires in Britain.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The latest provisional estimate is that about 10,000 individuals owned wealth exceeding £1 million in 1985.

Friendly Societies

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has received any representations from the friendly society movement seeking a new legislative framework which will enable them to compete more effectively with other financial institutions; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lilley: I received a memorandum from the friendly societies liaison committee earlier this month. I intend to meet its representatives to discuss its proposals.

London Clearing Banks

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in the matter of his reply dated 14 July 1986, *Official Report*, columns *680-81*, concerning the profits of the London clearing banks, he will provide the corresponding figures for 1986 and 1987.

Mr. Lilley: The information requested, updated to include 1986 and 1987, is as follows:

Pre-tax profits of London clearing banks

	Actual £ million	*Adjusted to 1987 prices* £ million
1987	290	290
1986	3,040	3,167
1985	2,556	2,747
1979	1,571	2,833
1969	212	1,242

The figures are drawn from the annual reports of Barclays, Lloyds, Midland and National Westminster.

EC (Budget)

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will bring up to date the figures on net contributions to the EEC budget in the evidence submitted by Her Majesty's Government to the Treasury and Civil Service Committee on the financial and economic consequences of United Kingdom membership of the European Communities (page 76 of HC57-II Session 1984-85).

Mr. Peter Brooke: The updated figures are set out in the table:

Net contribution to the EC Budget

£ million

Year	*Net contribution before refunds or VAT abatements (cash)*	*Negotiated refunds*	*VAT abatements*	*Net contribution after refunds and abatements (cash)*[1]	*Net contribution after refunds and abatements in constant 1987 prices*[2]
1975	−56	—	—	−56	−170
1976	167	—	—	167	441
1977	369	—	—	369	854
1978	822	—	—	822	1,708
1979	947	—	—	947	1,718
1980	804	98	—	706	1,070
1981	1,090	693	—	397	539
1982	1,625	1,019	—	606	765
1983	1,454	807	—	647	776
1984	1,184	528	—	656	755
1985	2,035	61	166	1,808	1,965
1986	2,273	—	1,701	572	599
1987	2,866	—	1,153	1,713	1,713

[1]United Kingdom figures showing payments to the Community budget on a cash flow basis. Budget refunds and abatements are credited to the year in which they are paid.

[2]Constant prices have been constructed using the GDP deflator at market prices.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a revision of the tables on pages 33-36 of Cm. 288-II to take account of what was agreed at the EEC summit meeting on financing the EEC budget and of the current year's budget settlement.

Mr. Brooke *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* I regret I cannot provide the information requested. As my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister informed the hon. Gentleman on 22 February, at column *17*, the overall effect of the EEC summit agreement will be to increase the United Kingdom's net contribution after abatement by about £200 million to £300 million a year compared to the 1·4 per cent. own resources ceiling, and by an estimated £100 million to £200 million a year compared with the effective level of spending in 1987. Revised estimates of the United Kingdom's net payments to Community institutions which take account of the new financing arrangements and this year's budget will be published in the Autumn Statement.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the sum of £200 was established as the level above which the cost of answering a parliamentary question is considered disproportionate; and if he will place a note in the Library detailing how this sum was arrived at, and the cost assumptions currently used when calculating the cost of parliamentary questions.

Mr. Brooke: The disproportionate cost threshold was set at £200 in 1982, being increased to £250 in March 1988 to maintain the value of the cost threshold in real terms.

The disproportionate cost procedure is designed to identify and draw to ministerial attention the most expensive 1 to 2 per cent. of parliamentary questions. This does not alter the discretion of individual Ministers to decide that a particular question should be answered partially or in full, regardless of cost.

The cost of answering a parliamentary question is based on staff time, using average rates of pay and associated costs (such as national insurance and superannuation for the Civil Service grades concerned) and on substantive non-staff costs such as computer usage.

Arts Sponsorship (Tax Relief)

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the cost to the Revenue of tax relief on business sponsorships of the arts; and how many companies have claimed such relief for each of the last five years.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The cost is not known precisely but is currently thought to be no higher than £10 million. The number of companies claiming relief is not known.

Theatre Tickets (VAT)

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the receipts from value added tax on theatre tickets for each of the last five years.

Mr. Lilley: This information is not directly available. The estimated yield of value added tax based on consumers' expenditure on admissions to theatres, concerts and similar live entertainment for the last five years is:

	VAT Yield
	Nearest £5 million
1983-84	35
1984-85	35
1985-86	40
1986-87	50
1987-88	[1]55

[1] Estimated

Public Expenditure

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table for the years 1982-83 to 1990-91 bringing together on the same basis the analysis of charges against public expenditure by departmental programme, *Official Report*, columns *375-76*, 25 May, an analysis of charges by functional composition consistent with table 2.7 of Cm. 288-I.

Mr. Major: My reply on 22 July explained that the information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Programmes

Mr. George: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much has been spent by his Department in each of the past five years on the evaluation of Department programmes; and what proportion this constitutes of *(a)* the amount allocated for evaluation and *(b)* the Department's total budget.

Mr. Brooke: The process of evaluation of my Department's programmes is part of the work itself. It is therefore not possible to identify separately the resources involved.

Budget Council

Mr. Summerson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the outcome of the recent meeting of the European Community's Budget Council.

Mr. Brooke: The Budget Council met in Brussels on 26 July. I represented the United Kingdom.

The Council established a first reading draft budget for 1989 totalling 47·6 becu (£33·1 billion) in commitment appropriations and 46·0 becu (£32·0 billion) in payment appropriations, respectively 470 mecu (£325 million) and 480 mecu (£335 million) below the figures proposed by the Commission in the preliminary draft budget (PDB).

The 1989 budget is the first to be subject to the new arrangements for budgetary discipline arising from the Brussels European Council of 11-12 February and to the inter-institutional agreement (IIA) between the Council, the Commission and the European Parliament which incorporates expenditure ceilings for 1988-92. The following table shows that the first reading draft budget is some way within those ceilings.

MECU

	Expenditure ceilings		*Draft budget*	
	ecu	*£*	*ecu*	*£*
Commitment appropriations				
FEOGA guarantee	28,624	19,886	28,127	19,541
Structural funds	9,522	6,615	9,478	6,585
R & D and integrated Mediterranean programmes	1,708	1,187	1,583	1,100
Other policies	2,468	1,715	2,298	1,596
Reimbursements and administration	5,153	3,580	5,081	3,530
Monetary reserve	1,000	695	1,000	695
TOTAL	48,475	33,677	47,567	33,046
Total payment appropriations[1]	46,885	32,572	46,009	31,964

[1] There is only a global ceiling for payments.

Provision for agricultural guarantee expenditure is almost 500 mecu (£350 million) below the limit agreed at the Brussels Council and given legal effect in the Budget discipline decision. The draft budget also includes provision of 1·45 becu (£1 billion) for the cost of depreciating existing agricultural stocks; and of 1 becu (£695 million) for a monetary reserve which can be drawn upon only to cover unforeseen additional expenditure of over 400 mecu (£280 million) arising from changes in the $/ecu exchange rate.

Non-obligatory expenditure (DNO) in the draft budget totals 13·5 becu (£9·4 billion) in commitments and 12 becu (£8·3 billion) in payments. In accordance with the conclusions of the Brussels European Council, the Budget Council distinguished between so-called "privileged" and "non-privileged" expenditure. In the first category, the draft budget provides for the substantial increase in appropriations for the structural funds agreed at the Brussels Council and for research and development appropriations at a level consistent with the framework programme adopted in September 1987. As regards non-privileged DNO, the Budget Council reduced the proposed provision in the PDB by an amount sufficient to ensure that, for this category of expenditure, the growth of both payments and commitments was contained within half the maximum rate of 5·8 per cent. communicated by the Commission. The growth of DNO as a whole in the draft budget is some 16·6 per cent. in commitments and some 17·7 per cent. in payments. The fact that the Council substantially exceeded the overall maximum rate was an inevitable consequence of the increase in provision for the structural funds.

The draft budget implies an own resource call up rate of 1·15 per cent. of Community GNP compared with own resources sub-ceiling for 1989 of 1·17 per cent.

The European Parliament will consider the draft budget at its plenary session in October and is entitled to make amendments and modifications within the ceilings for individual categories of expenditure set out in the IIA. The Budget Council will consider these amendments and modifications at its second reading of the budget in November.

HMSO

Mr. Nicholas Baker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has for the future of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

Mr. Lawson: My right hon. Friend the Paymaster General said in a written answer on 21 July 1987, at column *112*, that the Government have no present plans to privatise Her Majesty's Stationery Office. That remains the present position. However, the Government see every advantage in removing unnecessary constraints and encouraging the management of the office to continue to develop the business on commercial lines. It has therefore been decided to establish Her Majesty's Stationery Office in the autumn as one of the new-style executive agencies as foreseen by the Prime Minister in her announcement on 18 February 1988, at column 1149 et seq, about the future management of the Civil Service. Her Majesty's Stationery Office will remain a trading fund within central Government, accountable direct to Treasury Ministers,

but the controller and chief executive will have greater freedom, within parameters agreed by Ministers, to manage the day-to-day affairs of the agency and in particular to introduce an organisational and pay structure better suited to the most efficient achievement of the agency's aims and objectives. Details of the new structure will be worked out with the Treasury during the next few months. The proposed changes will be the subject of full consultation with the trade unions.

Residence Rules

Mr. Hind: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has any proposals for amending the residence rules and the basis of liability to United Kingdom tax of resident individuals.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The present rules on United Kingdom residence and domicile which determine the basis of an individual's liability to United Kingdom income tax and capital gains tax are complex, long-standing and lack a firm statutory basis. Possible changes to these rules need careful consideration and discussion. With my agreement, therefore, the Inland Revenue is today issuing a consultative document which suggests a possible approach to overcome the deficiencies of the present rules. The aim is to move in the direction of greater simplicity, certainty and neutrality, and to relate liabilities to United Kingdom tax more closely to the degree of an individual's connection with this country.

The Revenue is issuing a press release today giving further details. Comments on the consultative document should be received by 30 November. We shall carefully consider all comments and representations which are made before introducing any legislative changes. I have placed copies of the document in the Library.

Income Tax

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the reduction in income tax liability as a result of the introduction of independent taxation in its first full year of operation for *(a)* the top 1 per cent. of taxpayers, *(b)* the top 5 per cent. of taxpayers, *(c)* the top 10 per cent. of taxpayers, *(d)* the bottom 70 per cent. of taxpayers, *(e)* the bottom 60 per cent. of taxpayers, *(f)* the bottom 50 per cent. of taxpayers, *(g)* the bottom 30 per cent. of taxpayers and *(h)* the bottom 10 per cent. of taxpayers, with the percentages defined by reference to the joint income of husband and wife.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 20 June 1988]:* Estimates are given in the table. The first column gives the reduction for quantiles of all married couples and single people liable to income tax and the second column gives quantiles based on married couples only. The quantiles in these two columns are defined by the total income of each current tax unit, that is counting a married couple as one unit. The third column gives the reduction in liability for husbands and wives (counted separately) who are liable to income tax on the basis of their own income. The quantiles in this column are calculated by reference to the income of each individual. This approach is more appropriate for analysing the income tax reductions of independent taxation than approaches in which the incomes of married couples are combined. Reductions in income tax liability relate to a full year at 1990-91 projected levels of income. The 1988 Budget proposals for income tax rates and allowances have been indexed to 1990-91 according to the statutory formula.

Quantile group based on income	*Reduction in income tax liability under independent taxation for quantiles[1] of all tax units[2] £ million*	*quantiles[1] of married couples £ million*	*quantiles[3] of married people £ million*
Top 5 per cent.	400	260	90
Top 10 per cent.	440	400	140
Bottom 70 per cent.	160	210	450
Bottom 60 per cent.	130	200	430
Bottom 50 per cent.	100	170	400
Bottom 30 per cent.	—	130	350
Bottom 10 per cent.	—	50	200
All	670	670	670

[1] Based on all income of tax unit, ie combining income of husband and wife.
[2] Married couples and single people.
[3] Based on each married person's own income.

All estimates are provisional and subject to considerable uncertainty; and I regret that it is not possible to provide estimates for the top 1 per cent. of taxpayers.

Public Relations

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the total spending by his Department on press, public relations and advertising, respectively, in 1987-88.

Mr. Brooke *[holding answer 21 July 1988]:* Expenditure during 1987-88 was as follows:

	£
Press and public relations	591,460
Advertising	44,723

These figures do not include the marketing costs on sales of Government shareholdings (some £44,616,000 including VAT in 1987-88) which are financed from the sales proceeds.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the latest figure for the estimated expenditure by the Treasury on press and public relations during 1988-89.

Mr. Brooke *[holding answer 21 July 1988]:* The estimated expenditure for the current year is £586,515.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the latest figure for the number of staff presently employed in the press and public relations office of the Treasury.

Mr. Brooke *[holding answer 21 July 1988]:* The number of press and public relations staff employed in the Treasury on 1 July 1988 was 11.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the latest figure for the number of staff presently employed on press and public relations duties by those parts of the former Management and Personnel Office for which he now has responsibility.

Mr. Peter Brooke *[holding answer 25 July 1988]:* Nil.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the latest figure for the estimated expenditure on press and public relations during 1988-89 by those parts of the former Management and Personnel Office for which he now has responsibility.

Mr. Brooke *[holding answer 25 July 1988]:* Nil.

Departmental Advertising

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the latest figure for the estimated spending in 1988-89 by the Treasury on *(a)* television advertising, *(b)* radio advertising, *(c)* newspaper advertising and *(d)* other promotional material.

Mr. Brooke *[holding answer 21 July 1988]:* The estimated expenditure for 1988-89 is £49,000, none of which is likely to be on television and radio advertising.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the latest figure for the estimated spending in 1988-89 by those parts of the former Management and Personnel Office for which he now has responsibility on *(a)* television advertising, *(b)* radio advertising, *(c)* newspaper advertising and *(d)* other promotional material.

Mr. Brooke *[holding answer 25 July 1988]:* Nil.

Multiple Share Applications

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer for which privatisation share issue the first computer program to identify multiple share applications was designed; whether it has been purchased by his Department for use in conjunction with subsequent flotations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 25 July 1988]:* The Government place a high priority on detecting multiple applications in privatisation sales. Methods of detection are a matter for the fraud auditors appointed for each sale, but computers have been used as an aid to detection in every sale since the British Gas sale in 1986 and we would expect them to be used in future sales. Different programmes are used in each sale, as the methods of collecting applications and techniques of detection change. Innovation in computer programmes to improve detection of multiple applicants is one of the criteria in the selection of fraud auditors.

Customs and Excise (Ethnic Monitoring)

Mr. French: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the total cost of preparing, printing, posting and processing the results of the ethnic survey questionnaire recently sent to Customs and Excise staff.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 26 July 1988]:* This expenditure is included in the Department's general administrative costs and cannot be separately identified without incurring disproportionate expense.

Mr. French: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement regarding the purposes of the ethnic survey questionnaire sent to Customs and Excise staff for completion.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 26 July 1988]:* The ethnic survey questionnaires issued to staff in Customs and Excise will provide the Department with statistical information about the number, grade and location of employees from ethnic minorities. The information will be used in monitoring the career progression of these staff to ensure they receive equality of treatment in respect of training, promotion and allocation to duties.

Rating

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what progress has been made in the discussions between the Inland Revenue valuation officer and the Scottish Assessors Association regarding the harmonisation of rating practices.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 26 July 1988]:* Significant progress has been made and the prospect of reaching agreement in many important areas in time for the 1990 revaluation is good.

Domestic Credit

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the extent to which the expansion of domestic credit is under control; what effect the influx of foreign funds has had on this; what measures he has taken to sterilise the influx and with what results; and if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each year since 1972 and the current year to date the expansion of domestic credit and the increase in sterling M3 in cash and in percentage terms.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* Domestic credit is monitored as part of the continuous and comprehensive assessment of monetary conditions on which interest rate decisions are based. External influences are taken into account together with all other relevant factors.

The Government's policy is to ensure that, over time, any net foreign exchange intervention is fully funded.

Sterling M3 is now called M3. Figures for M3 and its credit counterparts are available in the annual supplement of *Economic Trends 1988*, and more recent figures are in *Financial Statistics*.

Government Expenditure

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each year since 1978 central Government expenditure on goods and services as a percentage of gross domestic product, less the extraction of oil and gas.

Mr. Major *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* The available information is as follows:

Central Government expenditure on goods and services as a percentage of GDP at market price, less extraction of mineral oil and natural gas

	Percentage
1978	13·0
1979	13·0
1980	14·3
1981	14·7
1982	14·9
1983	15·2
1984	15·1
1985	14·8
1986	14·1
1987	13·6

Source: Based on United Kingdom National Accounts Statistics.

Incomes

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* tables showing by range of total income up to a lower limit of £100,000, for those above and those below pensionable age and distinguishing between single persons, one-earner and two-earner married couples, the estimated saving to the Exchequer of abolishing all allowances and reliefs other than the basic single and married allowances; and if he will provide similar tables on the 1990 basis of separate taxation of husbands and wives.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* An answer will be given after summer recess.

Market Researchers

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether companies using the services of market researchers are advised to issue P45s on completion of their services.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* Companies employing market researchers do not normally issue forms P45 on the completion of an assignment, unless there is no intention of providing the researcher with a further assignment or the researcher indicates that the employment has ceased and requests a form P45.

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what decision has been taken by the Inland Revenue concerning the taxation status of market researchers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* The status of market research interviewers, like the employment status of all other workers, depends on the terms on which they are engaged and work. The Inland Revenue's evaluation of the terms which normally apply leads it to believe that in general market researchers are engaged under contracts of employment.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Earnings Taper

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Hornchurch (Mr. Squire), *Official Report*, 29 June, column 269, whether he intends to take any steps to ensure that the single homeless living in hostel accommodation who are in full-time training and work placements do not experience a 100 per cent. taper on their earnings, if they earn more than £5 a week;

(2) if he will give his current estimate of the number of social security recipients living in hostel accommodation who undertake full-time training or work placements and have a 100 per cent. taper on their earnings, under the provisions of the Social Security Act 1986;

(3) which social security recipients, other than the single homeless living in hostel accommodation and undertaking training or work placements have a 100 per cent. taper on their earnings.

Mr. Scott: Single people who are working fewer than 24 hours a week will have the first £5 of any earnings disregarded, or £15, if they have an underlying entitlement to the disability or lone-parent premium in income support. The number of income support recipients living in hostels and whose part-time earnings exceed their earnings disregard is not known. Each spouse in a married couple unemployed for less than two years has a part-time earnings disregarded of £5. Couples unemployed for more than two years have a combined disregard of £15. Any income support recipient or dependant whose part-time earnings exceed his or her disregard has those earnings taken fully into account. We have undertaken to monitor the effects of the earnings disregards and to consider their implications. People who are in remunerative work for 24 hours or more a week are not entitled to income support. No full-time workers now experience combined income tax and benefit withdrawal rates of 100 per cent. or more.

Departmental Offices (Norwich)

Mr. John Garrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services in respect of the local offices of his Department at Chantry house and Baltic house, Norwich, how many items of unlinked correspondence were recorded each month since 11 April.

Mr. Scott: For the months since 11 April 1988, the totals of income support and supplementary benefit correspondence which were unlinked after two days at the Chantry house and Baltic house offices of the Department were:

	30 April 1988	*31 May 1988*	*30 June 1988*
Chantry house	0	18	0
Baltic house	17	38	4

No records are maintained on unlinked correspondence for other local office benefits.

Mr. John Garrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services in respect of the local offices of his Department at Chantry house and Baltic house, Norwich, what was the average number of new claims and cases awaiting review which were recorded as outstanding each month since 11 April; and how many related to supplementary benefit claims and to single payment claims.

Mr. Scott: The number of cases outstanding at the two Norwich offices is as follows:

	Chantry House			Baltic House		
	April	May	June	April	May	June
1. (a) Income support claims	181	126	125	178	182	273
(b) Assessment reviews	78	44	46	359	173	73
2. (a) Supplementary benefit claims	22	0	0	136	17	1
(b) Single payments	10	0	0	37	3	13

Source: Internal management information statistics. This information is provisional only and subject to amendment.

Mr. John Garrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services in respect of the local offices of his Department at Baltic house and Chantry house, Norwich, how many social fund applications were made each month for budget loans; crisis loans and community care grants since 11 April; how many applications in each of these categories were determined each month; and how many applications in each of these categories were granted each month.

Mr. Scott: The following numbers of social fund applications were made to the two Norwich offices:

	Norwich (Chantry House)			Norwich (Baltic House)		
	April	May	June	April	May	June
Community care grants	23	32	49	5	19	37
Budgeting loans	64	112	163	53	153	226
Crisis loans	61	113	126	33	55	63

These data are provisional and subject to amendment.

Details of the number of applications processed and the number of awards made each month are in the Library.

Mr. John Garrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services, in respect of the local offices of his Department at Baltic house and Chantry house, Norwich, what load of current cases each office has carried *(a)* in the past six months, and *(b)* since 11 April; how many new claims for income support were made each month; and how many claims were determined.

Mr. Scott: The live case load for each office requested is:

	Chantry house	Baltic house
Supplementary benefit live load as at 17 November 1987	15,350	17,684
Income support live load as at 31 May 1988	13,129	14,633

Those figures may, however, overstate the number of people receiving supplementary benefit. I refer the hon. Gentleman to the footnote to the reply given to my hon. Friend the Member for Hyndburn (Mr. Hargreaves) on 31 March 1988, at columns *660-61*.

(*Source:* 100 per cent. count of cases in action which includes a small number of cases not actually in receipt of benefit.)

The number of income support claims received and determined for each office is as follows:

	Chantry house			Baltic house		
	April	May	June	April	May	June
Claims received	879	741	864	520	943	1,017
Determinations made	698	796	865	342	939	926

Source: Internal management statistics. This information is provisional and subject to amendment.

Poverty and Unemployment Traps

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will update again the information given in the first paragraph of the section on poverty and unemployment traps which appears on page 94 of the current issue of "Social Trends", taking into account changes in housing benefit, and the transition from supplementary benefit to income support in April, but assuming that income tax and national insurance remain at current levels; and if he will update again the information given in the second paragraph of the section on poverty and unemployment traps which appears on page 94 of the current issue of "Social Trends" assuming that a married couple with four children were faced with social security changes in April, but assuming that there will be no change in the level of national insurance contributions or income tax.

Mr. Scott: For a full-time working family paying income tax and national insurance contributions, and receiving income-related benefits, an extra £1 of gross earnings can lead to an increase in income tax of 25p, a 9p increase in national insurance contributions, 46p reduction in family credit and a 17p reduction in housing benefit—a total of 97p. Only 45,000 out of 17 million working heads of tax units are likely to have combined income tax and benefit withdrawal rates in excess of 90 per cent. In April 1987, 70,000 working heads experienced a combined rate in excess of 100 per cent.

After the addition of benefits, the net income of a hypothetical married couple with four dependent children (aged 3, 8, 11 and 16), and paying average rent and local authority rates, would be £123·25 at gross weekly earnings of £75. This figure would rise to £140·90 at gross earnings of £165. Prior to the reform of social security, net income at £75 gross earnings would have been about £127. It would then have fallen below this level until gross earnings reached £165.

The effects under the reformed social security scheme are cushioned somewhat by the fact that family credit is paid for 26 weeks irrespective of any subsequent change in circumstances.

Supplementary Benefit

Mr. Frank Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the number of, or estimates of, people who were in November 1987 *(a)* in receipt of supplementary benefit and *(b)* dependent upon supplementary benefit in respect of the offices of his Department at Stockton, Middlesbrough, Hartlepool, Eston and Redcar.

Mr. Scott: The number of people in receipt of supplementary benefit on 18 November 1987 was:

	Number
Stockton	20,321
Middlesbrough	23,141
Hartlepool	12,365
Eston	8,445
Redcar	9,492

Source: 100 per cent. count of cases in action.

I regret that information on the number of people dependent upon supplementary benefit is not available at local level.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will update the answer given to the hon. Member for Birkenhead, *Official Report,* 9 December, column *206,* to give the number of claimants and dependants below and above retirement age for each year since 1979, who have been dependent on supplementary benefit for over five years.

Mr. Scott: The table shows and up-dates the number of claimants below and above pension age who have been dependent on supplementary benefit for five or more years since 1979. Information about their dependants is not immediately available. When it is I shall write to the hon. Member.

	Supplementary pension claimants (thousands)	*Supplementary allowance claimants (thousands)*
November 1979	1,053	234
December 1980	1,054	251
December 1981	1,087	281
December 1982	1,090	308
December 1983	1,057	348
December 1984	1,041	409
February 1986	1,026	535
May 1987	1,033	659

Source: Annual Statistical Enquiries.

There was no annual statistical inquiry in 1985: the one due in December that year was deferred until February 1986.

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the total number of 16 and 17-year-olds claiming supplementary benefit in September in each of the years 1979 to 1987 inclusive.

Mr. Scott: Information about the number of 16 and 17-year-olds claiming supplementary benefit in any given period is not available. The numbers in receipt of supplementary benefit on a day in each of the months indicated are shown in the following table:

Date	*Total number of 16/17-year-olds in receipt of supplementary benefit (thousands)*
November 1979	79
December 1980	141
December 1981	166
December 1982	183
December 1983	175
December 1984	184
February 1986	168
May 1987	141

Source: Annual sample statistical inquiries.
Notes: No inquiry was held in 1985.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will detail the extent to which the increase in the number of persons living at or below the supplementary benefit level since 1979 has been due to an increase in the real value of the scale rates;

(2) what proportion of the increase in the number of persons living at 100 per cent. or below the supplementary benefit level is accounted for by the real increase in the value of benefits over the periods *(a)* 1979 to 1983 and *(b)* 1979 to 1985.

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how far the fall in the number of persons living *(a)* below supplementary benefit level, *(b)* on supplementary benefit and *(c)* at between 100 and 140 per cent. of supplementary benefit level is accounted for by the changes in the real value of the supplementary benefit scale rate between 1979 and 1985.

Mr. Scott *[holding answer 8 July 1988]:* The information requested is as follows. The increase attributable to higher supplementary benefit real values is greater in some instances than the increase which actually occurred. Thus, if supplementary benefit had increased only in line with prices, the numbers of people in these ranges would have reduced. Supplementary benefit recipients do not, as a general rule, have incomes of 100 per cent. of the supplementary benefit scale rates. Two individuals shown in the low-income tables as having similar incomes may have incomes which are significantly different because two quite separate scale rates are applied.

Percentage of the increase in the number of people in benefit units attributable to real terms increases in the supplementary benefit scale rates 1979-85

	Per cent.
1. People in units receiving supplementary benefit	30
2. People in units not receiving supplementary benefit but with RNR below 100	220
3. Total: Rows 1 and 2 together	[1]50
4. People in units not receiving supplementary benefit and with RNR between 100 and 140	140

[1] The corresponding figure for the period 1979 to 1983 is 40 per cent.

Notes:

(1) Relative net resources is a concept expressing the net income of people not in receipt of supplementary benefit as a proportion of the supplementary benefit scale rates. A full explanation of how RNR is calculated may be found in the technical notes included in "Low Income Familes—1985", copies of which are available in the Library.

(2) Further information on the relative net resource distribution of

persons in benefit units receiving supplementary benefit or housing benefit supplement may be found in the reply given to the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) on 17 June, at column *366*.

Disabled People (Report)

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what considerations he has given to "Last On The List: Community Services for People with Disabilities", an independent report published by the King's Fund Institute, a copy of which has been sent to him; what action he is taking; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: We welcome the publication of this report, as it sets out a valuable overview on the ways that services are being provided for people with physical disabilities. The report is receiving careful consideration and it is proposed to discuss its implications further with interested parties. It will also be taken into account in framing the Government's proposals on community care policy, following consideration of Sir Roy Griffiths' recent report. The report is not, however, addressed solely to Government and we hope that it will stimulate similar consideration and discussion amongst service providers in the public, private and voluntary sectors.

National Insurance

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to the reply dated 25 March 1987, *Official Report*, columns *199-200*, concerning reduced rate national insurance contributions, if he will provide figures for the gross and net contributions, taking into account the figures supplied on the same date in reply to a question asking for an update of table 40.13 of social security statistics 1985, 25 March, *Official Report*, column *200*.

Mr. Scott: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Mrs. Mildred Edwards

Mr. Mudd: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when the hon. Member for Falmouth and Camborne can expect a reply to his letter to the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, dated 27 January, concerning Mrs. Mildred Edwards, departmental reference PO(5)1223/63.

Mr. Scott: A reply was sent on 11 April.

Ynys Môn

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list for each local office of his Department in Ynys Môn *(a)* the load of current cases which each office has carried during the last six months, *(b)* the number of new claims for income support made in each month since 11 April, *(c)* the number of claims for income support determined during each month since 11 April for income support and *(d)* the number of social fund applications made, and the number determined, in each month since 11 April for (i) budget loans, (ii) crisis loans and (iii) community care grants.

Mr. Scott: The constituency of Ynys Môn is served by the local office at Anglesey, but the boundaries are not conterminous.

The information requested is as follows:

	Number
Supplementary benefit live load at 17 November 1987	7,323
Income support live load at 31 May 1988	6,588

Note: These are the only figures available for the period. The source is a 100 per cent. count of cases in action. These figures may, however, overstate the number of people receiving supplementary benefit. The footnote to the reply given to my hon. Friend the Member for Hyndburn (Mr. Hargreaves), 31 March 1988 c. *660-61* refers.

Income support

	11 to 29 April 1988	*May 1988*	*June 1988*
Claims made	278	448	623
Claims determined	220	356	454

Note: These figures are provisonal and subject to amendment.

Social Fund applications

	11 to 29 April 1988	*May 1988*	*June 1988*
Budgeting loans	43	78	120
Crisis loans	25	38	56
Community care grants	17	20	25

Details of the number of social fund applications determined each month for each office have already been placed in the Library.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list for each local office of his Department in Ynys Môn the average number of new claims and cases awaiting review which were recorded as outstanding in each month since 11 April; how many were related to (i) supplementary benefit claims and (ii) single payment claims; and how many items of unlinked correspondence were recorded in each month since 11 April.

Mr. Scott: The constituency of Ynys Môn is served by the local office of Anglesey, but the boundaries are not conterminous.

The amount of work outstanding in each month since 11 April 1988 is as follows:

	11 to 29 April	*May*	*June*
Income support claims	58	92	169
Assessment reviews	231	118	59
Supplementary benefit claims	67	10	2
Single payment claims	57	174	49

These figures are provisional and are subject to amendment.

I regret that no details are available about unlinked correspondence.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list for each local office of his Department in Ynys Môn by staffing grades *(a)* the current staff complement, *(b)* the number of permanent staff currently in post, *(c)* the number of temporary staff currently in post, *(d)* the number of staff members currently being trained, *(e)* the number of qualified officers engaged in training staff and *(f)* the annual turnover of permanent staff.

Mr. Scott: Ynys Môn is served by Anglesey integrated local office. The requested information in respect of that office is as follows:

Grade	*Complement 1988-89*	*Permanent staff in post 1 July 1988*	*Temporary staff in post 1 July 1988*	*Turnover*
Senior Executive Officer	1	1	—	—
Higher Executive Officer	4	4	—	—
Local Officer 1	25	25	—	—
Local Officer 2	39	37	—	6
Administrative Assistant	12	11	2	5
Typist	2	1	—	—
TOTAL	83	79	2	11

The information regarding turnover relates to the year ending 31 March 1988.

On 1 July 1988 there were three LO1s and one LO2 being trained by means of self-instruction. Two LO1s supervise and assist their training as and when required in addition to other LO1 duties.

Family Income Supplement

Mr. Squire: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how much family income supplement rose in *(a)* cash terms and *(b)* real terms between (i) 1979 and 1988, (ii) 1979 and 1985 and (iii) 1983 and 1985.

Mr. Scott: The information requested is shown in the tables. The latest relevant date for comparison purposes for family income supplement is April 1987, the date of the last uprating. Family income supplement was replaced by family credit in April 1988, but it is not possible to make direct comparisons of the rates of family credit with family income supplement because the structure of the schemes is different.

(i) Period November 1979 to April 1987

	(1) November 1979 actual £	*(2) April 1987 actual* £	*(3) November 1979[1] expressed in April 1987 prices* £	*(4) Actual increase column 2 over column 1* £	*per cent.*	*(5) Real value increase column 3 over column 2* £	*per cent.*
Family income supplement. Prescribed amount for one child family where child is aged:							
Under 11	56·00	100·70	94·61	44·70	79·8	6·09	6·4
11-15	56·00	101·75	94·61	45·75	81·7	7·14	7·5
16 and over	56·00	102·80	94·61	46·80	83·6	8·19	8·7
Maximum amount for one child family, where child is aged:							
Under 11	13·50	25·85	22·81	12·35	91·5	3·04	13·3
11-15	13·50	26·40	22·81	12·90	95·6	3·59	15·7
16 and over	13·50	26·90	22·81	13·40	99·3	4·09	17·9

[1] Based on the movement in the General Index of Retail Prices (all items) between November 1979 and April 1987.

(ii) Period November 1979 to November 1985

	(1) November 1979 actual £	*(2) November 1985 actual* £	*(3) November 1979[1] expressed in November 1985 prices* £	*(4) Actual increase column 2 over column 1* £	*per cent.*	*(5) Real value increase column 3 over column 2* £	*per cent.*
Family income supplement. Prescribed amount for one child family where child is aged:							
Under 11	56·00	97·50	89·15	41·50	74·1	8·35	9·4
11-15	56·00	98·50	89·15	42·50	75·9	9·35	10·5
16 and over	56·00	99·50	89·15	43·50	77·7	10·35	11·6
Maximum amount for one child family, where child is aged:							
Under 11	13·50	25·00	21·49	11·50	85·2	3·51	16·3
11-15	13·50	25·50	21·49	12·00	88·9	4·01	18·7
16 and over	13·50	26·00	21·49	12·50	92·6	4·51	21·0

[1] Based on the movement in the General Index of Retail Prices (all items) between November 1979 and November 1985.

(iii) Period November 1983 to November 1985

	(1) November 1983 actual	(2) November 1985 actual	(3) November 1983[1] expressed in November 1985 prices	(4) Actual increase column 2 over column 1		(5) Real value increase column 3 over column 2	
	£	£	£	£	per cent.	£	per cent.
Family income supplement.							
Prescribed amount for one child family where child is aged:							
Under 11	85·50	97·50	94·63	12·00	14·0	2·87	3·0
11-15	85·50	98·50	94·63	13·00	15·2	3·87	4·1
16 and over	85·50	99·50	94·63	14·00	16·4	4·87	5·1
Maximum amount for one child family, where child is aged:							
Under 11	22·00	25·00	24·35	3·00	13·6	0·65	2·7
11-15	22·00	25·50	24·35	3·50	15·9	1·15	4·7
16 and over	22·00	26·00	24·35	4·00	18·2	1·65	6·8

[1] Based on the movement in the General Index of Retail Prices (all items) between November 1983 and November 1985.

Low Incomes

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if his Department has any plans to implement the recommendations of the Social Services Committee that the Government should publish data on low income for each country in the United Kingdom and for each English region; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: The Select Committee will receive a formal response to its recommendations in the usual way. It would not be appropriate to comment until the Government have responded to the Committee.

Young People (Benefits)

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate the number of 16 and 17-year-olds who will lose their general entitlement to benefit in September; and if he will also give an estimate of the number likely to retain their entitlement.

Mr. Scott: Our best estimate is that some 70,000 school leavers will be affected by the September changes removing general income support entitlement and guaranteeing a YTS place and a training allowance. In some 18,000 cases income support dependency additions will be payable during the child benefit extension period because the young person's parents will be in receipt of income support. We estimate that of the order of 4,000 young people with good reason for living independently will be entitled to income support in their own right during the child benefit extension period only.

A possible 90,000 16 and 17-year-olds already in receipt of income support before September will instead receive bridging allowance from the Department of Employment for a limited period until they take up a place on the youth training scheme.

A total of some 18,000 young people will continue to be entitled to income support in their own right. These will include lone-parents and the severely disabled.

Fraud

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will list for each of his Department's offices the number of people whose claims were disqualified because of *(a)* fraud and *(b)* suspected fraud for the years 1983 to 1987;

(2) if he will list the sums discovered to have been obtained by *(a)* fraud and *(b)* suspected fraud for each office of his Department for each of the years from 1983 to 1987;

(3) if he will list for each of his Department's offices the amount expected to be detected by managers in respect of claims that are either fraudulent or as suspected of being so in 1987 and 1988.

Mr. Scott: I regret that the information requested is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the average numbers of days that his Department assumes that a person ceases to claim benefit after having a claim refused by reason of proved or suspected fraud or other wrongful claims.

Mr. Scott: Where the amount of benefit in payment is reduced or extinguished following a fraud investigation, it is estimated that on average the changed position will continue for 32 weeks. This is based on a study by the Department's operational research services, a copy of whose report is in the Library.

Social Fund

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he intends to review the operation of the social fund; and what proposals he has to encourage people to claim benefit to which they are entitled.

Mr. Scott: There is continuous review of the operation of the social fund as part of the constant processes of monitoring and policy evaluation. There is a range of booklets, leaflets and posters giving prospective applicants to the social fund details of both the regulated and discretionary payments available under the scheme.

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what are the social fund budget profiles separately for grants and loans for each of the Bradford local offices of his Department and the Keighley office for each month of the financial year 1988-89; and what is expenditure so far.

Mr. Scott: The profiles set for these offices at the beginning of the financial year were:

	Loans		Grants	
	Per cent.	£	Per cent.	£
Bradford East				
April	2·23	9,800	2·23	4,150
May	8·88	39,024	8·88	16,529
June	8·88	39,024	8·88	16,529
July	8·88	39,024	8·88	16,529
August	8·88	39,024	8·88	16,529
September	8·56	37,618	8·56	15,933
October	9·47	41,616	9·47	17,626
November	9·49	41,705	9·49	17,664
December	8·27	36,343	8·27	15,393
January	7·87	34,585	7·87	14,649
February	9·19	40,387	9·19	17,106
March	9·40	41,309	9·40	17,496
Bradford West				
April	2·23	9,982	2·23	4,248
May	8·88	39,731	8·88	16,906
June	8·88	39,731	8·88	16,906
July	8·88	39,731	8·88	16,906
August	8·88	39,731	8·88	16,906
September	8·56	38,[illegible]	8·56	16,296
October	9·47	[illegible]	9·47	18,029
November	9·49	42,460	9·49	18,067
December	8·27	37,002	8·27	15,744
January	7·87	35,212	7·87	14,983
February	9·19	41,118	9·19	17,496
March	9·40	42,058	9·40	17,896
Bradford South				
April	2·23	8,848	2·23	3,754
May	8·88	35,233	8·88	14,948
June	8·88	35,233	8·88	14,948
July	8·88	35,233	8·88	14,948
August	8·88	35,233	8·88	14,948
September	8·56	33,963	8·56	14,409
October	9·47	37,574	9·47	15,941
November	9·49	37,653	9·49	15,974
December	8·27	32,813	8·27	13,921
January	7·87	31,225	7·87	13,248
February	9·19	36,463	9·19	15,469
March	9·40	37,296	9·40	15,823
Keighley				
April	2·23	4,197	2·23	1,825
May	8·88	16,713	8·88	7,268
June	8·88	16,713	8·88	7,268
July	8·88	16,713	8·88	7,268
August	8·88	16,713	8·88	7,268
September	8·56	16,111	8·56	7,006
October	9·47	17,823	9·47	7,751
November	9·49	17,861	9·49	7,767
December	8·27	15,565	8·27	6,769
January	7·87	14,812	7·87	6,441
February	9·19	17,296	9·19	7,522
March	9·40	17,692	9·40	7,694

Profiles are only a management guide to anticipated expenditure and are adjusted monthly in the light of actual expenditure.

Details of actual expenditure to date have been placed in the Library.

There have been technical problems with the social fund microcomputers. These are being corrected as quickly as possible. As a result these figures may be subject to revision.

Mr. Terry Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many appeals to the social fund inspectorate were received at the social security office at Erdington in Birmingham on Friday 22 July; and when the papers for these appeals were sent to the social fund inspectorate.

Mr. Scott: One application for a review by the social fund inspectorate was received in Erdington social security office on 22 July and the papers were forwarded on 27 July.

Mr. Terry Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many social fund officers are employed at the social security office at Erdington in Birmingham; what training has been given to these social fund officers; and what training will be given to them in future.

Mr. Scott: There are seven social fund officers currently employed at the Erdington office. Details of the training given to social fund officers was provided in the reply to the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) on 15 December 1987, at columns *483-84*. All seven officers have completed their training. The ongoing training needs of social fund officers are the subject of continual review.

Mr. Terry Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many applications for crisis loans were rejected by the social fund officers at the social security office at Erdington in Birmingham in April, May and June.

Mr. Scott: Information on numbers of social fund applications processed is in the Library.

Private Pensions

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his Department's practice with regard to warning applicants for private pension schemes that they may forfeit state benefits and any local authority benefits dependent on his Department's qualifications, if income from a private pension exceeds a given level.

Mr. Scott: The leaflets and guides which the Department issues in relation to each benefit explain the current effect, if any, of receipt of an occupational pension on the benefit concerned. These leaflets and guides are available from local social security offices and post offices. It would not be practicable for the Department to give definitive information to individuals about the likely effect —possibly up to 40 years later—of their entitlement to an occupational or personal pension on state and local authority-administered benefits.

Family Credit

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what facilities he is providing to ensure that family credit claims are processed rapidly; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: The central unit which previously administered family income supplement has been expanded to handle the higher level of claims expected under family credit, and an entirely new computer system has been developed and brought into use. Arrangements provide for priority to be given to claims where people have just started work following unemployment and to cases referred by local offices as being in financial difficulties whilst awaiting the award of family credit.

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what is the total number of applications for family credit which have been processed and paid from his Department's office areas for Leeds road, Law Russell house and Westfield house in Bradford; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what is the number of applicants for family credit from the office areas for Leeds road, Law Russell house and Westfield house in Bradford; how many people were in receipt of family income supplement for those same areas; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: Family credit claims are dealt with centrally, as were claims for family income supplement, and no information is available about claims from particular local areas for either benefit.

Single Payments

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many applications for single payments and supplementary benefit claims had been made before 11 April; and how many are outstanding at his Department's offices serving the London borough of Lambeth.

Mr. Scott: The London borough of Lambeth is served by 10 local social security offices. The boundaries of these offices are not conterminous with those of the borough. Local offices do not record single payments claims outstanding. Instead, a record is kept of the number of cases awaiting action. Figures for outstanding supplementary benefit claims and cases awaiting action on single payment claims at the close of business on 8 April and on 30 June are given in the table. The figures are provisional and subject to amendment.

	Single payment cases		*Supplementary benefit claims*	
	8 April	*30 June*	*8 April*	*30 June*
Office				
Balham	246	4	303	nil
Battersea	271	194	458	nil
Brixton	397	34	356	287
Camberwell	318	85	283	6
Crystal Palace	292	247	673	235
Kennington Park	416	[1]728	193	2
Oval	525	[1]2,085	368	6
Peckham	230	51	343	3
Southwark	238	42	341	20
Streatham	402	[1]475	611	74

[1] The later figures exceed the earlier ones because take-up campaign claims were sent to a central clearing office for sorting and onward transmission to the appropriate local office. Some claims made on or before the 8 April did not therefore arrive in local offices until after that date.

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the cost of supplementary benefit single payments for each of his Department's local offices in the county of Cleveland in May 1985, 1986 and 1988; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: I refer the hon. Member to the reply to him on 25 July.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Favell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what percentage of council house tenants are receiving housing benefit in *(a)* Glasgow, *(b)* Manchester, *(c)* Stockport, *(d)* Bristol and *(e)* Barnet.

Mr. Scott: The latest available information is given in the table.

Proportion of council house tenants receiving assistance through the housing benefit scheme 1987

	Percentage
Glasgow	73
Manchester	70
Stockport	72
Bristol	68
Barnet	62

Source:
The information for English authorities is derived from the publication "Housing Rent Statistics at April 1987" produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy. The figure for Glasgow is derived from the local authority housing stock as published in "Rating Revenue Estimates of Income and Expenditure 1987" produced by CIPFA Scotland; and rent rebate information from the local authority housing benefit subsidy claims for 1987-88.

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish a table giving the latest estimate of the number of tenants in receipt of housing benefit *(a)* by tenure, *(b)* by reason of eligibility for benefit and *(c)* whether the claims are standard or certificated.

Mr. Scott *[holding answer 27 June 1988]:* The information available is in the tables.

Housing Benefit: Estimated number of tenants receiving housing benefit 1988-89
Table 1—By tenure type

	Rent rebate/ allowance 000's	*Rate rebate 000's*
Local authority tenants	3,430	3,385
Private tenants	1,055	815

Note: (1) There is a significant overlap between rent rebate/allowances and rate rebates. Some tenants may receive help with both rent and rates whereas some may be receiving assistance with only rent or rates.

Table 2—By reason of eligibility

Client group	*number 000's*
Pensioners aged 80 and over	485
Pensioners aged 60 to 79	2,075
Sick and disabled	165
Lone parents	495
Couples with children	640
Others	640

Notes:
(1) Information cannot be separated by tenure type.
(2) Figures rounded to nearest 5,000.

Table 3—By tenants recieving/not receiving income support

	number 000's
Receiving income support	2,645
Not receiving income support	1,850

Departmental Staff

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what will be the implications for staff who have previously been working for his Department's offices situated in the London borough of Southwark of the proposed creation of the Department of Social Security; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: The decision to divide the DHSS into two separate Departments has only just been made and detailed arrangements will be announced later. One of our

first concerns will be to ensure that proper arrangements are made to protect the legitimate interests of staff. The trades unions representing the staff affected will, of course, be consulted.

Rating Reform

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) if he will show the effects of the proposed community charge benefit taper of 15 per cent., with tapers of *(a)* 20 per cent., *(b)* 12·5 per cent., *(c)* 10 per cent. and *(d)* 7·5 per cent., by showing for each of these tapers the cost at 1988-89 prices of paying community charge benefit to each of the following categories of income units, showing for each category how many income units he estimates would actually receive community charge benefit and how many would be entitled to community charge benefit (i) all income units, (ii) income units consisting of a single person over pensionable age, (iii) income units consisting of a couple both of whom are over pensionable age, (iv) income units consisting of a single person with dependent children, (v) income units consisting of a single person of less than pensionable age without dependent children, (vi) income units consisting of a married or cohabiting couple one or both of whom is of less than pensionable age, without dependent children, (vii) income units consisting of a married or cohabiting couple with dependent children and (viii) any income units not included in the categories above;

(2) what he now estimates will be *(a)* the total cost of community charge benefits in 1990-91 at 1988-89 prices, *(b)* the total number of income units in receipt of community charge benefits in 1990-91, *(c)* the total number of income units entitled to community charge benefits, whether or not they claim and receive benefit, *(d)* the total cost in 1988-89 of rate rebates, *(e)* the total number of income units in households which are in receipt of rate rebates in 1988-89, *(f)* the total number of income units in households which are entitled to rate rebates on 1988-89, whether or not rebate is actually claimed and received and *(g)* the cost of administering rate rebates in 1988-89 and the cost of administering community charge benefits in 1990-91, at 1988-89 prices; and if he will attribute any additional cost of community charge benefit compared to rate rebates to (i) payment of benefit to non-householders, (ii) the reduction in the taper from 20 per cent. to 15 per cent., (iii) increased administrative costs and (iv) other reasons.

Mr. Scott: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Asbestos

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what progress has been made with the production of a leaflet to give information on claims for industrial disablement benefit, to those diagnosed as suffering from an asbestos-related illness; and when he expects it to be published;

(2) what organisations outside his Department will be consulted by the officials asked to investigate the possibility of producing a leaflet to give information on claims for industrial benefits to those suffering from an asbestos-related illness.

Mr. Scott: A leaflet giving information about claiming industrial injuries disablement benefit for an asbestos-related prescribed disease will be published as soon as resources are available. It is not normal practice to consult organisations outside the Department about such a leaflet.

Benefits

Mr. McKelvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the average time taken to calculate entitlement to transitional payments; and when claimants are likely to receive benefit.

Mr. Scott *[holding answer 14 July 1988]:* The information requested is not yet available.

Ms. Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to his answer of 5 May, *Official Report*, columns *550-51*, if he is in a position to state what stage negotiations have reached with the local authority associations regarding their role in administering the claims for transitional payments and the reimbursement of administrative costs solely for the additional work arising out of transitional protection.

Mr. Scott *[holding answer 15 July 1988]:* Agreement was reached in June with the local authority associations on the information to be provided by local authorities to the new transitional payments unit and the procedures which would be set up to obtain it. Apart from the detailed payment arrangements, negotiations with the associations on the financial support for local authorities' additional administrative costs have now also been completed. The Government are allocating £1 million among authorities for their costs in preparing to assist the transitional payments unit and authorities will be paid £5 for each completed inquiry form returned to the unit.

Ms. Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services, if, pursuant to his statement of 27 April, *Official Report*, columns 356-61, and the answer of 5 May, *Official Report*, columns *550-51*, he will state what arrangements are being made and what resources are available to compensate local authorities for the costs of the publications and other information which they produced for claimants and which have had to be reissued in the light of the changes announced on 27 April and 5 May; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott *[holding answer 15 July 1988]:* The publicity campaign carried out nationally through two press advertising campaigns, leaflet RR4 "Housing Benefit New Rules" and posters should ensure that local authorities' additional publicity costs arising from the changes to the schemes are minimised. However, we are making an addition of £2 million to the housing benefit administration costs grant payable to authorities in 1988-89 to reflect their additional workload and costs as a result of the change in the capital rule.

Severe Disablement Allowance

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what would be the cost of *(a)* abolishing the 80 per cent. test of disablement for severe disablement allowance, *(b)* increasing the rate of severe disablement allowance to the same rate as invalidity benefit and *(c)* both *(a)* and *(b)*.

Mr. Scott *[holding answer 18 July 1988]:* I regret that information is not available on which to base reliable estimates of the cost of abolishing the 80 per cent. disablement condition for severe disablement allowance. It is estimated that the net cost of paying the allowance at the same rate as invalidity benefit to current recipients would be around £210 million a year.

HEALTH

Immunisation

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will consider making immunisation against certain diseases a precondition of children attending school.

Mrs. Currie: Such an idea would effectively make immunisation compulsory. It has not been public policy for immunisation to be compulsory, with the exception of smallpox, which ceased to be so in 1948. Some other European countries without compulsory vaccination achieve equally high immunisation rates as those which employ compulsion, and very high rates are already achieved in many parts of this country already.

However, we are about to launch a major publicity campaign to introduce a combined immunisation against measles, mumps and rubella, both in the second year of life and, for a limited period as a "catch-up" programme, at pre-school entry. Children should already be called at the latter stage for booster immunisations against diphtheria, tetanus and poliomyelitis. We look to general practitioners, health authorities and parents for active support for this programme.

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps he is taking to ensure the levels of immunisation of children against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, polio and measles, including MMR, exceed 90 per cent. by 1990.

Mrs. Wise: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what advice on contra-indications is given to general practitioners and other doctors administering pertussis vaccine.

Mrs. Currie: The Chief Medical Officer has written to all doctors in England about the current upsurge of measles cases, reminding them of the need to improve levels of immunisation. We are also releasing very shortly to all doctors and to members of the nursing profession involved in immunisation a revised edition of the joint committee on vaccination and immunisation's memorandum "Immunisation Against Infectious Disease" which includes comprehensive expert advice on contra-indications to all immunisations, including pertussis. I shall arrange for a copy of the memorandum to be placed in the Library when it is published. Health professionals and authorities are also being urged to increase their efforts to raise immunisation rates, particularly in relation to the introduction of a combined vaccine against measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) on 1 October this year.

The level of immunisation and the efforts required to meet targets set for 1990 have been discussed at recent ministerial reviews of regional health authorities and family practitioner committees.

Doctors

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects the number of women doctors to reach parity with male doctors in the main career grades in the National Health Service.

Mrs. Currie: It is not possible to make a forecast of this kind. The proportion of women among medical students has risen from 22 per cent. in 1965 to 46 per cent. in 1987, but it is likely to be some years before the increased number of women entering the profession is fully reflected throughout the career structure.

The Department sponsored the recently published research study by Ms. Isobel Allen, "Doctors and their Careers", which highlighted the problem of women doctors in reaching top medical jobs. A copy of the study is in the Library. We are raising the problems identified with the medical profession and health authorities as part of our policy to ensure that women seeking medical careers have equal opportunity for employment and promotion.

Coronary Heart Disease

Mr. Bell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what assessment his Department has made of the annual cost to both the National Health Service and the social services of the treatment of coronary heart disease, taking into account the costs of working days lost through illness, disability payments, unemployment benefits and similar other social costs; and if he will specify such costs.

Mrs. Currie: Comprehensive statistics on a precisely consistent basis are not available, but estimates can be made for some cost components. The annual cost to the National Health Service in England is estimated at approximately £560 million per annum. This includes expenditure on hospital in-patients and out-patients treated for coronary heart disease, an attribution of the costs of the general medical services, and the net ingredient cost of pharmaceutical preparations for treating heart disease.

The number of days of certified incapacity for sickness and invalidity benefit is readily available only on a Great Britain basis. The number of days attributable to coronary heart disease in the period 7 April 1986 to 4 April 1987 was 40·5 million. This statistic excludes periods of incapacity covered by statutory sick pay and working days lost by certain groups of workers who do not claim these benefits. It includes days of incapacity for which invalidity benefit was claimed by men aged 65 to 69 and women aged 60 to 64. It is not possible to attribute costs to these days.

Ethnic Monitoring

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when the monitoring of recruitment in respect of ethnic minorities was introduced in his Department; and where and by whom.

Mrs. Currie: Recruitment monitoring was introduced throughout the Department in July 1987 and is conducted by designated equal opportunities officers.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services by what means managers in his Department are encouraged to utilise all possible advertising outlets to attract, in particular, applicants in minority groups; what

advertisements were placed in the ethnic minority press and radio; which local ethnic employment groups were consulted; when and by whom; and with what results.

Mrs. Currie: Guidance for managers on recruitment and ethnic monitoring of job applicants was issued in July 1987. The guidance emphasises the importance of liaison with local community groups, particularly the community relations officer and representatives of ethnic minority groups, when running local recruitment exercises. A central record of recruitment advertising is not kept, but the Department has used a variety of outlets to attract applications from ethnic minority groups including:

contact with community relations officers, employment agencies and ethnic community leaders;
advertising in local press, including free press;
advertising in the London area in ethnic minority press such as *The Voice, Asian Times, Caribbean Times* and *New Life*. In 1987 three advertisements placed in *Asian Times, The Voice* and *New Life* (circulations 19,000, 38,000 and 40,000) produced 13, 87 and four applications respectively.

Snuff and Chewing Tobacco

Sir Dudley Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what medical evidence he has on the safety of *(a)* snuff and *(b)* chewing tobacco.

Mrs. Currie: Medical evidence on the carcinogenicity of snuff and chewing tobacco was summarised in the monograph of the International Agency on Research into Cancer (Vol. 37). It concluded that there is sufficient evidence that oral use of snuffs of the types commonly used in North America and western Europe is carcinogenic to humans; that there is limited evidence that chewing tobacco of the types used in these areas is carcinogenic to humans and that there is inadequate evidence that nasal snuff is carcinogenic to humans. These forms of tobacco usage avoid certain effects specifically associated with the combustion of tobacco. However, the nicotine present in tobacco has addictive properties; nicotine may be related to some of the other non-carcinogenic adverse effects on health which can arise in people who smoke tobacco.

London Ambulance Service

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what survey his Department has conducted into the present efficiency of the London ambulance service; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: The South West Thames regional health authority, which is responsible, on behalf of the four Thames regions, for the management of the London ambulance service continually monitors the efficiency of the service in order to ensure that the best possible service is provided to patients.

Heparin

Mr. Lawrence: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what assessment his Department has made of the drug Heparin as an anti-clotting post-operational treatment to prevent death from pulmonary embolism.

Mrs. Currie: Products containing Heparin have been licensed for the prophylaxis and treatment of thrombo-embolic disorders. Use for particular patients is a matter for clinical decision.

Physiotherapists

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many vacancies there are for physiotherapists in funded and frozen posts by regional health authority.

Mrs. Currie: I regret that information on establishments is not collected centrally. However, the results of most recent sample surveys of health authorities suggest that nationally about 3·6 per cent. of funded posts for physiotherapists are unfilled after three months.

Mortality Rates

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the latest available figures for mortality rates by *(a)* regional health authority, and *(b)* district health authority.

Mrs. Currie: The latest available information is published in table 4.2 of "Key Population and Vital Statistics, local and health authority areas 1986", a copy of which is in the Library.

RAWP Formula

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will outline the methodology and the criteria used to determine deprivation in the recent report of the resource allocation working party formula.

Mrs. Currie: The research for the review of the RAWP formula looked at the relationship between a range of proxy measures of need for health care, and the use of health services, and allowed for the effects of the availability of services on their use.

Existing composite indices of deprivation, all based on data from the 1981 census, were examined. Details of the research are given in the final report on the review of the resource allocation working party formula, which is in the Library. Annex D to the report describes the indices of deprivation that were considered.

Abortions

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many abortions were performed in 1987 on residents and non-residents at each of the following gestational ages: less than nine weeks, nine to 12 weeks, 13 to 16 weeks, 17 to 20 weeks, 21 to 24 weeks and 25 weeks and over on each of the following grounds; one with other, two alone, three with or without two, four alone, four with any other except one and five and six;

(2) how many abortions were performed in 1987 on residents and non-residents at each of the following gestational ages: less than nine weeks, nine to 12 weeks, 13 to 16 weeks, 17 to 20 weeks, 21 to 24 weeks and 25 weeks and over, on women in each of the following age groups; under 15 years, 15 years, 16 to 19 years, 20 to 24 years, 25 to 29 years, 30 to 34 years, 35 to 39 years, 40 to 44 years and 45 years and over.

Mrs. Currie: The information is given in the tables.

Legal abortions in England and Wales (1987 terminations) for residents of England and Wales: Grounds then age by gestation weeks

	Total	Gestation in completed weeks: Under 9	9-12	13-16	17-20	21-24	25 and over	Not stated
Statutory Grounds								
Total	156,191	53,821	81,961	13,336	5,629	1,409	24	11
1 (With any other)	475	118	288	40	15	13	1	—
2 (Alone)	137,348	48,375	71,555	11,602	4,618	1,184	4	10
3 (With or without 2)	16,499	5,048	9,575	1,390	425	59	1	1
4 (Alone)	1,224	85	229	243	512	138	17	—
4 (With any other except 1, excluding 4 alone)	638	194	311	58	59	15	1	—
5	3	—	1	2	—	—	—	—
6	4	1	2	1	—	—	—	—
Age in years								
Under 15	907	198	454	144	71	40	—	—
15	2,858	633	1,543	392	224	66	—	—
16-19	35,167	9,239	19,532	4,064	1,859	469	2	2
20-24	49,256	16,785	25,762	4,424	1,839	432	10	4
25-29	31,243	11,983	15,988	2,198	853	211	8	2
30-34	18,960	7,823	9,586	1,101	375	72	2	1
35-39	12,639	5,143	6,424	720	275	75	1	—
40-44	4,757	1,874	2,460	263	121	37	—	2
45 and over	390	137	206	29	11	7	—	—
Not stated/unknown	14	6	6	1	1	—	—	—
Total	156,191	53,821	81,961	13,336	5,629	1,409	24	11

Legal abortions in England and Wales (1987 terminations) for non-residents of England and Wales: grounds then age by gestation weeks

	Total	Gestation in completed weeks: Under 9	9-12	13-16	17-20	21-24	25 and over	Not stated
Statutory Grounds								
Total	18,085	4,677	6,024	3,205	2,782	1,396	—	1
1 (with any other)	5	2	1	2	—	—	—	—
2 (alone)	17,279	4,401	5,642	3,123	2,735	1,377	—	1
3 (with or without 2)	748	256	367	72	40	13	—	—
4 (alone)	9	3	2	3	1	—	—	—
4 (with any other except 1, excluding 4 alone)	44	15	12	5	6	6	—	—
5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Age in years								
Under 15	83	5	7	22	23	26	—	—
15	227	26	34	51	72	43	—	1
16-19	3,315	481	935	766	727	406	—	—
20-24	6,051	1,428	2,021	1,142	985	475	—	—
25-29	3,768	1,184	1,325	583	473	203	—	—
30-34	2,310	776	849	324	257	104	—	—
35-39	1,572	530	596	213	150	83	—	—
40-44	682	229	233	87	84	49	—	—
45 and over	77	18	24	17	11	7	—	—
Not stated/unknown	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	18,085	4,677	6,024	3,205	2,782	1,396	—	1

Legal abortions in England and Wales (1987 terminations) for residents and non-residents of England and Wales: grounds then age by gestation weeks

	Total	Gestation in completed weeks: Under 9	9-12	13-16	17-20	21-24	25 and over	Not stated
Statutory grounds								
Total	174,276	58,498	87,985	16,541	8,411	2,805	24	12
(with any other)	480	120	289	42	15	13	1	—
2 (alone)	154,627	52,776	77,197	14,725	7,353	2,561	4	11
3 (with or without 2)	17,247	5,304	9,942	1,462	465	72	1	1
4 (alone)	1,233	88	231	246	513	138	17	—
4 (with any other except 1, excluding 4 alone)	682	209	323	63	65	21	1	—
5	3	—	1	2	—	—	—	—
6	4	1	2	1	—	—	—	—
Age in years								
Under 15	990	203	461	166	94	66	—	—
15	3,085	659	1,577	443	296	109	—	1
16-19	38,482	9,720	20,467	4,830	2,586	875	2	2
20-24	55,307	18,213	27,783	5,566	2,824	907	10	4
25-29	35,011	13,167	17,313	2,781	1,326	414	8	2

	Total	Gestation in completed weeks: Under 9	9-12	13-16	17-20	21-24	25 and over	Not stated
30-34	21,270	8,599	10,435	1,425	632	176	2	1
35-39	14,211	5,673	7,020	933	425	158	2	—
40-44	5,439	2,103	2,693	350	205	86	—	2
45 and over	467	155	230	46	22	14	—	—
Not stated/unknown	14	6	6	1	1	—	—	—
Total	174,276	58,498	87,985	16,541	8,411	2,805	24	12

Definitions of statutory grounds

1. The continuance of the pregancy would involve risk to the life of the pregnant woman greater than if the pregnancy were terminated.
2. The continuance of the pregnancy would involve risk of injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman greater than if the pregnancy were terminated.
3. The continuance of the pregnancy would involve risk or injury to the physical or mental health of any existing child(ren) in the family of the pregnant woman greater than if the pregnancy were terminated.
4. There is a substantial risk that if the child were born it would suffer from such physical or mental abnormalities as to be seriously handicapped.
5. In emergency to save the life of the pregnant woman.
6. In emergency to prevent grave permanent injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman.

Conceptions

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the numbers of conceptions in 1987 which *(a)* led to maternities and *(b)* were terminated under the terms of the Abortion Act 1967, among residents of England and Wales aged under 14 years, 15 years, 16 years, 17 years, 18 years and 19 years, giving in each case the rate per 1,000 population in each age group.

Mrs. Currie: The estimated number of conceptions in the calendar year 1987 will be derived from the births and legal abortions data for 1988, which are not yet available. The following table gives the latest available information, which is for the estimated number of conceptions occurring during the year 1986. A commentary on these statistics, together with details of the definitions and methods of estimation, will be included in the next issue of *Population Trends* to be published in September.

Number and rates of conceptions for girls aged 19 and under resident in England and Wales: 1986

Age of mother at conception	All conceptions: Number	All conceptions: [1]Rate	Conceptions leading to maternities: Number	Conceptions leading to maternities: [1]Rate	Conceptions terminated under the 1967 Abortion Act: Number	Conceptions terminated under the 1967 Abortion Act: [1]Rate
Under 14	292	0·9	120	0·4	172	0·5
14	1,980	5·7	809	2·3	1,171	3·4
15	6,922	18·5	3,293	8·8	3,629	9·7
16	15,425	41·9	8,933	24·3	6,492	17·6
17	24,776	64·8	16,101	42·1	8,675	22·7
18	32,177	83·6	22,456	58·4	9,721	25·3
19	37,205	93·5	27,419	78·9	9,786	24·6

[1] Rates per 1,000. The rates for girls under 14 is based on the number aged 13.

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the numbers of conceptions in 1987 which *(a)* led to maternities and *(b)* were terminated under the terms of the Abortion Act 1967, among residents of England and Wales aged under 16 years, 16 to 19 years, 20 to 24 years, 25 to 29 years, 30 to 34 years, 35 to 39 years and 40 years and over.

Mrs. Currie: The estimated number of conceptions in the calendar year 1987 will be derived from the births and legal abortions data for 1988, which are not yet available. The following table gives the latest available information, which is for the estimated number of conceptions occurring during the year 1986. A commentary on these statistics, together with details of the definitions and methods of estimation, will be included in the next issue of *Population Trends* to be published in September.

Conceptions to women resident in England and Wales: 1986

Age of mother at conception	All conceptions	Conceptions leading to maternities	Conceptions terminated under the 1967 Abortion Act
All ages	818,917	671,259	147,658
Under 16	9,194	4,222	4,972
16-19	109,583	74,909	34,674
20-24	253,131	208,356	44,775
25-29	253,799	225,557	28,242
30-34	133,024	115,352	17,672
35-39	50,266	37,503	12,763
40 and over	9,920	5,360	4,560

Births

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the total numbers of live births and still births in England and Wales in 1987, giving the numbers of each that were *(a)* legitimate, *(b)* jointly registered illegitimate and *(c)* solely registered illegitimate.

Mrs. Currie: The information requested is as follows:

Live and still births in England and Wales: 1987

	Live births	Still births
Total births	681,571	3,423
Legitimate	523,080	2,404
Jointly registered illegitimate	107,957	571
Solely registered illegitimate	50,474	448

Mentally Handicapped People

Mr. Clelland: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what was the total number of mentally handicapped people over the age of 18 years who were cared for in hospitals and homes run by health authorities in England and Wales prior to 16 March;

(2) what is the total number of mentally handicapped people over the age of 18 years currently cared for in health authority hospitals and homes in England and Wales.

Mrs. Currie: On 31 December 1986, the latest date for which information is available centrally, there were 30,652 patients aged over 18 years resident in NHS mental handicap hospitals and hospital units in England, and 2,140 mentally handicapped people aged over 18 years resident in NHS community units in England. Figures for Wales are the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Community Care

Mr. Clelland: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what records are kept to show where health authority patients have been resettled in the community; and how their resettlement and the progress of their rehabilitation into the community has been monitored.

Mrs. Currie: Oversight of services is maintained nationally through the Health Service planning and review system and the work of the social services inspectorate. It is for professional staff locally to decide what records to keep and how to monitor the progress of individual patients discharged into the community.

Mr. Clelland: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how standards of community care are defined; and which body has responsibility for their maintenance.

Mrs. Currie: Health and social services authorities have a management responsibility to set and maintain standards in their services. The social services inspectorate, the health advisory service and the national development team for people with a mental handicap advise on professional practice. Under the Registered Homes Act 1984, health and local authorities are responsible respectively for the statutory inspection and registration of independent nursing homes and independent residential care homes. The "Handbook for Health Authorities: Registration and Inspection of Nursing Homes" and the code of practice for residential care "Home Life", give detailed guidance. Copies are available in the Library.

Ex-mental Patients

Mr. Clelland: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what are the guidelines used to define rehabilitation and resettlement of ex-mental patients.

Mrs. Currie: Our policy is that mentally disordered people who are judged by the clinical team to be no longer in need of in-patient care should be subject to planned discharge from hospital. Planning should take full account of the patient's potential for resettlement and integration into the community, the ability of the individual's family to cope and the facilities and services provided by health and local authorities, voluntary organisations and the private sector which are available to meet his or her particular needs. Rehabilitation programmes are essential before discharge and should be followed up thereafter.

Cervical and Breast Cancer

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if, in view of the establishment of fund-raising organisations which claim to provide cervical and breast cancer screening units but which fail to gain charitable status and then fold, he has any proposals for further action to seek to prevent abuse, increase monitoring and strengthen powers available to prevent such fund-raising activity; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: I shall write to the hon. Member.

District Health Authorities

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what guidelines his Department offers as to which agenda items should be taken in private at district health authority meetings.

Mrs. Currie: Health authorities are subject to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 under which they may by resolution exclude the public from the whole or part of a meeting

"whenever publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, or for other special reasons stated in the resolution and arising from the nature of that business or proceedings".

Guidance as to the application of the Act to health authorities is contained in circular HC(81)6. We expect as much business as possible to be conducted in public.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) to whom generalist members of district health authorities are accountable;

(2) to whom local authority appointed members of district health authorities are accountable.

Mrs. Currie: All health authority members are appointed for their personal contribution. They are not appointed to represent any particular section or interest. District health authorities are responsible through their regional health authority to the Secretary of State for the provision of health services within their boundaries.

District General Managers

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services to whom a district general manager is responsible.

Mrs. Currie: District general managers are directly accountable to their employing authority.

Health Authorities (Disputes)

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what factors determine whether he will intervene when a dispute arises between a district and regional health authority.

Mrs. Currie: The provision of services at local level is a matter for the district health authority, which will be held accountable by the regional health authority. Any differences should be resolved through discussions between the health authorities concerned.

Private Hospitals

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will list those recommendations made by Körner which applied to private hospitals; and when they were implemented;

(2) what plans he has to collect information suggested by Körner from private hospitals on the same basis as the information collected from National Health Service hospitals.

Mrs. Currie: There are no Körner recommendations which apply to private hospitals. Körner recommends that information be collected about NHS patients treated in private hospitals under contractual arrangements, such information to be on the same basis as that collected about NHS hospital stays. I refer the hon. Member to paragraph 8.30(b) of the first Körner report, a copy of which is available in the Library.

There are no plans to introduce the Körner recommendations about NHS patients and facilities to private patients in private hospitals. The information that we require from the Körner system is intended to help us in running the National Health Service.

NHS Patients (Private Hospitals)

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish information about *(a)* the length of in-patient stays, *(b)* mortality, *(c)* the nurse-patient ratio, *(d)* the junior doctor-patient ratio and *(e)* the senior doctor-patient ratio for all private hospitals which treat National Health Service patients under contractual arrangements with district health authorities.

Mrs. Currie: Statistical information concerning National Health Service patients treated under contractual arrangements with private hospitals is included in the activity information submitted to the Department by health authorities. Information on the numbers of private hospital staff involved in contractual arrangements is not collected centrally. The available data are currently being processed and decisions will be taken in due course as to how much of the information can usefully be published on a routine basis.

Griffiths Report

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what proposals he has to review the working of the management style and structures introduced into the National Health Service following the Griffiths report.

Mrs. Currie: All aspects of the provision of hospital services are being examined as part of our review of the National Health Service. General management has been successfully introduced into the NHS and we remain committed to the principles set out in Sir Roy Griffiths' report.

Mental Illness (Ethnic Monitoring)

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he has any information on the relative proportion of people receiving treatment for mental illness by ethnic group; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he has any information with respect to the numbers of people committed under different sections of the Mental Health Acts by ethnic group; and if he will make a statement;

(3) what steps were taken as a result of the MIND report, a copy of which has been sent to him, about the disproportionate number of Afro-Caribbeans held in mental institutions, to investigate the causes and to alter the provisions of facilities; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: The MIND report, "A Place of Safety", dealt primarily with the use of police powers under section 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983. This part of the Act is the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary. We are aware that there is a concern that ethnic minorities may be over-represented among patients detained under the powers of the Mental Health Act.

Mental health statistics are not currently collected centrally by ethnicity. There are no immediate plans to introduce the national monitoring of the ethnic origins of National Health Service patients, although the subject is under constant review by the Department.

It is essential that psychiatric patients receive care and treatment in a way appropriate to their illness, and that such care should be offered in a way acceptable to them, independently of racial origins.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what research he has carried out with respect to the needs of patients from different ethnic minorities with respect to provision of mental health facilities; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: The Department is currently funding a project concerned with mental and other health needs of ethnic minorities in an inner-city context, undertaken by a small voluntary organisation, NAFSIYAT, which runs an inter-cultural therapy centre in north London. A final report on this project is expected next year.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps he takes to ensure that mental health provision and treatment for mental illness is made available for members of ethnic minority groups; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: It is for health and social services authorities to identify and take account of the needs of all sections of the community in planning and funding local mental health services. The importance of this work was emphasised at a seminar on ethnic minority health last November for health authority chairmen and managers. Ministers also drew attention to the difficulties which needed to be overcome when mentally ill patients and those treating them had different cultural backgrounds. In addition, where appropriate, Ministers are raising questions on improving health services for ethnic minorities through the review system.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps he has taken to ensure that the training of those involved with the treatment of patients suffering from mental illness recognises the particular problems of patients from ethnic minorities.

Mrs. Currie: This is a matter for the bodies responsible for the education and training of professional staff. I understand, however, that the particular needs of members of ethnic minorities are covered in the training syllabuses of the nursing and social work professions, and the Royal College of Psychiatrists has established a special committee to consider any special training needs arising from mental illness among people from the ethnic minorities.

Care Orders (Privately Run Schools)

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the criteria applied by his

Department for registering privately run schools which cater for young persons under care orders by local authorities; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: Responsibility for the registration of privately run schools in a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science, who is writing to the hon. Member.

Departmental Programmes

Mr. George: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how much has been spent by his Department in each of the past five years on the evaluation of departmental programmes; and what proportion this constitutes of *(a)* the amount allocated for evaluation and *(b)* the Department's total budget.

Mrs. Currie: The process of evaluation of the Department's programmes is part of the work itself. It is therefore not possible to identify separately the resources involved.

Child Abuse

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will commission a research project using information collated from medical records and information from the courts of new cases in order to study the link between the abuse of children and the marital status of and stability of relationship between the carers of the victim, taking full account of whether or not the abuser was the natural parent of the victim, whether he or she had at the time time of abuse been married or was cohabitating with the victim's other parent, and whether at the time of abuse the abuser was separated, divorced or distanced from the other parent of the victim.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* Child abuse is a priority field for research sponsored by the Department, and there is a substantial programme of research, details of which follow. It is well known that disruption of normal family life may be a factor in some child abuse cases and there are no plans at present to focus solely on this question.

Current child abuse research sponsored by DHSS

Researcher	*Abstract*
1. Dr. F. Boddy, Dr. D. Gough, Glasgow University	*Professional Interventions in Child Abuse* This study will examine, evaluate literature on interventive strategies in cases of child abuse and attempt to provide a synthesis of present knowledge of value to those working in the field.
2. Dr. Bentovim, Professor Graham, Great Ormond Street, Hospital/Institute of Child Health	*Child Sexual Abuse* This study will look at characteristics and outcome of a treatment programme provided to the victims of child sexual abuse and their families.
3. Margery Smith, Great Ormond Street, Hospital/Institute of Child Health	*Normal Sexual Knowledge in Children* The aim is to collect systematic and reliable information on: (i) sexual knowledge in children; (ii) normal behaviour in families. A second aim of the study is to see whether children in the community can be distinguished from children who have been sexually abused on the basis of their sexual knowledge and behaviour.
4. Jane Gibbons, NISW	*Longitudinal Study of Children on NSPCC Abuse Registers* A feasibility study to examine the possibility of tracing children placed on registers maintained by the NSPCC; identifying the services supplied at the time; and assessing the outcome for the child several years later (seven years).
5. Elaine Farmer, Bristol University	*Decision Making Intervention and Outcomes in Respect to Children at risk of Abuse* The aims of this study are to explore the process of decision making and intervention in relation to a group of children at risk of abuse in two local authorities, and to relate these to outcomes over a two year period. Attention will be given to the way in which risk is reassessed over time and to the way in which decisions are made to remove or restore children home.
6. Christine Hallett, Leicester University	*A Study of Coprdination in Child Abuse* The research aims to study the policies and practices of interagency coordination in child abuse. The research has three dimensions: a conceptual analysis and literature review; a study of professional perspectives using case vignettes and a study of coordination in a sample of cases in selected areas.

Wakefield District Health Authority

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if, in view of the fact that the Yorkshire regional health authority inquiry into Wakefield health authority did not look at the policy issues affecting the relationship between its chairman and district general manager and the rôle of the regional health authority in this situation, he will, as a matter of urgency, reconsider his decision not to set up a full independent public inquiry into the Wakefield health authority's proposed introduction of cook-chill catering and related matters;

(2) what action he proposes to take on the first recommendation of the report of the Yorkshire regional health authority inquiry into Wakefield health authority concerning the chairman of Wakefield health authority, a copy of which has been sent to him.

Mrs. Currie: We are considering the report, which was received only this week.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether his Department was consulted by Yorkshire regional health authority concerning its direction to Wakefield health authority to spend its share of the non-recurrent grant in December 1987 on meeting the additional costs of implementing cook-chill catering; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: The region informed the Department in advance of discussion with its districts as to how it expected them to use the additional non-recurrent funds allocated in December, including in Wakefield's case that the money should be used to implement cook-chill, thereby securing recurrent savings. No formal direction was issued by the region to its districts.

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will request the Yorkshire regional health authority to publish its report on the management of Wakefield district health authority; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: No.

Childhood Cancers

Mr. Cran: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to his answer of 19 July, *Official Report*, column *604*, on childhood cancers on north Humberside, what expert advice has been sought; and when he expects to receive it.

Mrs. Currie: Experts on medical statistics have been asked for an assessment of the report on childhood cancers on north Humberside and for advice on the further work which may be required. It is too early to say when their advice will be received.

Leukaemia

Mr. Cran: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the current level of Government funding for research into the epidemiology of leukaemia; and what have been the comparable figures over the previous five years.

Mrs. Currie: In 1986-87 (the latest year for which figures are available) the Department spent £2·7 million on directly commissioned cancer research. I regret that comparable information for the previous five years is not readily available. It is not possible separately to identify expenditure on research into the epidemiology of leukaemia, but the Department's programme contains the following:

— A programme of research at the Childhood Cancer Research Group, Oxford.

— Studies arising from the report on the investigation of the possible increased incidence of leukaemia in west Cumbria.

— A case control study of childhood leukaemia and other cancers in the West Berkshire and Basingstoke, and the North Hampshire district health authorities.

The Medical Research Council, the main Government agency for medical research in the United Kingdom, which receives its grant-in-aid from the Department of Education and Science, supports a considerable amount of research into the epidemiology of leukaemia.

Mr. Cran: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services which cancer registries and research organisations are involved in the research into the epidemiology of leukaemia; what form the co-ordination between them will take; and what will be the rôle of the Government's Chief Medical Officer.

Mrs. Currie: A large number of organisations including the cancer registries, Medical Research Council, Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, medical research charities, and the Health Departments are involved in epidemiological research and the analysis of statistics on leukaemia. These activities are brought together in the United Kingdom Co-ordinating Committee on Cancer Research (UKCCCR) which also fulfils a co-ordinating role between the governmental and charitable organisations that fund research into leukaemia and other cancers.

A medically qualified official from the Department attends the UKCCCR on behalf of the Chief Medical Officer.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what will be the implications for staff who have previously been working for his Department's offices situated in the London borough of Southwark of the proposed creation of the Department of Health; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: The decision to divide the DHSS into two separate Departments has only just been made and details have still to be worked out. One of our first concerns will be to ensure that proper arrangements are made to protect the legitimate interests of staff. The trades unions representing the staff affected will, of course, be consulted.

Spectacles

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the new National Health Service voucher values will be to take account of the imposition of value added tax on spectacles.

Mrs. Currie: The Government have introduced an amendment to the Finance Bill which, if approved, would apply VAT to spectacles from 1 September. We have decided that the new voucher values shown in the table would apply from that date if VAT is implemented. The imposition of VAT should not result in prices increasing by 15 per cent. The prices of spectacles already include the VAT which the opticians pay on their purchases of appliances. The only new element of VAT is the tax in the retail margin.

	Voucher type	*Current value (£)*	*New value (£)*
Single Vision	A	15·50	16·25
	B	25·50	27·00
	C	42·00	44·00
Bifocal	D	29·50	31·00
	E	50·00	52·50
	F	85·00	89·00
Hospital Eye Service Only	G	85·00	89·00
	H	25·00	26·50

	Voucher type	Current value (£)	New value (£)
Supplements	Childs small frame	30·00	31·50
	Specially made frame (hospital eye service)	30·00	31·50

National Blood Transfusion Service

Mr. Ian Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he has completed his consideration of the National Health Service management consultancy services report on the organisation of the national blood transfusion service; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: We have decided that new management arrangements are needed for the supraregional and national dimension of the national blood transfusion service. We therefore intend that operational responsibility at the national level for the NBTS and the Central Blood Laboratories Authority (CBLA) will be exercised on behalf of the Health Ministers for England and Wales by the NHS management board and undertaken by its director of operations, in consultation in respect of Wales with the director, NHS Wales. Day-to-day implementation of the national strategy will be delegated to a new national director of the NBTS and a small supporting staff.

The key objectives will be:

(a) to implement a cost-effective strategy for ensuring an adequate supply of blood throughout England and Wales;

(b) to implement a cost effective strategy for the supply of plasma to the blood products laboratory of the CBLA;

(c) to co-ordinate the activities of the NBTS and the CBLA;

(d) to promote the efficiency of the NBTS.

In implementing the objectives in *(a)* and *(b)* a priority task will be to remove financial disincentives by having a national system of processing and handling charges both between transfusion centres and between them and CBLA. No charges will be made, of course, for freely donated blood.

The national director will be Dr. Harold Gunson, who is at present the regional transfusion director for north western region.

I have arranged for copies of the report to be placed in the Library.

Hospital Waiting Lists

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will publish the total number of cases deferred other than those listed by KHO7a; and if he will give the reasons for those deferrals.

(2) if he will break down the figures given in KHO7a into those cases where treatment has been *(a)* postponed and *(b)* cancelled.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 5 May 1988]:* I regret that the information requested is not available centrally.

NHS Expenditure and Charges

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) when he will provide a substantive reply to the questions on health charges tabled by the hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie for priority written answer on 25 May;

(2) when he will provide a substantive reply to the questions on health charges tabled by the hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie for priority with written answer on 7 July.

Mrs. Currie: I replied to the hon. Member today.

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table, consistent with the reply of 27 May, *Official Report*, columns *375-76*, indicating the receipts in the years 1982-83 to 1990-91 classified as charges in respect of running costs expenditure, together with a supplementary analysis indicating, separately, the amounts of receipts in respect of programme expenditure and of running costs expenditure estimated to have been met from other public expenditure programmes.

Mrs. Currie: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will publish in the *Official Report* tables which provide for *(a)* pharmaceutical services, *(b)* general dental services and *(c)* general ophthalmic services covering the period 1979-80 to 1988-89, gross expenditure, details of income analysed by source, and net expenditure incurred on Supply Votes and public expenditure programmes;

(2) if he will publish in the *Official Report* tables which provide, for *(a)* pharmaceutical services, *(b)* general dental services and *(c)* general ophthalmic services covering the period 1979-80 to 1988-89, gross expenditure, details of income analysed by source and net expenditure incurred on Supply Votes and public expenditure programmes.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answers 25 May and 7 July 1988]:* The information requested is given in the table. The figures for 1987-88 are the latest forecasts of outturn for that year and differ from those underlying the public expenditure White Paper, Cm. 288-II, which were based on Winter Supplementary Estimates for that year. The figures for 1988-89 are the planning figures underlying Cm. 288-II and are necessarily indicative. They form the basis of the Main Estimate for the year currently before Parliament. They will be reviewed in the light of up-to-date information during the course of the year and if necessary supplementary estimates submitted to Parliament at the appropriate stage.

Family practitioner services
Gross expenditure and charge income

	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	Estimated plans[1] out-turn 1987-88	1988-89
(a) Pharmaceutical services										
Gross[2]	790·119	973·700	1,124·725	1,290·047	1,430·575	1,550·749	1,657·132	1,787·071	1,976·129	2,171·776
Income Prescription charges collected by										
(1) Pharmacists	-34·615	-61·257	-75·395	-89·510	-96·020	-104·528	-110·131	-128·021	-139·322	-133·671

		1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	Estimated plans[1] out-turn 1987-88	1988-89
	(2) Dispensing doctors	-1·734	-3·161	-3·934	-4·847	-5·294	-5·969	-7·057	-7·718	-7·892	-7·645
	Prepayment certificate sales	-2·862	-7·334	-8·769	-10·458	-10·883	-12·303	-13·540	-14·628	-15·700	-15·918
Less	(1) Prescription charge refunds	0·275	0·528	0·900	1·385	1·479	1·381	1·531	1·352	2·183	2·095
	(2) Charges collected in respect of prescriptions written by hospital doctors and dispensed by community pharmacists	0·290	0·471	0·578	0·638	0·674	0·671	1·441	1·131	0·966	0·943
	Total charge income	-38·646	-70·753	-86·620	-102·792	-110·044	-120·748	-127·756	-147·884	-159·765	-154·196
Net		751·473	902·947	1,038·105	1,187·255	1,320·531	1,430·001	1,529·376	1,639·187	1,816·364	2,017·580
(b) General dental services											
Gross		336·404	419·120	481·083	538·445	584·440	64[illegible]·179	660·026	741·744	827·366	889·200
Income	Charges collected by dentists	-69·777	-92·633	-115·521	-141·709	-156·080	-171·321	-196·866	-221·670	-237·409	-286·482
	Charges collected by Health Centres	-0·072	-0·108	-0·127	-0·144	-0·154	-0·177	-0·187	-0·186	-0·200	-0·246
	Charges collected by Family Practitioner Committees	-0·015	-0·022	-0·030	-0·039	-0·040	-0·034	-0·041	-0·044	-0·060	-0·054
Less	Refunds	0·180	0·276	0·571	0·844	0·994	1·031	1·016	0·949	0·900	1·482
	Total charge income	-69·684	-92·487	-115·107	-141·048	-155·280	-170·501	-196·078	-220·951	-236·769	[2]-285·300
Net		266·720	326·633	365·976	397·397	429·160	469·878	463·948	520·793	590·597	603·900
(c) General Ophthalmic services											
Gross[3]		89·868	104·033	125·713	201·096	161·657	172·880	143·099	128·716	151·065	160·300
Income	Charges collected by opticians	-27·613	-28·915	-32·253	-38·086	-43·783	-44·140	-11·798	-0·782	—	—
	Charges collected by Family Practitioner Committees	-0·010	-0·012	-0·018	-0·013	-0·023	-0·016	-0·022	-0·019	—	—
Less[4]	Refunds	0·103	0·116	0·166	0·253	0·368	0·388	0·297	0·291	—	—
	Total charge income	-27·520	-28·811	-32·105	-37·846	-43·438	-43·768	-11·523	-0·510	0·000	0·000
Net		62·348	75·222	93·608	163·250	118·219	129·112	131·576	128·206	151·065	160·300

[1] These are the figures underlying the public expenditure White Paper (Cm. 288-II) and are subject to in-year review.
[2] The basis is given in the reply to the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) on 12 April, at columns *104-5*.
[3] Certain amounts appropriated in aid are offset against gross expenditure on the Phs and GOS (for example, receipts from drug manufacturers)
[4] The cessation of supply of NHS glasses in 1985-86 following the introduction of the voucher scheme resulted in the reduction, then cessation of GOS charge income.

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table providing a detailed analysis of the various line entries for charges in the years 1982-83 to 1990-91 in table 14.1 of Cm. 288-II;

(2) if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table providing a detailed analysis of the various line entries for charges in the years 1982-83 to 1990-91 in table 14.1 of Cm. 288-II;

(3) if he will provide a detailed breakdown for the years 1982-83 to 1990-91, by nature of item and functional area of charge, of the receipts to his programme classified as charges for the purposes of the public expenditure survey.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answers 25 May and 7 July 1988]:* The requested information is given in the table.

The 1987-88 income figures for prescription and dental charges in the family practitioner services underlying Cm. 288-II were based on winter Supplementary Estimates. Later forecasts of outturn are as given in my other reply to the hon. Member today.

The figures for 1988-89 and later years are the planning figures underlying Cm. 288-II and are necessarily indicative. Those for 1988-89 form the basis of the main Estimates for that year currently before Parliament. These figures for the family practitioner services will be reviewed in the light of up-to-date information during the course of the year and if necessary Supplementary Estimates submitted to Parliament at the appropriate Supply stage. The income in later years will be determined, where appropriate, by the level of charges, when these come to be set by Parliament, and by the volume of chargeable activity.

Analysis of charge income in table 14.1 of Cm. 288-II

	1982-83 £ million	1983-84 £ million	1984-85 £ million	1985-86 £ million	1986-87 £ million	1987-88 estimated outturn £ million	1988-89 plans £ million	1989-90 plans £ million	1990-91 plans £ million
Hospital and community health services and central health miscellaneous services[1]									
Prescription charges	5	6	6	7	7	7	7	8	8
Private patients	52	56	56	60	62	65	68	72	75
Overseas visitors	—	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Road traffic accidents	6	7	7	8	8	8	9	9	9
Laboratory services	5	6	6	7	8	8	8	8	8
Special hospital receipts	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2
Other	6	8	9	9	12	10	11	12	12
TOTAL[2]	75	85	87	95	101	102	107	113	116
Family practitioner service									
Prescription charges	103	110	121	128	148	148	154	161	168

	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88 estimated outturn	1988-89 plans	1989-90 plans	1990-91 plans
	£ million	£ million	£ million	£ million	£ million	£ million	£ million	£ million	£ million
Dental charges	141	155	171	196	221	245	[3]285	334	361
Ophthalmic charges	38	43	44	12	1	—	—	—	—
TOTAL[2]	282	308	336	336	370	393	[4]439	495	529
Personal social services[5]									
Residential care	274	287	296	352	—	—	—	—	—
Support services	36	40	44	50	—	—	—	—	—
Day care	22	24	24	25	—	—	—	—	—
Administration	3	3	3	4	—	—	—	—	—
Other	1	1	1	2	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL[2]	336	355	368	433	474	472	493	510	530

[1] Hospital and community health services and Central health miscellaneous services totals have been combined to overcome the effect of transfers of services between the two sub-programmes.
[2] Differences between totals in the analysis and table 14.1 are due to roundings in individual items. The convention used in Cm. 288-II was to round the last two years to the nearest £10 million.
[3] The basis is given in the reply to the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) on 12 April, at columns 104-5.
[4] Differs from table 14.1 which included assumed receipts of £80 million from the reconstitution of the GPFC.
[5] Total receipts only are indicated for the years 1986-87 to 1990-91. They are estimates based on the proportional relationship between gross and net expenditure in previous years and a breakdown of this figure would be meaningless.

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for the period 1958 to 1988, in a form consistent with the written answer of 29 March 1982, *Official Report*, columns *27-30 (a)* prescription charges per form or item *(b)* the real charge, as measured after adjusting by (i) the retail price index and (ii) the gross domestic product deflator *(c)* the proportion of prescriptions for which the nominal payment was in fact made *(d)* the proportion of patients receiving prescriptions exempted from the nominal payment and *(e)* the estimated proportions of the *(y)* adult and *(z)* total population estimated to liable to make the nominal payment.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 7 July 1988]:* The requested information on the prescription charge per item, together with the proportion of prescriptions for which such charges were paid, is given in the table. In addition, some 5 per cent. of all prescriptions dispensed are covered by pre-payment certificates.

Information is not available on the estimated proportion of patients, or of the population who are exempt from the single item prescription charge. It is thought however that approximately half the population is exempt from all prescription charges.

		Prescription charge per item[1]	Prescription charge per item re-valued to 1987 prices using:		Proportion of prescriptions paid[2]
			RPI	GDP Deflator	
		£	£	£	per cent.
1 December 1956 5p per item	1958	0·05	0·41	0·44	—
	1959	0·05	0·40	0·44	—
	1960	0·05	0·40	0·42	—
1 March 1961 10p per item	1961	0·09	0·71	0·75	—
	1962	0·10	0·76	0·79	—
	1963	0·10	0·75	0·78	—
	1964	0·10	0·72	0·74	—
1 February 1965 charges abolished	1965	0·01	0·06	0·06	—
	1966	—	—	—	—
	1967	—	—	—	—
10 June 1968 12·5p per item	1968	0·07	0·42	0·44	—
	1969	0·125	0·73	0·75	—
	1970	0·125	0·68	0·69	—
1 April 1971 20p per item	1971	0·18	0·90	0·92	—
	1972	0·20	0·93	0·94	—
	1973	0·20	0·84	0·88	—
	1974	0·20	0·71	0·73	—
	1975	0·20	0·57	0·58	—
	1976	0·20	0·50	0·52	—
	1977	0·20	0·44	0·45	37
	1978	0·20	0·40	0·41	37
16 July 1979 45p per item	1979	0·31	0·55	0·55	36
1 April 1980 70p per item	1980	0·66	0·99	0·98	30
1 December 1980 £1·00 per item	1981	1·00	1·34	1·35	25
1 April 1982 £1·30 per item	1982	1·23	1·53	1·54	25
1 April 1983 £1·40 per item	1983	1·38	1·64	1·65	22
1 April 1984 £1·60 per item	1984	1·55	1·76	1·78	22
1 April 1985 £2·00 per item	1985	1·90	2·04	2·06	20
1 April 1986 £2·20 per item	1986	1·90	1·98	2·00	18

		Prescription charge per item[1]	Prescription charge per item re-valued to 1987 prices using:		Proportion of prescriptions paid[2]
			RPI	GDP Deflator	
		£	£	£	per cent.
1 April 1987 £2·40 per item	1987	2·35	2·35	2·35	18
1 April 1988 £2·60 per item	1988	2·55	2·45	2·44	*

[1] For years for which the charge was changed in the course of the year, the values above are weighted averages according to the number of months at each rate.
[2] Relates to prescriptions for which the single item charge was made.
[3] Data not available prior to 1977.
* Not yet available.

Acute Hospitals

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the average daily occupancy of acute hospital beds in England by region and age groups *(a)* birth to four years, *(b)* five to 14 years, *(c)* 15 to 44 years, *(d)* 45 to 64 years, *(4)* 65 to 74 years and *(f)* 75 years and over for each year from 1974 to the last year for which figures are available.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 20 July 1988]:* The information that can be provided without incurring disproportionate cost is given in the table.

Regional health authority	All ages	0 to 4 years	5 to 14 years	15 to 44 years	45 to 64 years	65 to 74 years	75 years and over
Estimated average number of beds occupied daily, acute sector, 1979							
Northern	7,002	377	351	1,514	1,879	1,408	1,473
Yorkshire	8,586	532	441	1,992	2,227	1,729	1,667
Trent	8,241	487	426	1,782	2,210	1,641	1,695
East Anglian	3,666	157	163	787	965	822	772
North West Thames	8,678	417	341	2,073	2,232	1,766	1,849
North East Thames	10,302	405	342	2,136	2,718	2,298	2,403
South East Thames	9,036	590	598	1,733	2,202	1,924	1,990
South West Thames	6,186	304	356	1,196	1,287	1,288	1,755
Wessex	5,434	289	304	1,016	1,315	1,203	1,308
Oxford	4,375	274	249	972	1,098	866	917
South Western	6,443	301	295	1,111	1,536	1,509	1,691
West Midlands	10,381	720	596	2,064	2,733	2,136	2,132
Mersey	6,202	454	332	1,286	1,587	1,242	1,301
North Western	9,836	736	550	2,098	2,740	2,105	1,607
SHA's	2,085	316	241	470	596	308	156
England	106,452	6,358	5,584	22,229	27,323	22,243	22,715
Estimated average number of beds occupied daily, acute sector, 1982							
Northern	6,746	350	316	1,257	1,858	1,332	1,633
Yorkshire	8,220	545	331	1,582	2,079	1,761	1,923
Trent	8,109	477	378	1,673	2,144	1,647	1,791
East Anglian	3,650	177	133	697	959	870	814
North West Thames	7,633	397	279	1,607	1,725	1,557	2,068
North East Thames	10,704	417	336	2,176	2,644	2,451	2,681
South East Thames	8,555	455	409	1,529	2,042	1,842	2,279
South West Thames	5,732	281	237	1,047	1,204	1,167	1,795
Wessex	5,334	277	278	929	1,163	1,126	1,560
Oxford	4,303	275	179	928	1,001	892	1,028
South Western	6,463	290	244	1,040	1,461	1,435	1,993
West Midlands	10,396	752	470	2,129	2,602	2,172	2,272
Mersey	5,946	490	250	1,061	1,514	1,191	1,440
North Western	9,598	702	468	1,896	2,620	2,024	1,888
SHA's	1,969	267	158	427	648	308	162
England	103,358	6,151	4,464	19,978	25,664	21,776	25,325
Estimated average number of beds occupied daily, acute sector, 1983							
Northern	6,904	362	359	1,343	1,905	1,316	1,618
Yorkshire	8,326	518	354	1,661	2,135	1,811	1,848
Trent	8,284	469	354	1,739	2,139	1,602	1,980
East Anglian	3,761	153	142	770	1,026	804	867
North West Thames	7,555	422	254	1,482	1,774	1,588	2,036
North East Thames	10,454	406	333	2,171	2,825	2,218	2,500
South East Thames	8,529	425	398	1,567	2,012	1,904	2,222
South West Thames	5,791	274	229	1,071	1,461	1,095	1,661
Wessex	5,369	291	223	978	1,210	1,188	1,480
Oxford	4,281	226	171	913	1,018	821	1,134
South Western	6,419	277	228	1,092	1,432	1,435	1,955
West Midlands	10,437	592	544	2,038	2,762	2,092	2,409
Mersey	5,796	426	277	1,054	1,549	1,166	1,322
North Western	9,630	673	433	1,902	2,755	2,001	1,866
SHA's	1,920	319	165	473	560	283	120
England	103,454	5,833	4,462	20,254	26,562	21,324	25,018

Regional health authority	All ages	0 to 4 years	5 to 14 years	15 to 44 years	45 to 64 years	65 to 74 years	75 years and over
Estimated average number of beds occupied daily, acute sector, 1984							
Northern	6,876	351	297	1,258	1,792	1,353	1,825
Yorkshire	8,118	559	330	1,623	2,079	1,770	1,757
Trent	8,187	473	321	1,757	2,111	1,585	1,940
East Anglian	3,684	145	150	787	964	782	857
North West Thames	7,299	361	215	1,448	1,737	1,421	2,117
North East Thames	10,046	407	319	2,085	2,581	2,045	2,609
South East Thames	8,186	474	321	1,442	1,898	1,759	2,293
South West Thames	5,672	263	215	1,083	1,251	1,195	1,667
Wessex	5,380	286	203	1,019	1,213	1,103	1,557
Oxford	4,248	246	171	935	1,006	788	1,102
South Western	6,358	272	232	1,068	1,472	1,411	1,903
West Midlands	10,361	629	442	2,071	2,722	2,060	2,438
Mersey	5,566	371	234	1,075	1,589	1,107	1,189
North Western	9,488	641	394	1,915	2,611	1,935	1,992
SHA's	1,848	382	148	367	528	275	147
England	101,316	5,860	3,993	19,930	25,552	20,588	25,392
Estimated average number of beds occupied daily, acute sector, 1985							
Northern	6,784	338	333	1,327	1,687	1,342	1,758
Yorkshire	7,978	559	355	1,563	2,069	1,634	1,798
Trent	8,246	488	446	1,704	2,028	1,576	2,004
East Anglian	3,758	175	127	808	982	778	888
North West Thames	7,172	361	251	1,352	1,624	1,512	2,072
North East Thames	9,759	434	298	2,163	2,393	1,833	2,637
South East Thames	8,139	480	381	1,442	1,857	1,795	2,186
South West Thames	5,611	294	191	992	1,148	1,120	1,867
Wessex	5,485	265	313	1,014	1,252	1,091	1,551
Oxford	4,346	283	159	911	1,019	750	1,223
South Western	6,420	294	206	1,149	1,397	1,329	2,046
West Midlands	10,379	644	393	2,063	2,608	2,163	2,508
Mersey	5,494	386	288	1,000	1,396	1,075	1,350
North Western	9,353	642	389	1,881	2,645	1,919	1,877
SHA's	1,734	313	131	375	525	253	138
England	100,658	5,955	4,259	19,744	24,628	20,169	25,903

Nursing and Residential Homes

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make it his policy to establish such guidelines for the care of persons residing in nursing and residential homes as will ensure the early development of improved standards of care through the provision of physiotherapy, occupational therapy, chiropody and similar health-related support services; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Edwina Currie *[holding answer 21 July 1988]:* This is our policy already. Through registration and inspection under the Registered Homes Act 1984, health and local authorities have a responsibility to ensure that appropriate and acceptable levels of care are provided to all patients and residents. It is a statutory requirement that the person registered in respect of a nursing home should provide and maintain adequate medical, surgical and nursing equipment and adequate treatment facilities to meet the needs of patients.

In 1985, the National Association of Health Authorities produced a handbook for health authorities, which the Department commended to all registering health authorities. The handbook provides comprehensive advice on all aspects of registration and inspection and advice relating to individual client groups. I understand a supplement is to be issued in September.

People living in residential care homes are entitled to receive the same standard of remedial care as other members of the community and the full range of remedial facilities provided by the local health authority or social services authority should be available to them. "Home Life: a code of practice for residential care" gives guidance about the provision of these services by authorities.

Copies of the handbook and "Home Life" are in the Library.

Health Authorities (Staff)

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* showing for each regional health authority the number of whole-time staff employed and number of hours worked of *(a)* hospital nurses, *(b)* midwives, *(c)* health visitors, *(d)* district nurses, *(e)* ancillary staff, *(f)* ambulance personnel and *(g)* administrative and clerical staff for each year from 1974 to the latest year for which figures are available.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 21 July 1988]:* Such information as can be provided without incurring disproportionate costs is shown in the tables.

Number of whole-time staff employed and number of hours worked have been interpreted as whole-time equivalents.

Although not in the precise form requested, some additional information for years prior to 1981 can be obtained from two tables in *Regional Trends* publications, copies of which are in the Library. The particular tables are:

Health authorities: analysis by type of staff and practitioner, and primary health care nursing services: staff employed, within section 4—health.

NHS staff in post at 30 September 1981

Whole-time equivalents

Region	*Hospital nursing staff[1] including agency*	*Hospital and community midwives including agency*	*Health visitors[2]*	*District nurses[3]*	*Ancillary staff*	*Ambulance staff*	*Administrative and clerical staff*
1. Northern RHA	22,183·6	1,315·2	617·5	1,039·4	11,673·0	1,473·0	6,162·0
2. Yorkshire RHA	25,487·1	1,690·6	687·9	1,103·8	13,478·0	1,606·0	7,083·0
3. Trent RHA	29,183·3	2,079·8	860·3	1,386·1	16,739·0	1,842·0	8,952·0
4. East Anglian RHA	11,790·1	881·7	327·6	549·5	6,037·0	599·0	3,877·0
5. North West Thames RHA	24,687·7	1,515·4	732·0	895·6	12,995·0	492·0	8,799·0
6. North East Thames RHA	27,576·0	1,743·6	648·0	987·6	15,092·0	566·0	9,481·0
7. South East Thames RHA	26,496·3	1,706·4	686·8	1,235·5	15,249·0	938·0	9,341·0
8. South West Thames RHA	21,601·2	1,201·3	661·0	973·0	11,050·0	638·0	6,718·0
9. Wessex RHA	17,954·1	1,183·7	554·4	797·5	8,799·0	947·0	5,460·0
10. Oxford RHA	13,401·1	1,040·4	462·0	737·8	6,395·0	753·0	4,762·0
11. South Western RHA	22,443·7	1,071·0	607·5	932·1	10,735·0	1,408·0	6,734·0
12. West Midlands RHA	34,432·8	2,097·9	1,004·9	1,602·3	16,955·0	1,873·0	10,830·0
13. Mersey RHA	18,988·9	1,189·0	485·7	756·0	9,466·0	852·0	5,391·0
14. North Western RHA	29,637·7	2,167·4	908·5	1,527·3	14,935·0	1,649·0	9,761·0
20. London post-graduate special health authorities	4,243·6	148·0	—	—	2,484·0	—	1,798·0
London Ambulance Service	—	—	—	—	40·0	2,587·0	91·0
DEB/PPA	—	—	—	—	76·0	—	3,561·0
England Total	330,107·2	21,031·4	9,244·1	14,523·2	172,177·0	18,221·0	108,800·0

Source: DHSS annual census of NHS non-medical manpower.

NHS staff in post at 30 September 1982

Whole-time equivalents

Region	*Hospital nursing staff[1] including agency*	*Hospital and community midwives including agency*	*Health visitors[2]*	*District nurses[3]*	*Ancillary staff*	*Ambulance staff*	*Administrative and clerical staff*
1. Northern RHA	22,377·2	1,323·2	620·7	1,062·2	11,402·0	1,474·0	6,094·0
2. Yorkshire RHA	25,339·1	1,570·6	680·8	1,132·9	13,324·0	1,622·0	7,085·0
3. Trent RHA	29,505·5	2,073·2	909·0	1,433·8	16,564·0	1,890·0	9,019·0
4. East Anglian RHA	12,114·3	873·9	344·0	562·7	6,035·0	626·0	3,854·0
5. North West Thames RHA	24,375·1	1,416·7	777·5	970·3	12,410·0	484·0	8,476·0
6. North East Thames RHA	30,022·5	1,722·6	655·1	1,055·1	16,043·0	584·0	10,119·0
7. South East Thames RHA	26,392·4	1,656·2	757·9	1,263·8	14,970·0	942·0	9,366·0
8. South West Thames RHA	21,166·5	1,165·1	644·8	940·6	10,529·0	637·0	6,489·0
9. Wessex RHA	18,260·1	1,196·2	566·4	816·7	8,747·0	954·0	5,483·0
10. Oxford RHA	13,597·4	1,014·8	447·8	692·3	6,256·0	762·0	4,715·0
11. South Western RHA	22,541·6	1,041·0	607·4	950·3	10,633·0	1,424·0	6,807·0
12. West Midlands RHA	34,537·5	2,124·2	1,046·7	1,598·5	16,827·0	1,849·0	10,826·0
13. Mersey RHA	19,154·6	1,108·0	495·9	773·5	9,351·0	870·0	5,349·0
14. North Western RHA	30,712·7	2,023·8	919·0	1,596·6	14,924·0	1,688·0	9,809·0
20. London post-graduate special health authorities	4,740·7	240·6	26·4	48·5	2,399·0	—	1,805·0
London Ambulance Service	—	—	—	—	40·0	2,519·0	87·0
DEB/PPA	—	—	—	—	72·0	—	3,421·0
England Total	334,837·2	20,549·7	9,499·4	14,897·8	170,525·0	18,324·0	108,803·0

Source: DHSS annual census of NHS non-medical manpower.

NHS staff in post at 30 September 1983

Whole-time equivalents

Region	*Hospital nursing staff[1] including agency*	*Hospital and community midwives including agency*	*Health visitors[2]*	*District nurses[3]*	*Ancillary staff*	*Ambulance staff*	*Administrative and clerical staff*
1. Northern RHA	22,688·6	1,383·9	651·0	1,069·7	11,175·5	1,482·4	6,218·5
2. Yorkshire RHA	24,924·0	1,726·9	735·3	1,162·9	13,131·8	1,630·2	7,102·6
3. Trent RHA	29,321·2	2,112·8	905·9	1,441·1	16,158·2	1,903·7	9,019·9
4. East Anglian RHA	12,176·6	921·9	347·6	554·8	6,028·8	638·0	4,055·1
5. North West Thames RHA	23,886·1	1,446·6	718·1	968·4	12,082·0	467·1	8,495·9
6. North East Thames RHA	29,814·4	1,891·2	647·8	1,083·0	15,433·7	565·0	10,169·1
7. South East Thames RHA	26,209·4	1,780·9	753·2	1,269·6	14,456·8	942·7	9,381·8
8. South West Thames RHA	21,186·7	1,179·9	641·9	978·4	10,200·7	632·6	6,614·1
9. Wessex RHA	18,399·8	1,278·2	575·6	865·1	8,588·6	942·9	5,646·1
10. Oxford RHA	13,362·0	1,104·2	505·8	684·4	6,108·5	750·0	4,697·7
11. South Western RHA	22,235·4	1,210·2	608·0	975·7	10,332·5	1,437·8	6,892·6

Region	Hospital nursing staff[1] including agency	Hospital and community midwives including agency	Health visitors[2]	District nurses[3]	Ancillary staff	Ambulance staff	Administrative and clerical staff
12. West Midlands RHA	33,981·4	2,340·4	1,044·2	1,557·0	16,466·4	1,889·3	11,121·0
13. Mersey RHA	18,934·9	1,159·9	498·4	794·9	8,944·1	894·2	5,320·2
14. North Western RHA	30,293·2	2,300·9	1,048·0	1,666·3	14,563·5	1,702·8	9,810·5
20. London post-graduate special health authorities	4,741·8	237·7	27·1	53·3	2,397·5	—	1,855·3
London Ambulance Service	—	—	—	—	40·2	2,518·3	87·6
DEB/PPA	—	—	—	—	74·9	—	3,477·0
England Total	332,155·4	22,075·3	9,707·8	15,124·3	166,183·7	18,396·9	109,964·8

Source: DHSS annual census of NHS non-medical manpower.

NHS staff in post at 30 September 1984

Whole-time equivalents

Region	Hospital nursing staff[1] including agency	Hospital and community midwives including agency	Health visitors[2]	District nurses[3]	Ancillary staff	Ambulance staff	Administrative and clerical staff
1. Northern RHA	22,476·0	1,472·7	630·8	1,107·3	10,657·9	1,423·5	6,314·9
2. Yorkshire RHA	24,935·1	1,782·4	726·6	1,168·7	12,085·0	1,603·5	7,271·4
3. Trent RHA	29,467·7	2,115·3	909·7	1,502·1	14,942·4	1,904·8	9,328·0
4. East Anglian RHA	12,509·9	962·0	278·8	574·9	5,549·0	645·9	4,134·7
5. North West Thames RHA	23,742·1	1,479·1	676·9	997·1	11,018·9	455·9	8,445·2
6. North East Thames RHA	29,920·0	1,901·3	579·9	1,041·6	13,860·7	537·3	10,064·7
7. South East Thames RHA	25,802·4	1,819·6	649·5	1,252·1	12,546·6	958·1	9,265·5
8. South West Thames RHA	20,864·6	1,216·1	624·8	954·1	9,049·8	595·6	6,416·6
9. Wessex RHA	18,620·2	1,315·4	565·0	867·8	8,048·1	952·2	5,709·7
10. Oxford RHA	13,713·8	1,143·2	465·4	704·1	5,682·3	749·9	4,891·8
11. South Western RHA	22,268·1	1,213·4	599·0	975·9	9,542·6	1,430·4	6,818·5
12. West Midlands RHA	33,931·5	2,506·0	1,008·5	1,547·4	15,235·1	1,848·6	11,150·9
13. Mersey RHA	18,429·2	1,173·2	491·0	798·1	8,233·4	909·7	5,448·9
14. North Western RHA	30,445·6	2,283·9	1,093·4	1,671·0	13,568·3	1,584·0	9,748·7
20. London post-graduate special health authorities	4,567·9	230·8	—	13·0	2,065·7	—	1,725·4
London Ambulance Service	—	—	—	—	40·7	2,504·5	82·8
DEB/PPA	—	—	—	—	75·2	—	3,487·2
England Total	331,694·2	22,614·5	9,299·1	15,174·4	152,201·6	18,103·8	110,304·2

Source: DHSS annual census of NHS non-medical manpower.

NHS staff in post at 30 September 1985

Whole-time equivalents

Region	[1]Hospital nursing staff including agency	Hospital and community midwives including agency	[2]Health visitors	[3]District nurses	Ancillary staff	Ambulance staff	A[4] Administrative and clerical staff
1. Northern RHA	22,749·1	1,492·5	675·3	1,135·4	10,017·3	1,396·0	6,116·8
2. Yorkshire RHA	25,159·4	1,791·0	789·5	1,187·2	11,302·9	1,595·5	7,016·6
3. Trent RHA	30,417·2	2,148·5	931·5	1,580·0	13,989·8	1,934·4	9,014·2
4. East Anglian RHA	12,983·3	954·1	373·8	587·3	4,853·5	674·5	4,028·3
5. North West Thames RHA	23,365·6	1,510·7	791·9	1,069·2	9,565·9	455·5	7,839·6
6. North East Thames RHA	29,071·5	1,882·8	708·7	1,083·6	12,562·8	541·5	9,812·0
7. South East Thames RHA	25,540·5	1,778·1	746·3	1,226·1	11,356·3	949·4	8,902·4
8. South West Thames RHA	20,580·4	1,212·0	651·1	979·8	7,587·4	628·6	6,022·7
9. Wessex RHA	19,058·1	1,326·6	602·7	907·3	7,577·8	946·0	5,448·5
10. Oxford RHA	13,463·5	1,185·0	568·8	704·3	5,012·2	757·4	4,687·3
11. South Western RHA	22,661·4	1,286·9	662·6	1,003·4	8,814·8	1,441·4	6,670·9
12. West Midlands RHA	34,728·9	2,550·6	1,111·3	1,631·6	14,370·5	1,880·2	11,012·1
13. Mersey RHA	18,675·0	1,188·6	517·0	795·8	7,631·4	892·5	5,274·7
14. North Western RHA	30,597·6	2,364·6	1,153·8	1,680·4	12,788·0	1,604·9	9,394·2
20. London post-graduate special health authorities	4,623·2	226·9	—	19·0	1,832·2	2,490·5	6,302·1
London Ambulance Service	—	—	—	—	40·7	—	86·0
DEB/PPA	—	—	—	—	76·0	—	3,419·8
England Total	333,674·6	22,898·6	10,284·3	15,590·8	139,379·3	18,188·1	111,048·1

Source: DHSS annual census of NHS non-medical manpower.

NHS staff in post at 30 September 1986

Whole-time equivalents

Region	*Hospital nursing staff*[1] *including agency*	*Hospital and community midwives including agency*	*Health visitors*[2]	*District nurses*[3]	*Ancillary staff*	*Ambulance staff*	*Administrative and clerical staff*
1. Northern RHA	22,993·0	1,517·0	691·0	1,162·1	9,199·5	1,401·3	6,262·5
2. Yorkshire RHA	25,355·0	1,829·6	742·6	1,106·4	9,868·5	1,640·1	7,024·2
3. Trent RHA	30,928·6	2,127·6	955·8	1,524·4	12,973·1	1,968·1	8,899·6
4. East Anglian RHA	13,110·6	939·9	374·9	587·1	4,494·8	769·8	4,029·7
5. North West Thames RHA	23,646·2	1,509·5	809·7	988·5	7,788·8	488·4	7,735·6
6. North East Thames RHA	28,890·4	1,938·5	738·8	1,010·7	11,060·9	590·5	9,794·2
7. South East Thames RHA	24,916·8	1,850·2	834·2	1,241·1	10,109·3	956·5	8,945·8
8. South West Thames RHA	20,330·2	1,204·1	638·7	966·0	6,409·0	666·6	5,909·0
9. Wessex RHA	19,405·3	1,312·3	608·4	909·8	6,623·3	990·2	5,441·9
10. Oxford RHA	13,602·0	1,202·5	563·0	691·9	4,477·2	814·5	4,662·1
11. South Western RHA	22,942·9	1,332·7	680·2	969·8	8,064·2	1,470·2	6,732·1
12. West Midlands RHA	35,352·9	2,565·3	1,118·0	1,570·2	13,186·1	1,936·0	11,283·1
13. Mersey RHA	18,801·4	1,218·8	501·7	800·3	6,698·0	946·7	5,306·4
14. North Western RHA	30,897·1	2,385·4	1,173·3	1,638·1	11,638·7	1,667·8	9,563·4
20. London post-graduate special health authorities	4,523·3	219·6	—	20·0	1,559·7	—	6,275·0
London Ambulance Service	—	—	—	—	37·8	2,659·1	79·7
DEB/PPA	—	—	—	—	78·3	—	3,406·9
England Total	335,695·9	23,152·7	10,430·2	15,186·7	124,267·1	18,965·7	111,351·2

Source: DHSS annual census of NHS non-medical manpower.

[1] Includes qualified nurses, unqualified nursing staff and learners.

[2] Includes health visitors in both the community and school health services, health visitor field work teachers, TB visitors with HV certificates; dual/triple parts (HV/DN/MID and bank health visitors. Excludes HV students.

[3] Includes district nurse practical work teachers, registered/enrolled nurses assisting district nurses, dual parts (DN/MID) and bank district nurses. Excludes tutorial staff, other nursing staff in district nursing and district nurse students.

[4] 1985 and 1986 figures include general managers.

Child Protection Services (London)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he plans to publish the social services inspectorate survey of child protection services in London; and if he will distribute copies to all London hon. Members.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 25 July 1988]:* I am today placing copies of the report in the Library. The report was discussed with London directors at a meeting on 18 July. They are now examining the report and will be taking action locally where needed. Some directors, however, reported a continuing rise in the numbers of registrations of child abuse and it may therefore take some time before there is a satisfactory resolution of the problem of unallocated cases. The inspectorate will continue to monitor progress and to work with boroughs with the worst problem.

I am also placing in the Library copies of the report by the social services inspectors on child protection services in Haringey. That report makes recommendations and puts forward a sensible action plan to tackle the serious problems it identifies. These can all be implemented within the resources available to Haringey. The council has already reported to me on the work that it has in hand to implement the key recommendations of the report.

Listeriosis

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will institute an immediate inquiry into the possible connection between cook-chill food and the incidence of listeriosis; and what steps have been taken to ensure that no risk exists in National Health Service hospitals using this system of catering to patients who are pregnant or elderly or with weakened immune systems;

(2) what advice he has received from the chief medical officer on the possible connection between the incidence of listeriosis and cook-chill catering in National Health Service hospitals; and what urgent action he proposes to take.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* While the incidence of listeriosis is increasing, only two cases are known to have been associated with food in the United Kingdom, neither of which was connected with the cook-chill catering system. There is no evidence to suggest the system is connected with this increased incidence and we have no plans to institute an enquiry. The Public Health Laboratory Service is investigating the food histories of all reported cases of listeriosis.

Hernia Repairs and Hip Replacements

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the number of hernia repairs and hip replacement operations performed in each region, each year, since 1974 to the latest date for which figures are available.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 22 July 1988]:* Such information as can be provided without incurring disproportionate costs is given in the following tables.

Estimated number of hernia operations (Codes[1]: 410-412,515) performed in NHS non-psychiatric hospitals, by region of treatment, England 1979-85

Region of treatment	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
England	69,210	76,740	75,400	63,450	74,000	73,780	74,810
Northern	4,200	4,820	4,560	3,330	4,620	4,960	4,020
Yorkshire	5,330	6,040	5,670	4,340	5,940	5,400	6,130
Trent	6,130	7,540	7,080	5,060	6,690	7,380	7,700
East Anglian	3,220	3,610	3,760	3,150	3,660	3,630	4,290
North West Thames[2]	4,920	5,070	4,860	4,240	4,760	4,800	5,110
North East Thames[2]	6,500	7,560	6,760	6,690	6,930	6,620	6,070
South East Thames[2]	6,260	6,270	6,850	5,840	6,240	6,030	5,820
South West Thames[2]	4,440	4,090	4,610	3,580	4,720	4,500	4,350
Wessex	4,440	4,600	5,110	4,960	4,200	4,630	4,730
Oxford	3,460	4,260	4,450	3,610	3,510	3,840	3,840
South Western	5,070	5,390	4,930	4,350	5,320	4,940	5,260
West Midlands	6,760	7,380	7,090	6,330	7,250	7,130	7,650
Mersey	2,870	3,120	3,050	2,260	3,300	3,180	3,230
North Western	5,430	6,730	6,380	5,400	6,590	6,510	6,340
Special Heath Authorities[2]	180	260	240	310	270	230	270

Notes:
In 1979 and 1982 surgical activity in the NHS was affected by industrial action.
[1] OPCS classification of surgical operations and procedures—3rd revision: 1975.
[2] Because of NHS restructuring in 1982, regional figures are not strictly comparable over the whole period.

Estimated number of total hip replacements and other arthroplasty of hip operations (Codes[1]: 810,811) performed in NHS non-psychiatric hospitals, by region of treatment, England, 1974-1985

Region of treatment	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
England	21,100	22,400	25,110	27,080	28,060	29,520	32,550	33,440	33,730	37,320	37,970	37,650
Northern	810	1,170	1,240	1,180	1,440	1,630	1,490	1,780	1,560	1,470	2,010	2,060
Yorkshire	1,590	1,760	1,830	1,660	1,790	1,860	2,110	2,340	2,200	2,620	2,540	2,470
Trent	1,260	1,340	1,840	1,830	1,780	2,200	1,880	2,600	2,530	2,900	3,190	3,330
East Anglian	920	1,160	1,130	1,290	1,200	1,410	1,920	1,530	1,680	1,980	1,890	1,560
North West Thames[2]	1,140	1,240	1,390	1,450	1,630	1,740	1,770	2,020	2,100	2,260	2,350	2,480
North East Thames[2]	2,360	2,140	2,180	2,610	2,470	2,330	2,690	2,780	3,460	3,940	3,550	3,660
South East Thames[2]	2,410	2,110	2,230	2,920	3,040	2,820	3,100	2,910	3,110	3,130	3,320	2,850
South West Thames[2]	2,090	2,020	2,470	2,400	2,560	2,320	2,370	2,510	2,590	3,060	2,880	2,640
Wessex	1,070	1,590	1,780	2,340	2,110	2,220	2,370	2,580	2,620	2,670	2,780	2,730
Oxford	1,080	1,180	1,510	1,620	1,620	1,810	1,940	1,750	1,970	2,180	2,060	2,090
South Western	1,300	1,750	1,950	1,840	2,140	2,220	2,620	2,360	2,350	2,650	2,740	2,840
West Midlands	2,220	2,110	2,430	2,370	2,560	3,080	3,530	3,510	3,610	3,660	3,950	4,020
Mersey	700	750	1,000	850	1,110	850	990	1,330	1,190	1,400	1,530	1,550
North Western	1,650	1,590	1,640	2,300	2,110	2,600	3,270	3,000	2,720	3,390	3,180	3,330
Special Health Authorities[2 3]	490	490	480	410	500	400	490	440	40	20	0	20

Notes:
In 1975, 1978-79 and 1982 surgical activity in the NHS was affected by industrial action.
[1] OPCS classifications of surgical operations and procedures—3rd revision 1975.
[2] Because of NHS restructuring in 1982, the regional figures are not strictly comparable over the whole period.
[3] Special health authorities.

Essex Hospitals

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many individual representations he has received in opposition to West Essex health authority plans for Princess Alexandra hospital, Harlow, and the corresponding downgrading of St. Margaret's hospital, Epping, and the Hertfordshire and Essex hospital, Bishop's Stortford.

Mrs. Currie *[pursuant to her reply, 27 May 1988, c. 419]:* The number of letters we had received direct from members of the public about changes to services at St. Margaret's and the Herts and Essex hospitals proposed by West Essex health authority was about 250, not several thousand as stated. A petition with several thousand signatures was mistakenly included in the earlier total.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Inward Investment

6. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much inward investment has been attracted to the Province during his term of office; and if he is considering any further initiatives, similar to the Locate in Scotland initiative by the Scottish Office.

Mr. Tom King: Since I took office on 2 September 1985, 21 new projects, which are expected to create 1,330 jobs, have been finalised. The aggregate investment associated with those projects has been £47·15 million.

These investments reflect the hard work of the Northern Ireland Industrial Development Board and we have no current plans to alter the basis of its operation.

Fair Employment

9. **Ms. Armstrong:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he now expects to publish a Bill on fair employment in Northern Ireland.

40. **Mr. McNamara:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when it is the Government's intention to publish the Bill on religious equality of opportunity in employment in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Viggers: The preparation of the legislation is well in hand, and a Bill will be introduced at the earliest possible opportunity.

15. **Mr. Parry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish the representations he has received from employers in Northern Ireland following the publication of the fair employment White Paper.

17. **Mr. Duffy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what changes will be made in the proposals contained in the fair employment White Paper following the representations received since its publication.

Mr. Viggers: The broad framework of policy and proposals for legislation is set out in the White Paper. The Government will give careful consideration to representations which are received, but I cannot anticipate the detailed provisions of the Bill.

The question of the publication of such representations is a matter for those who submitted them.

33. **Mrs. Fyfe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what representations he has received from employers in Northern Ireland following publication of the fair employment White Paper.

Mr. Viggers: Representations have been received from the Northern Ireland chamber of commerce and industry, the Engineering Employers' Federation and the Federation of Building and Civil Engineering Contractors.

Debt (Emergency Provisions) Act 1971

10. **Mr. Clay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what representations he has received seeking the repeal of the payments for Debt (Emergency Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 1971.

Mr. Ian Stewart: In the last year there have been a number of questions on this subject from hon. Members and a letter from Derry city council.

Labour Statistics

14. **Mr. Harry Barnes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the Northern Ireland unemployment figures for June.

Mr. Tom King: There were 115,640 unemployed at 9 June 1988. I am pleased to note that this represented a decrease of 516 from May and a decrease of 9,910 from June 1987.

21. **Mr. John Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement about trends in employment in Northern Ireland during the last five years.

Mr. Viggers: At March 1988, the latest date for which figures are available, there were an estimated 495,580 employees in employment in Northern Ireland. This figure is 1,850 higher than the corresponding estimate five years ago and 5,000 higher than the figure one year ago.

Security

18. **Mr. William Ross:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps have been taken to improve security in Northern Ireland since 30 June.

Mr. Tom King: Since 30 June, the reorganisation of Army deployments has been completed with the establishment of a new brigade headquarters in Armagh. Various new physical improvements have been completed. New legislative measures to combat terrorism have been brought forward. A proposal for a draft Police and Criminal Evidence Order has also been published. Meetings between senior Royal Ulster Constabulary and Garda Siochana officers have continued and a further meeting between the Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the Commissioner of the Garda Siochana took place at the Intergovernmental Conference on 27 July, which discussed a number of proposals for further improving the level of cross-border security co-operation.

24. **Mr. Maginnis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the security situation in the Province.

Mr. Tom King: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Brent, East (Mr. Livingstone).

Cross-border Co-operation

19. **Mr. Andrew Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he is satisfied with the level of cross-border co-operation.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Co-operation takes place over a wide range of activities, and we and the Irish Government are committed to developing it further.

Education

20. **Mr. Bidwell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent meetings he has had with the educational groups.

27. **Mr. Henderson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many representations he has received recently from interest groups in the education field; and on what subjects.

Dr. Mawhinney: I have in recent months, received a large number of representations, written and oral, on a wide range of educational topics. These include representations on the consultation paper on education reform, substitution provision in schools, school development proposals, the cross-community contact scheme, youth service review and funding for arts, museums, sport and community services.

Mr. Anthony Hughes

22. **Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will call for a report from the Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary as to when he expects police inquiries into the death of Mr. Anthony Hughes at Loughgall on 8 May 1987 to be concluded; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I understand that the RUC have completed their investigations. The Director of Public Prosecutions (Northern Ireland) will decide whether any criminal proceedings should be brought.

Protection Rackets

23. **Mr. Bowis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on current progress on the ending of the protection racket system operating against firms in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The combating of paramilitary racketeering has a high priority in our overall law and order drive. Protection rackets have proved most difficult to counter, chiefly because of evidential difficulties. Nevertheless, determined police efforts have continued and there have been 12 successful court cases since the beginning of 1987, with a number of other cases currently pending.

We have been examining the best ways further to tackle the protection racketeers. In particular, we look to a forthcoming major administrative initiative to help spearhead this drive, an action which should be complemented by the forthcoming Prevention of Terrorism Bill, which will provide us with a further opportunity to fill any gaps in the legislative support being given to the RUC. We intend in the Bill to broaden further and to strengthen our attack on paramilitary racketeering.

Planning Applications

25. **Mr. Clifford Forsythe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many planning applications have been approved during 1986 and 1987 in *(a)* the borough of Newtownabbey and *(b)* the borough of Antrim.

Mr. Needham: In Newtownabbey borough, 544 planning applications were approved in 1986, and 459 in 1987. The corresponding figures for Antrim borough were 466 and 363.

Anglo-Irish Agreement

26. **Mr. Dykes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he has received any representations from the public concerning recent developments affecting the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Agreement.

Mr. Tom King: I have received occasional letters from the public about the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

37. **Sir John Farr:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is his latest assessment of the effect that the Anglo-Irish Agreement has had on the level of violence in the Province, and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tom King: I believe that, through the operation of the structures established following the agreement, co-operation on security across the border continues to develop, to the benefit of our common anti-terrorist effort.

Community Groups

28. **Mr. Barron:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the level of funds for community groups in the Province.

Dr. Mawhinney: In 1987-88, £37·24 million was provided to community groups through the action for community employment scheme, the community volunteering scheme and the youth training programme. In addition, £9·78 million was paid in grants to the health and social services boards and district councils to support community services and voluntary groups.

36. **Mr. Morgan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what meetings he has had recently with representatives from community groups in the Province.

Dr. Mawhinney: Ministers and officials frequently meet representatives from community groups; some seven meetings have taken place at ministerial level in the past six months.

Housing Order 1988

29. **Mr. Illsley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many representations he has received on the draft Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1988; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham: During the consultation period on the proposal for a draft Housing (Northern Ireland) Order, submissions were received from 58 organisations and individuals. I also met representatives from four of the main voluntary organisations concerned with homelessness to discuss their views.

International Investment Ltd.

30. **Mr. Beggs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will call for a report from the Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary on the progress of investigations into the affairs of International Investment Limited (in liquidation) Gibraltar.

Mr. Tom King: I have nothing further to add to the information I gave to the hon. Gentleman when I wrote to him on 27 June 1988.

Harland and Wolff

31. **Mr. Nicholas Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent discussions he has had with Mr. Ravi Tikkoo on the future of the Harland and Wolff shipyard; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Viggers: My right hon. Friend met Mr. Tikkoo earlier this year. Discussions are being carried out by my officials and their advisors.

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he last met trades union representatives from Harland and Wolff; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Viggers: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has not had any recent meetings with trades union representatives from Harland and Wolff. He is, however, due to meet the Northern Ireland council of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions in the near future to discuss general economic issues.

35. **Mr. Skinner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the state of current dicussions on his plans to privatise Harland and Wolff.

Mr. Tom King: The Government have appointed merchant bankers to advise on possible privatisation. Preliminary discussions have been held with Tikkoo Cruise Line Ltd. but these are at a very early stage.

A number of other parties have also expressed an initial interest.

Northern Health Board

32. **Mr. Fatchett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the recent High Court decision on health service cuts and closures in the Northern health board area.

Mr. Needham: I wholeheartedly welcome the court's decision on this matter, since it frees the Northern board to proceed with its plans for 1988-89, which include service developments totalling over £800,000.

38. **Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he last met National Health Service trade unions to discuss the High Court's recent decision on the service cuts planned by the Northern health board; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham: The judgment in this case was given only on 8 July and I have not met the trade unions during the intervening period.

I am glad of course that this case has been resolved and that the board can now proceed with implementing its operational plan—including the development of new services at a cost of more than £800,000.

Intergovernmental Conference

34. **Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he will next have meetings with Ministers of the Republic of Ireland; and what subjects he will discuss.

Mr. Tom King: I met Irish Ministers yesterday at a meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference.

I gave details of our discussions in a reply earlier to a question from the hon. Member for Falkirk, West (Mr. Canavan).

IRA (Aid)

39. **Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement about efforts by the Royal Ulster Constabulary to prevent aid to the Irish Republican Army from outside Northern Ireland.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I understand that the Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary is in regular contact with law enforcement agencies throughout the United Kingdom and in other countries with a view to preventing the supply of arms and funds to terrorist organisations in Northern Ireland.

Concessionary Fares

41. **Mr. Kilfedder:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will introduce full concessionary fares for pensioners throughout the Province.

Mr. Needham: No. I have no plans to extend the existing scheme, which entitles persons over the age of 65, as well as children under 16 and the registered war disabled, to concessionary travel throughout Northern Ireland at half-fare on all scheduled bus and rail services, without restriction on time of travel or length of journey. Registered blind persons travel free. These concessions are financed by grants to the bus and rail companies amounting to some £6 million a year.

Gaelic Athletic Association

42. **Sir John Biggs-Davison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will ask the chairman of the Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights when his predecessor received the representations of the hon. Member for Epping Forest against the continued discrimination against members of the armed forces and police by the Gaelic Athletic Association; and when the commission expects to report.

Mr. Tom King: Representations by my hon. Friend on this issue were referred to the commission, which is an independent body, in 1984. I understand that a final completion date has not been fixed for the commission's major review of the adequacy and effectiveness of legislation to prevent discrimination on grounds of religious or political belief. However, the commission's report on fair employment (Cm. 237) referred to the matter raised by my hon. Friend, at paragraph 14.4.

Consultants

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will give the cost to his Department of employing management or computer consultants for each year from 1983 to 1987.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The total cost to all Northern Ireland Departments is as follows:

Financial Year	£
1983-84	3,309,283
1984-85	3,841,035
1985-86	4,006,116
1986-87	5,125,405

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list each management or computer consultancy contract extant in his Department as at 1 January 1987, giving in each case the name of the consultancy firm and the subject of the assignment.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The following management and computer consultancy contracts were extant at 1 January 1987:

Firms	*Subject of assignment*
Barnard Systems	DOE land registry BIS-IPSE
	DANI animal health
	NIO prison officers payroll
Beecom Management Consultants Ltd.	To provide work study staff under an agency agreement
	Finance for managers consultancy service for client company
Beecom (NI) Ltd.	II appreciation training
	DOE roads service integrated systems
	DOE water service integrated systems
Belfast Information Technology Service	"Hands On" IT sessions
British Telecom	Government network
Business Information Systems-Beecom	Management and finance accounting systems, IT sessions
Cap Industry Ltd.	To maintain the computerised rates assessment and collection system in NI
CCTA	DFP methodology support
	DFP strategy development
	DOE strategy study
Centre House Management	Financial appraisal for IDB

Firms	Subject of assignment
CIPFA Computer Services Ltd.	Implementation of IT strategy
H. Cloutt Associates	VME technical consultancy
Computer Learning Centre	"Hands On" IT sessions
Computing Consultancy and Services	Report on software, staff availability and demand
Elsdon Computer Services Ltd. (London)	Development of payroll system under VME (virtual machine environment)
Ernst and Whinney	Review on internal audit in Northern Ireland Civil Service
Ewbank Preece	Feasibility study
Gilpin Black Associates	Objective setting exercise
Goldblatt Management Consultancy	Carpet sector Review
	Financial appraisals for IDB
	Marketing appraisals for IDB
Gresham Computer Personnel Southampton	VME operations consultancy
P. Hyde	IT "The Human Dimension"
Industrial Training Service Ltd.	Development of Youth Training Programme (YTP) workscheme
	Enterprise training for YTP trainers
Industrial Training Services	Provide specialist advice and input to IDB's executive development programme
Johnson Andrews & Co.	Sales development training programme
Learmouth Burchett Management Systems	DANI works service
Lindsay Marketing Services	Marketing appraisal for IDB
Management Development Services (NI) Ltd	Consulting support service to participants in the enterprise allowance scheme
Market Research NI	Market appraisal for IDB
McCormick Tracey & Mullarbey	Meat plant survey
McFarland Edmund	International investment and market research
	Market appraisal for IDB
McIver Jenkins Associates Ltd.	Marketing advice
NI Council on Alcohol	Alcohol awareness
Coopers and Lybrand Associates	The development and implementation of a departmental information technology strategy for social security benefit payments
	Marketing appraisals for IDB
	Financial appraisals for IDB
	To carry out a survey of standard capital grants scheme claimants
	Energy consultants—to advise on the technical and economic aspects of private sector electricity generation and to evaluate competing private and public sector proposals for the next tranche of generating capacity required in Northern Ireland
	To assist the Department to supervise and monitor the affairs of the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company and the three subsidiary transport operating companies
	Enabling study for Northern Ireland Prison Department
David Rigby Associates	Linen task force update
	Marketing appraisal for IDB
Deloitte Haskins and Sells	Financial appraisals for IDB
	To devise a system to meet the management, accounting and information needs of the Department's works service
Denton Hall Burgin and Warrens	To negotiate and draft contractural arrangements with private sector electricity generators for the generation and sale of electricity to Northern Ireland Electricity
PA Management Consultants	Organisational change in DED
Pactel	Evaluation of benefits of Belfast London information system
Peat Marwick	Financial appraisal for IDB
PE Consultancy Services	Marketing appraisal for IDB
Price Waterhouse	Assistance with statutory audits
	Investment appraisal
	Professional qualification in internal audit
	Toolmaking requirements for a tooling facility for injection moulding;
	Financial appraisals for IDB
Purchasing Index (UK) Ltd.	Road vehicle-mobile plant purchasing and management in Department of Agriculture (Northern Ireland)
QUB (Department of Agriculture)	Cheese survey
Queen's University Belfast	Basic book-keeping
	Investment appraisal
	Professional qualification on internal audit
N. M. Rothschild and Sons Ltd.	Financial consultants—to advise on the viability of the financial structure underlying private sector electricity generating proposals
Rowena Mills Associates	Marketing appraisal for IDB
Software Ireland	DFP valuation and lands office
	DED companies registry
	DFP methodology support
	IT awareness
	Users role in micro-computers
Software Ireland and Beecom	IT awareness programme (users role in system development)
Software Ireland Ltd.	Computerisation of valuation and lands office
Touche Ross	Assessment of audit needs, development of audit processes and assistance with computer audit, both for departmental internal audit and the statutory audit function
Touche Ross Management Consultants	Monitoring Harland and Wolff on behalf of DED
	To monitor Short Bros plc
University of Ulster	Investment appraisal
Warner International	Marketing appraisal for IDB

Electricity Generation

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the Government's investment appraisal of Kilroot II and the competing public and private sector lignite proposals for electricity generation is likely to be completed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Viggers: The investment appraisal of the competing power station proposals has been completed and the Government have decided that Kilroot phase II will be developed to meet the need for new generating capacity in Northern Ireland. It has also been decided to set in hand immediately an examination of ways of privatising the entire Northern Ireland electricity system.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent discussions he has had on the future of electricity generation in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Viggers: I announced on 15 July that the Government have decided to meet the need for new

generating capacity in Northern Ireland, which will occur in the mid-1990s by installing the third and fourth generating sets in the Kilroot power station as dual coal-oil fired units.

On the same day I announced plans to examine ways of privatising the entire Northern Ireland electricity system.

Handicapped Persons (Central Heating)

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will extend the provision of central heating in respect of handicapped adaptations from those who are totally immobile to those in the severely handicapped categories; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham: The Northern Ireland Housing Executive can make house renovation grants to all disabled people to help meet the cost of any necessary adaptations to their homes. Such grants are made only following assessment of the needs of each disabled person by professional staff of health and social services boards.

If professional staff recommend that adaptations, including modification of existing heating systems or the installation of alternative systems, are necessary, grants are made available.

Child Care

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what action he is taking to implement the recommendations within his area of responsibility of the European Commission's childcare network report: "Caring for Children—Services and Policies for Childcare and Equal Opportunities in the United Kingdom".

Mr. Needham: This detailed report and its recommendations are currently being considered. They cover the areas of responsibility of a number of Government Departments, both at national level and in Northern Ireland.

Flooding

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the costs of repairing the damage caused to flood protection works by the floods of last October fall on the drainage division's maintenance budget.

Mr. Viggers: Yes. The 1987-88 maintenance budget of the Department of Agriculture's drainage division was increased by £80,000 to allow for purchase of additional materials for repair of damage caused to flood banks last October.

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* to show the sums of money in cash and real terms for each year since 1980 expended on *(a)* capital works and *(b)* maintenance on river drainage in (i) the Armagh area, (ii) the Dunmurry-Sprucefield area and (iii) the Omagh area; what are his projections for the current year; and if he will indicate what extra sums he has made available to prevent a repetition of the floods of last October, and what extra sums have been made available to repair damage caused by these floods in the current year.

Mr. Viggers: The information is as follows for the years 1982-83 to 1987-88 together with a projection of current year expenditure.

£ million

	Armagh		*Omagh*		*Dunmurry-Sprucefield*	
	Capital works	*Maintenance*	*Capital works*	*Maintenance*	*Capital works*	*Maintenance*
1982-83 (cash terms)	0·4	1·3	0·2	1·1	3·0	1·5
(at 1988-89 prices)	0·5	1·7	0·3	1·5	3·9	2·0
1983-84 (cash terms)	0·4	1·4	0·7	1·1	3·3	1·7
(at 1988-89 prices)	0·5	1·8	0·9	1·4	4·1	2·1
1984-85 (cash terms)	1·5	1·3	0·4	1·1	2·5	2·1
(at 1988-89 prices)	1·8	1·5	0·5	1·3	3·0	2·5
1985-86 (cash terms)	1·7	1·1	0·4	1·0	3·2	2·0
(at 1988-89 prices)	1·9	1·3	0·5	1·1	3·6	2·3
1986-87 (cash terms)	3·2	1·3	0·4	1·1	2·1	2·0
(at 1988-89 prices)	3·5	1·5	0·5	1·2	2·2	2·2
1987-88 (cash terms)	3·9	1·2	0·9	1·0	3·1	1·8
(at 1988-89 prices)	4·0	1·3	0·9	1·1	3·2	1·9
1988-89 Projection	4·2	1·3	1·3	1·1	2·0	2·1

Cash terms have been repriced using the GDP factors.

Figures are not available in the form requested for earlier years, but the total expenditure in Northern Ireland in those years was:

	Capital works £ million	*Maintenance £ million*
1980-81 (cash terms)	2·8	3·1
(at 1988-89 prices)	4·3	4·7
1981-82 (cash terms)	3·5	4·0
(at 1988-89 prices)	4·9	5·5

The Drainage NI Order 1973 does not charge the Department of Agriculture with responsibility for the prevention of flooding but its ongoing programme of providing flood protection in vulnerable areas has been supplemented by an additional £1 million in the current year.

The Department's maintenance effort has been concentrating on the repair of those flood defences requiring immediate attention in October 1987 and account continues to be taken of damage caused at that time in prioritising future works programmes.

Disabled People (Discrimination)

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps his Department is taking to eliminate discrimination against the disabled in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Viggers: Our approach towards the disabled in Northern Ireland is directed towards enabling them to acquire the training, skills, opportunities and support they need to secure employment. A range of measures is available to provide practical help to employers.

Belfast

Sir John Biggs-Davison: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what new funds are being provided to promote enterprises, employment and social improvement in the poorer parts of Belfast; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given to a question by my hon. Friend the Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Smith) on 19 July 1988 at column *562*.

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what consultations took place with Lisburn district council and Newtonabbey district council before the Whitehouse, Coole and Collin wards were included in areas of special need contained in "Making Belfast Work".

Mr. Needham: Wards within the Belfast urban area were assessed as areas of need on the basis of objective indices of deprivation and this did not, therefore, require consultation with any of the district councils.

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what criteria were used in defining areas of social need as Catholic West Belfast and Protestant West Belfast as contained in the map on figure 1 of "Making Belfast Work".

Mr. Needham: As the published material indicates, wards within the area were designated as either Protestant or Catholic on the basis of the 1981 census of population, after making allowance for those persons not stating their religion and those not enumerated. Objective indices of deprivation were used in defining the areas of social need.

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the amount of money invested in the area defined in the document "Making Belfast Work" published by his Department, as Catholic West Belfast, in projects for industrial development, housing, assistance to voluntary projects, health and social services and education for each year from 1970 through to 1980 and from 1980 until 1987.

Mr. Needham: The area in the document is defined by reference to council wards. The information requested is not held at ward level and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

MVs Portaferry and Strangford

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many days MV Portaferry and MV Strangford vessels operated from Strangford to Portaferry and from Portaferry to Strangford in each of the years 1984-85, 1985-86, 1986-87 and 1987-88.

Mr. Needham: The Strangford lough ferry service was run using either the MV Strangford Ferry or the MV Portaferry for all or part of the daily scheduled period of service on 363 days in 1984-85, 339 days in 1985-86, 349 days in 1986-87 and 365 days in 1987-88.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many days the MV Portaferry and MV Strangford vessels were scheduled to operate from Strangford to Portaferry and from Portaferry to Strangford in each of the years 1984-85, 1985-86, 1986-87 and 1987-88.

Mr. Needham: The Strangford lough ferry service, operated by the MV Strangford Ferry as the main vessel and by the MV Portaferry as a standby-vessel, was, and is, scheduled to run every day of the year apart from Christmas day.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the Department of the Environment will replace the MV Portaferry vessel on the Strangford-Portaferry route; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham: The Department of the Environment has no present plans to replace the MV Portaferry. The Department's aim is to ensure that the MV Portaferry is maintained as is required to enable the vessel to serve as a safe and effective standby for the main Strangford lough ferry service vessel, the MV Strangford Ferry.

Schools (Cleaning Services)

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) why the education and library boards in Northern Ireland have decided to employ contract cleaning services in all their schools from 1 September; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what steps will be taken to ensure that the same standards of hygiene and cleanliness are maintained under the contract cleaning services scheme in all schools in Northern Ireland.

Dr. Mawhinney *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* Experience in other public bodies has shown that savings are possible by subjecting services to competitive tendering and education and library boards were requested by the Department to consider the market testing of a number of services, including cleaning. However, the extent to which they will employ contract cleaning services in their schools is not yet known.

The maintenance of standard of hygiene and cleanliness in controlled and maintained schools is the responsibility of the appropriate education and library board.

For voluntary schools and independent schools this responsibility rests with the individual school authority.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what efficiency savings will be made in each of the education and library boards in Northern Ireland due to the introduction of contract cleaning services in schools from 1 September.

Dr. Mawhinney *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* The Southern education and library board obtained tenders for a pilot scheme for cleaning services at 26 of its schools in its area and awarded contracts for 16 schools; the estimated saving in the period 1 September 1988 to 31 March 1989 is £29,000. The other boards have not yet subjected their cleaning services to competitive tendering.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of the education and library board budget in each education and library boards was used for cleaning services for all types of schools in each of the years from 1980-81 to 1987-88.

Dr. Mawhinney *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* The information is as follows:

	Belfast *Per cent.*	*North-Eastern* *Per cent.*	*South-Eastern* *Per cent.*	*Southern* *Per cent.*	*Western* *Per cent.*
1980-81	8·18	6·85	5·11	6·05	5·77
1981-82	7·94	6·49	5·11	6·07	5·80
1982-83	7·95	6·19	5·19	6·13	5·93
1983-84	8·13	6·19	5·33	6·06	5·58
1984-85	7·88	6·10	5·23	6·09	5·73
1985-86	8·36	6·44	5·34	6·38	6·02
1986-87	6·69	6·20	5·29	5·94	5·70
1987-88	6·90	6·52	5·53	6·24	6·09

These figures include cleaning and caretaking services; separate figures for cleaning are not available.

Short Brothers

Mr. Kilfedder: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) if he proposes to take steps to prevent any foreign countries from purchasing the missile division of Short Brothers, Northern Ireland;

(2) if he will take steps to prevent Libyan interests from purchasing the missile division of Short Brothers, Northern Ireland.

Mr. Viggers *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* In considering any approaches relating to the company the national and other interests will be fully taken into account.

Public Order (Charges)

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list all those elected councillors and hon. Members who have been charged under the Public Order (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 and the outcome of the subsequent trials; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart *[holding answer 21 July 1988]:* This information is not readily available and could not be obtained except at disproportionate cost.

Economic League

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what information is available to him on the activities or associations of the Economic League in Northern Ireland; and whether the Royal Ulster Constabulary has investigated whether that body might receive, possess or circulate information or misinformation which might be useful to some terrorist groups.

Mr. Ian Stewart *[holding answer 15 July 1988]:* I understand that no such information is held by my Department, nor has any such investigation been carried out by the RUC.

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether Government at any level in Northern Ireland have or have had contacts with the Economic League, receive information or representations from it or give information to it or have had such contacts with individuals or bodies whom Government might regard as acting for or with the Economic League.

Mr. Ian Stewart *[holding answer 15 July 1988]:* I am not aware of any such relationships between my Department and the Economic League.

Plastic Bullets

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list, for each incident involving death or injury by plastic bullet rounds in Northern Ireland since 1972, the victim, the date of the incident, the circumstances leading to death or injury, the amount of compensation paid, if any, and whether it was paid under criminal injuries compensation legislation or other provisions.

Mr. Ian Stewart *[holding answer 8 July 1988]:* Since 1972, 13 people have died after being struck by plastic baton rounds. During the same period two people died as a result of rubber baton round injuries. The names of those who died and the details of the circumstances of each death are as follows:

Name	*Date of death*	*Circumstances*
Francis Rowntree	22 April 1972	Francis Rowntree was hit in the head by a rubber baton round fired during rioting at Divis Flats in Belfast on 20 April 1972. He died in hospital two days later.
Tobias Molloy	16 July 1972	On 16 July 1972 a number of rubber baton rounds were fired by the security forces when a crowd of youths attacked an army checkpoint near Strabane, Tobias Molloy is believed to have been struck by one of the rounds and was reported dead on arrival in hospital, across the border, in the Republic of Ireland.
Stephen Geddis	30 August 1975	On 28 August 1975, as the army moved in to dismantle a barricade built by youths at a road junction in Belfast, they were stoned by a crowd. The security forces fired a number of plastic baton rounds and later Stephen Geddis was admitted to hospital with head injuries from which he died the following day.
Brian Stewart	10 October 1976	On 4 October 1976 the security forces fired a number of plastic baton rounds to disperse a crowd of around 500 people who were stoning them in the Turf Lodge area of Balfast. Shortly afterwards Brian Stewart was admitted to hospital suffering from a fractured skull; he died on 10 October.

Name	Date of death	Circumstances
Michael Donnolly	9 August 1980	On 9 August 1980 the security forces fired a number of plastic baton rounds during a period of sustained rioting in Leeson Street in Belfast. Michael Donnolly was struck by one of these rounds and died a short time later in hospital.
Paul Whitters	25 April 1981	On 15 April 1981 during rioting in Londonderry masked youths approached a bakery throwing stones and breaking windowes and apparently intending to hijack a lorry. The security forces fired a plastic baton round at the crowd which hit one of them, Paul Whitters, on the head. He was admitted to hospital where he died 10 days later.
Julie Livingstone	13 May 1981	On 12 May 1981 members of the security forces in an armoured vehicle in Belfast fired 3 plastic baton rounds when they were attacked by youths throwing petrol bombs. Julie Livingstone was seen to fall and she later died as a result of a head injury.
Carol Ann Kelly	22 May 1981	On 19 May 1981 in the Twinbrook area of Belfast two army landrovers came under attack from youths throwing stones and other missiles, and the security forces fired two plastic baton rounds. Carol Ann Kelly was struck on the head by the second of these baton rounds and she died in hospital three days later.
Henry Duffy	22 May 1981	On 22 May 1981, during a period of heavy rioting in the Bogside area of Londonderry, the security forces fired a number of plastic baton rounds when they came under attack from youths throwing petrol and nail bombs. Henry Duffy was hit in the head by a baton round and died after admission to hospital.
Norah McCabe	9 July 1981	In the early hours of 8 July 1981 two police landrovers were attacked with stones and other missiles whilst travelling on the Falls Road in Belfast. At the junction of Linden Street a plastic baton round was fired from one of the landrovers and Norah McCabe was struck on the head, she died the following day in hospital.
Paul Doherty	31 July 1981	On 24 July 1981 following disturbances and demonstrations in connection with the Republican hunger strike, barricades were erected outside Divis Flats in Belfast. As the army removed these barricades they were stoned and petrol bombed by youths on the road and in the adjacent flats. A member of the security forces fired two plastic baton rounds and one of these struck Peter Doherty, who was near an open window in the kitchen of a flat. He died a week later.
Peter McGuinness	9 August 1981	On 9 August 1981 police on the Whitewell Road in Belfast were attacked with stones and petrol bombs by about 50 youths. As two petrol bombs burst on the roof of a police vehicle the security forces fired one plastic baton round and Peter McGuinness, who had been demonstrating with the crowd, was hit in the chest and died shortly afterwards.
Stephen McConomy	19 April 1982	On 16 April 1982, as a suspected explosives device was examined by the army, an armoured vehicle came under attack from rioters, Stephen McConomy was one of a group of youths near the vehicle. He was hit by a plastic baton round and died three days later in hospital.
John Downes	12 August 1984	On 12 August 1984 the police attempted to arrest Mr. Martin Galvin, the banned Noraid publicity director, at a rally in Andersonstown, West Belfast to mark the thirteenth anniversary of the introduction of internment, in the disturbances which followed the security forces fired a number of plastic baton rounds. John Downes died after being struck by one of them.
Keith White	14 April 1986	On 31 March 1986 following rioting in Portadown, Keith White was struck by a plastic baton round. He died in hospital from his injuries on 14 April 1986.

Since 17 March 1981, when records were first collated, 417 people are recorded as having been injured by baton rounds. More detailed information concerning these alleged injuries is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

The information in respect of compensation is not available in the form requested, but between 1982 and 1988 (to 8 July) 48 of the claims made under the Police Act (Northern Ireland) 1970 against the Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary for deaths and injuries from baton rounds have been settled at a figure of £505,516. Information relating to such claims made against the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland under the Criminal Injuries (Compensation) Northern Ireland Order 1977 could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Regarding the details of those of the 48 settled claims that were concluded in court and are therefore in the public domain, I refer the hon. Member to the reply I have given him today to his written question.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many actions were brought against the Royal Ulster Constabulary by individuals or the families of individuals injured or killed by plastic bullets in each year since 1972.

Mr. Ian Stewart *[holding answer 8 July 1988]:* The information requested is not readily available since 1982 and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

However, since 1982, 183 cases, of which 107 have been concluded and 76 are pending, involving the use of plastic baton rounds, have been brought against the RUC. These cases include civil bills, writs and letters of claim, and cover claims for personal injury or death and also damage to property.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if for those actions brought against the Royal Ulster Constabulary by individuals or the families of individuals injured or killed by plastic bullets since 1972, he will list *(a)* the outcome in each case whether

compensation was paid, to whom, in what amount and on what date and *(b)* for those cases settled out of court, amounts of compensation paid, to whom and on what date.

Mr. Ian Stewart *[holding answer 8 July 1988]:* The complete information is not available in the form requested and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

However, since 1982, 107 cases have been concluded as follows:

(a) 48 cases were concluded with an amount of £505,516 paid in compensation. No admissions of liability were made in these cases.
(b) Liability was denied in 35 cases.
(c) 15 cases were disallowed at court.
(d) In nine cases there were no further proceedings.

It would not be appropriate to give details of individual cases that were concluded out of court or the names of recipients of settlements in court. The other details of the 15 out of the 48 concluded cases that were settled in court were as follows:

Date of incident	*Amount paid*	*Date of settlement*
9 August 1981	3,000	20 December 1983
8 July 1981	2,000	7 February 1985
21 May 1981	1,000	14 December 1984
9 August 1980	1,500	11 December 1984
24 April 1981	2,000	21 March 1983
2 August 1981	3,000	18 December 1984
22 May 1981	8,500	4 June 1985
20 April 1981	515	3 November 1983
8 July 1981	41,000	19 December 1984
9 August 1986	1,000	29 December 1987
9 August 1980	1,250	27 December 1984
15 July 1981	750	21 April 1982
12 August 1984	10,000	18 December 1986
9 August 1980	750	27 December 1984
8 May 1981	14,050	8 July 1987
Total	90,315	

Educational Qualifications

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) if he will list the percentages of the total post-primary school population, who have attained passes in qualifications such as City and Guilds and B Tec certificates in each of the years 1985, 1986 and 1987;

(2) if he will list the percentages of the total post-primary school population, who have attained passes at each grade level including upgraded status in CSE and GCE O and A-level in each of the years 1985, 1986 and 1987.

Dr. Mawhinney *[holding answer 26 July 1988]:* The information is not available.

Electrical Equipment Testing

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to guarantee the same standards of consumer protection after the discontinuing of electrical equipment testing services in the industrial science division of the Department of Economic Development.

Mr. Viggers *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* Following a review of the work of the Department of Economic Development's industrial science division it has been possible to reinstate the service for the testing of electrical equipment and the same standards of consumer protection will therefore be provided as before the service was temporarily suspended.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will review his recent decision to discontinue electrical equipment testing in the industrial science division of the Department of Economic Development, taking into account the increased financial burdens which will be placed on local authorities required to despatch articles to Great Britain; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Viggers *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* I have had representations from a number of local authorities in Northern Ireland and from consumer organisations about the difficulties they are encountering in getting electrical equipment tested. A review has been conducted of the work of the Department's industrial science division and it has been possible to reinstate this service. Some increase in charges will be necessary so that the service covers its cost and the local authorities are being informed of these increases.

Schools (Cleaners)

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people were employed as cleaners in primary, secondary and further education in Northern Ireland in each of the years from 1980-81 to 1987-88.

Dr. Mawhinney *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* The information is as follows in respect of grant-aided controlled and maintained schools (including nursery and special schools):

	Cleaners
1980-81	5,313
1981-82	5,155
1982-83	5,194
1983-84	5,257
1984-85	5,262
1985-86	5,188
1986-87	4,984
1987-88	5,072

At present some 78 per cent. of cleaning staff are employed on a part-time basis.

A breakdown of these figures on a sectoral basis is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. The figures also exclude voluntary grammar schools for which such information is not held centrally.

DEFENCE

Submarine Compex

Mr. Patrick Thompson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if, subsequent to the publication of the results of frigate compex report in March 1987, the results of the submarine compex exercise are now available.

Mr. Sainsbury: My predecessor announced on 5 March 1987 the results of the comparison exercise for the refits of two Leander class frigates. A detailed report has now been drawn up to compare the commercial refits of the Oberon

class submarine HMS Otter at Humber Shiprepairers Limited, and her sister ship HMS Osiris under taken at Devonport royal dockyard.

Against an allocation of 105 weeks at the outset (including five weeks for sea trials), the submarine Otter was taken in hand on 3 December 1984 and completed on 2 March 1987, a period of 117 weeks inclusive. In effect, this was a delay of only one week since Humber Shiprepairers Limited was granted an 11-week extension to repair the port main engine at the Ministry of Defence's cost and liability. The Osiris refit commenced on 16 December 1985 and was completed on 11 June 1987, a period of just over 90 weeks inclusive. With less work to undertake, Devonport dockyard had contracted, during the refit, to complete in this time scale. Both refits achieved the required quality standards, having been examined by the same acceptance authorities, and both submarines are now operational.

The comparison of costs was again carried out by the Ministry of Defence's principal director of accountancy services, independently of the director general of ship refitting. In order to place the two refits on a comparable basis, the principal director of accountancy services made adjustments for differences in specification work content, condition of the ships, and yard facilities. He also took into account the work subcontracted by Humber Shiprepairers Limited, services provided to Humber Shiprepairers Limited and Devonport by the Ministry of Defence, and inflation between the different refit time scales. The costs were finally adjusted for the differences in the amount of work actually done on the respective submarines, with the result that the dockyard cost was assessed as approximately 30 per cent. more than Humber Shiprepairers Limited for comparable work.

Overall the performance of both yards was commendable in different ways. For HSL to complete Otter's refit to time and quality with no previous warship experience was most creditable, particularly in the light of the disruption to its schedules due to the poor quality of some of the Ministry material supplied to it. On the other hand, Devonport completed Osiris in a time not achieved for 13 years and to a high-quality standard. The report concludes that private ship repairers can compete with the royal dockyards, despite the latter's depth of experience, and recommends that, in view of the cost advantage, suitable ship repair yards should be invited to tender for future Oberon class refits. It describes the problems that arise during refits and suggests how these can be solved. Except as noted below the conclusions and recommendations of compex have been disseminated and are already being used by DGSR in the naval refit programme, the great majority of which is conducted now under commercial disciplines.

The Government are committed to the extension of competition as part of their policy of putting the royal dockyards under commercial management. The recommendation about future Oberon class refits will therefore be taken into account as decisions are made in each case. The recommended introduction of reduced complement refits will need further thought because of the budgetary implications.

Compex proved that the private ship repair sector was capable of conducting both submarine and surface warship refits. It has confirmed the opportunities for tightening our refit procedures across the board to achieve better value for money. It also confirms that we should pursue the goal of greater competition to reap those benefits in the future. The transfer of the royal dockyards to commercial management was wholly consistent with this policy.

I have placed in the Library copies of the executive summary of the report on the submarine refits, and will place copies of the full report there shortly.

Military Lands Act 1892

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list in chronological order the byelaws made under the Military Lands Act 1892 that were in force on 1 July; and if he will place a copy of each of these byelaws in the Library.

Mr. Freeman: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 18 May, at column *509*, listing byelaws made under the Military Lands Act 1892 since May 1979. All these were extant on 1 July although the RAF Greenham Common Byelaws 1985 and the RAF Fylingdales byelaws are currently sub judice.

In addition, byelaws made before May 1979 affecting principal Army training areas include:

	Byelaws
Cinque Ports Training Area:	Lydd Ranges Byelaws 1939
	Hythe Ranges Byelaws 1986
	Shorncliffe and District Military Lands Byelaws 1976
	Dover and District Military Lands Byelaws 1976
Salisbury Plain Training Area:	Bulford Ranges Byelaws 1963
	Imber Ranges Byelaws 1963
	Larkhill Artillery Ranges Byelaws 1965
	Pernam Down Ranges Byelaws 1969
	The Porton and Winterbourne Gunner Military Lands Byelaws 1977
Otterburn Training Area.	Otterburn Training Area Byelaws 1971 (as amended by the Otterburn Training Area (Amendment) Byelaws 1980)
Stanford Training Area:	Stanford Training Area Byelaws 1970 (as amended by the Stanford Training Area (Amendment) Byelaws 1975)
Sennybridge Training Area:	Sennybridge Training Area Byelaws 1974

Departmental Vehicles

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many vehicles are owned by his Department and by each branch of the armed forces; and how many of these have been converted to run on unleaded petrol.

Mr. Freeman: The Ministry of Defence owns 87,500 vehicles which are allocated as follows:

	Vehicles
Royal Navy	3,000
Army	58,000
Royal Air Force	10,000
Procurement Executive	2,000
Held in vehicle storage depots	14,500

A significant proportion of the current stock runs on diesel fuel, but it is not possible to provide the precise number without disproportionate effort. Other vehicles in

the current stock which cannot run on unleaded petrol will not be specifically converted, but, as and when they need to be replaced, they will be replaced whenever possible by vehicles which run on either diesel or unleaded petrol.

Ethnic Monitoring

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what were the results of the ethnic monitoring of recruitment carried out in accordance with his equal opportunities action plan; and how many and what percentage of people from ethnic minorities were shown in such ethnic monitoring exercises to be employed at each grade or level of his Department.

Mr. Sainsbury: I refer the hon. and learned Member to the reply I gave him on 17 June at column *343*.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects the results of the ethnic monitoring of recruitment commenced in 1987 to become available.

Mr. Sainsbury: Not before the end of the year.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what response he has received to the voluntary survey of the ethnic origins of all non-industrial and industrial staff thus far carried out.

Mr. Sainsbury: The response rate to the three phases of the survey of non-industrial staff completed to date was 79 per cent. Information on the response rate to the survey of industrial staff is not yet available.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence in what quasi-governmental bodies or other organisations under his aegis he has authority to request or require the carrying out of ethnic monitoring exercises in accordance with the code of the Commission for Racial Equality; and what ethnic monitoring and equal opportunities exercises have been carried out by each such department.

Mr. Sainsbury: NDPBs and other bodies sponsored by the Ministry of Defence are responsible for arrangements for recruitment and personnel management of staff they employ. Bodies are encouraged to be equal opportunities employers and to pursue practices in the codes of the Commission for Racial Equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission.

No central records are held of ethnic monitoring and equal opportunities exercises carried out by these bodies.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many of the respondents from ethnic minorities employed in his Department in grade seven and above were in grades one, two, three, four, five, six and seven, respectively;

(2) how many of the respondents from ethnic minorities employed in his Department were senior executive officers and higher executive officers, respectively.

Mr. Sainsbury: I regret this information cannot be provided. The code of practice governing the protection of data collected through ethnic origins surveys requires Departments not to publish information in a way which could lead to individuals being identified.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will institute a monitoring exercise in accordance with the code of the Commission for Racial Equality in order to ascertain figures for ethnic minorities in part-time posts in his Department.

Mr. Sainsbury: The Department now has the capability to monitor the number of ethnic minorities in part-time posts, and the number of such persons currently employed part-time is 27.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will place in the Library the results of the survey of ethnic origins of all non-industrial and industrial staff now being conducted by his Department, as and when each of the three phases are completed.

Mr. Sainsbury: The results of the surveys of the ethnic origins of MOD staff will be published by the Cabinet Office and copies of the reports will be placed in the Library.

Equal Opportunities

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the strength of his equal opportunities unit; how many members thereof are female and from ethnic minorities, respectively, and whether the equal opportunities officer is female or from an ethnic minority or both.

Mr. Sainsbury: The unit consists of three people, two men and one women, none of whom is from the ethnic minorities.

Staff (Ethnic Minorities)

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what advertisements he has placed in the ethnic press in order to encourage more applicants from the ethnic minorities; and when.

Mr. Sainsbury: Recruitment advertisements are run for two months out of every three throughout the year. Advertisements have been placed in *The Voice*, *The Asian Times*, *The Sri Lankan Monthly*, *New Life* and *Sing Tao*.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence in what scheme his Department participates which provides training for potential executive officer recruits; and in what way this encourages more applicants from ethnic minorities.

Mr. Sainsbury: The MOD is co-operating with the Cabinet Office in developing an access training course to enhance the job-related skills of candidates who wish to re-apply to enter the Civil Service through the executive officer competition. A pilot course is planned for the autumn.

Bisley Camp

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence under what statutory authority he has power to sell or otherwise dispose of any part of the Bisley camp and its ranges; and if he will name the property developers presently preparing *(a)* the residential and *(b)* the commercial developments.

Mr. Freeman: Bisley camp and its ranges are the property of the National Rifle Association and any question of disposal would be its responsibility.

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the total area of the ranges at Bisley; and whether he has any plans to dispose of any part of that area.

Mr. Freeman *[holding answer 22 July 1988]*: The ranges at Bisley are owned by the National Rifle Association from which MOD leases a number of administrative buildings; we have no plans to reduce these requirements.

USAF (Air Refuelling)

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if refuelling at low levels was practised over the United Kingdom or surrounding waters by the United States Air Force B52 aircraft deployed at RAF Fairford in May.

Mr. Freeman: No.

Flying (Mallet Blow Exercises)

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether flying during future Mallet Blow exercises will be allowed during the period between sunset plus 30 minutes and sunrise minus 30 minutes.

Mr. Freeman: Flying during the periods sunset plus 30 minutes is considered for those Mallet Blow exercises which take place at a time of the year when dusk is early. The next such exercise is planned to take place in April. No flying in the period before sunrise is planned for aircraft participating in Mallet Blow exercises.

Uranium Ammunition

Mr. David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will update his report on the development of depleted uranium ammunition for Her Majesty's forces.

Mr. Sainsbury: Further to the replies given by my hon. Friend on 17 January 1985, at columns *183-84*, I can announce that a minimum series of trial firings of Phalanx ammunition will be conducted at the royal aircraft establishment, West Freugh, commencing in August this year. The amounts of DU involved will be no more than that previously approved for other MOD ranges.

Public Expenditure

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will publish a table in the *Official Report*, in the same format as the reply of 7 July, *Official Report*, column *701-4*, on receipts classified as charges in respect of his programme expenditure over the years 1982-83 to 1990-91, indicating the receipts in respect of running costs expenditure together with a supplementary analysis indicating, separately, the amounts of receipts in respect of programme expenditure and of running costs expenditure estimated to have been met from other public expenditure programmes.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The figures provided in answer to the hon. Member on 7 July 1988, at columns *701-4*, related to receipts in respect of programme expenditure. MOD running costs receipts anticipated for the period 1982-83 to 1990-91 are detailed in table 1:

Table 1
Running costs receipts

£ million

1982-83	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*1987-88*	*1988-89*	*1989-90*	*1990-91*
516	610	645	670	704	818	777	808	828

A more detailed analysis of running costs receipts for the period 1985-86 to 1990-91 is provided in tables 2 and 3. Table 2 reflects receipts arising from other public expenditure programmes. Figures on the same basis for 1982-83 to 1984-85 are not readily available and could be produced only with disproportionate effort.

Table 2
Running cost receipts from other government departments

£ million

Vote	*Section*[1]	*Description*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*1987-88*	*1988-89*	*1989-90*	*1990-91*
		Appropriations-in-Aid of						
1	BZ	Army Personnel costs	0·2	0·2	0·2	0·3	0·3	0·3
	LZ	Educational services	2·5	2·3	2·4	2·6	2·7	2·8
2	AZ	Departmental expenses	1·0	0·9	0·9	1·0	1·0	1·0
		Total	3·7	3·4	3·5	3·9	4·0	4·1

Table 3
Other running cost receipts

£ million

Vote	*Section*[1]	*Description*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*1987-88*	*1988-89*	*1989-90*	*1990-91*
		Appropriations-in-Aid of						
1	AZ	Naval Personnel costs	10·4	9·3	16·3	13·3	13·6	13·9
	BZ	Army Personnel costs	168·5	169·9	163·7	169·9	174·1	178·5
	CZ	Air Force Personnel costs	19·6	24·2	23·0	22·5	23·1	23·7
	DZ	Civilian Personnel costs	60·2	66·6	73·2	79·0	81·0	83·0
	EZ	Movements	23·7	16·4	13·4	12·4	12·7	13·0
	FZ	Accommodation etc Stores	8·1	9·2	9·5	10·1	10·4	10·7
	GZ	Clothing and Victualling	98·5	95·2	100·7	105·6	108·2	110·9

Vote	Section[1]	Description	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91
	HZ	Liquid fuels and utilities	49·0	49·5	51·5	56·9	58·3	59·8
	LZ	Other Services	207·0	234·9	303·5	272·2	290·2	297·5
		Vote 1 Total	645·0	675·2	754·8	741·9	771·6	791·0
2	AZ	PE Headquarters costs	4·9	6·9	42·9	10·9	11·2	11·5
	BZ	Research and Development establishment costs	0·1	0·1	4·0	4·6	4·7	4·8
	CZ	Other PE outstanding costs[2]	—	—	—	0·1	0·1	0·1
		Total Vote 2	5·0	7·0	46·9	15·6	16·0	16·4
4	AZ	Defence Works services[2]	15·7	17·0	12·7	15·7	16·1	16·5
5	AZ	Ship refitting and repair[2]	0·6	1·4	0·3	—	—	—
		Total Defence	666·3	700·6	814·7	773·2	803·7	823·9

[1] Sections reflect the 1988-89 Supply Estimates structure.
[2] — indicates receipts of less than £0·1 million.

The amount of receipts in respect of programme expenditure met from other public expenditure programmes is not readily available and could be produced only at disproportionate effort.

Catering

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will consider the privatisation of the services' catering arrangements; and if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the number of officers and other ranks in each grade in each service who are wholly or partly responsible for catering, including the ordering, transporting and holding of stocks of foodstuffs and kitchen equipment and materials, the total cost including all administrative overheads, pension provision etc. and the cost per meal served.

Mr. Sainsbury: I will write to the hon. Member.

Recruitment and Promotion Policy

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what measures he has implemented to ensure that recruitment and promotion policy in his Department does not directly or indirectly discriminate against applicants who were mature students or women returning to work following a career break due to child care.

Mr. Sainsbury: The MOD, in common with other Government Departments, is an equal opportunities employer. All applicants for recruitment, and candidates for promotion, are considered wholly on their merits and on an equal basis. The instructions and training given to those in the MOD who are responsible for recruitment and promotion specifically cover the need to avoid discrimination, whether direct or indirect, including discrimination in the circumstances referred to in the question.

RAF (Reserve Forces)

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress has been made in attempts to make greater use of reserve forces in the Royal Air Force.

Mr. Freeman: Trials to evaluate the potential use of Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve aircrew have recently been concluded. The trials have shown that while it is not possible to replace regular crew members on RAF VC10s by means of reservists and the trial is being terminated, there is some scope for Volunteer Reserve air electronics operators to augment the Nimrod maritime reconnaissance force in time of tension and war. Accordingly, the possibility of developing and expanding this capability is being examined. In addition, a further trial has recently been set in hand to assess the feasibility of using some test pilots and navigators from the commercial sector in a reserve role to provide front-line aircrew in war.

In the case of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force, a trial has been carried out to establish the feasibility of recruiting and retaining a dedicated support force (the RAuxAF Support Force). The force adds to our ground defence capability, thus relieving regular uniformed personnel of diversionary tasks. The trial was a considerable success and attracted its full quota of 350 volunteers. We are hoping to build further upon this promising foundation.

Radioactive Waste

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his policy towards the use of landfill sites for the disposal of military radioactive waste; what use has been made of this technique in the past; what steps are taken to ensure that no environmental contamination takes place; and what measurements have been made of the actual level of contamination.

Mr. Sainsbury: The Ministry of Defence believes that shallow land burial is an appropriate and safe method of disposing of its low-level radioactive waste. It is the normal method for disposal of low-level radioactive waste, which arises from a variety of sources including hospitals and industry.

All disposals are measured and recorded. Regular monitoring of the disposal sites and surrounding area is carried out by the appropriate agencies to ensure that no harm to the local population or the environment occurs from past disposals.

Dartmoor (Mock Battles)

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make it his policy to put advance notices in the local press and in post offices, similar to those warnings given on live firing days, when mock battles using blank ammunition, flares, explosions and thunder flashes are planned by his Department on Dartmoor.

Mr. Freeman: The advance notification on live firing on Dartmoor range is intended to warn the public of the closure of these areas for safety reasons and is a

requirement under the byelaws. Training or range areas are not closed when the training taking place involves no live firing as this does not constitute a danger to the public; there is, therefore, no need to give advance notice to the public of this form of training.

RNADs Milford Haven and Trecwn

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will meet representatives of the work force of Milford Haven and Trecwn RNADs before 30 September to discuss the consultative document "The Future of RNADs Milford Haven and Trecwn" issued on 25 July.

Mr. Freeman: Yes.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when it was originally intended to issue the report on the future of RNADs Milford Haven and Trecwn.

Mr. Freeman: No specific date was fixed for the publication of the consultative document. It was issued as soon as the relevant Ministry of Defence departments had considered all aspects of this complex question, and the Welsh Office had been consulted.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the main features of the normal rules for order of redundancy referred to in paragraph 11 of the consultative document on the future of the royal naval arms depots at Milford Haven and Trecwn.

Mr. Freeman: Redundancy procedures would be implemented only if a final decision to close Milford Haven is taken after completion of the consultative process and it was not possible to offer alternative jobs within the MOD. However, the normal rules for redundancy can be summarised as follows:

Selection of employees for redundancy

1. The head of establishment will select the employees to be declared redundant from these categories and in this order:

a. VOLUNTEERS. Those aged 57 to 60 years being given preference.

b. EMPLOYEES AGED 65 AND OVER

1. The oldest should normally be declared redundant first.

2. In industrial grades from which there is in line promotion, eg to chargehand, certain stores grades etc., employees in the higher grade aged 65 or over will be declared redundant before those in the lower grade under 65, despite the absence of redundancy in the higher grade, provided that there are employees in the lower grade suitable for promotion.

c. DILUTEES. Where the redundancy occurs in a craft grade, dilutees employed in the craft concerned will be declared redundant before fully qualified craftsmen.

d. EMPLOYEES OVER THE MINIMUM RETIREMENT AGE. Provided the correct inefficiency or ill health procedures have been followed, and there has been no subsequent improvement, the head of establishment may call on industrial employees over the minimum retirement age (60 in most cases) to retire if on account of health or reduced ability they are no longer capable of carrying out the full duties of their grade.

e. OTHER EMPLOYEES. If the number of employees under sub-paragraphs *a* to *d* is insufficient to resolve the redundancy, the head of establishment will select other employees to make up the required number. In doing so, while having regard to the efficiency of the establishment, and therefore, to the general proficiency and reliability of individual employees, and their suitability for other work, he will adhere as closely as possible to the order determined by the length of service, that is, reverse order of seniority.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list by age, sex and length of service the total number of staff in each category E grade employed at royal naval arms depots *(a)* Milford Haven and *(b)* Trecwn.

Mr. Freeman: I will write to my hon. Friend with the information requested.

Apprentice Training School (RNAD Milford Haven)

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had or he intends to have with the Training Commission and other interested parties concerning the apprentice training school at RNAD Milford Haven.

Mr. Freeman: None. There are no plans to close the apprentice training school at present.

RNAD Milford Haven

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many industrial or commercial companies have made representations to him concerning their possible purchase or use of the site of royal naval arms depot Milford Haven.

Mr. Freeman: There has been one inquiry of which my hon. Friend will already be aware.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will give his estimate of the cost of *(a)* removing the explosive impregnation from the site of royal naval arms depot Milford and *(b)* of removing all existing buildings from the site in order that it might be available for industrial or commercial use.

Mr. Freeman: The estimated cost of *(a)* certifying RNAD Milford Haven free from explosives is estimated at between £500,000 and £1 million and *(b)* no estimate of the cost of removing all existing buildings has been made, nor is one considered necessary at this stage, as the future of the site has still to be decided.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what other defence uses for the Milford Haven royal naval arms depot have been considered.

Mr. Freeman: There is no naval requirement for RNAD Milford Haven. The Army and Royal Air Force have no present need of extra storage space and no other defence uses have been identified, as yet, which are considered to be feasible.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what non-defence uses by other Departments for the Milford Haven royal naval arms depot have been invited and considered.

Mr. Freeman: It would be inappropriate at this stage to invite other Government Departments to consider alternative uses for the RNAD Milford Haven site. If no futher use is found for it, our normal practice would be to offer the site for sale on the open market. I will ensure that there is full consultation with the Welsh Office and public authorities.

Borders Tactical Training Area

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what is the percentage increase in the size of the Borders tactical training area represented by the recent expansion of this area;

(2) on what date the military low-flying management group recommended the recent extension of the Borders tactical training area;

(3) what increase is planned in the number of military training flights authorised to fly at less than 250 ft above the ground in the Borders tactical training area;

(4) if he will make a statement on the extension of the Borders tactical training area;

(5) what population density threshold was used in determining the new boundaries of the Borders tactical training area;

(6) what types of low-level training at less than 250 ft altitude, other than work-up training for exercises in the United States of America and Canada, are conducted in the Borders tactical training area;

(7) how long it takes in terms of *(a)* years and *(b)* the cumulative number of low-flying sorties, for the training value obtained from extending low-flying into new, unfamiliar territory to decline to a level at which it ceases to be operationally valuable;

(8) what are the specified standards which a Royal Air Force pilot must achieve before being permitted to fly at less than 250 ft;

(9) what changes have taken place since 1979 in the amount of operational low-flying training at less than 250 ft which is calculated to be the minimum operationally necessary;

(10) if he will list the changes to the boundaries of the Borders tactical training area since 1979, specifying the geographical location and date of any changes;

(11) if he will list the planned periods of operational low-flying training to be conducted in the Borders tactical training area up to the end of 1988;

(12) what proportion of low flying at less than 250 ft in the Borders tactical training area is conducted between the hours of *(a)* 7 am and 7 pm *(b)* 7 pm and 11 pm and *(c)* 11 pm and 7 am; and what changes are planned in these proportions;

(13) if he will list the major accidents to Royal Air Force aircraft since 1979 which occurred during flights authorised to fly at less than 250 ft.

(14) if he will publish statistics indicating the rate of accidents to Royal Air Force aircraft flying at less than 250 ft;

(15) how many complaints have been received in each year since 1979 about low flying by aircraft authorised to fly at less than 250 ft.

Mr. Freeman: I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Low Flying

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what geographical area, expressed *(a)* by county and *(b)* by parliamentary constituency, is covered by low flying area 17.

Mr. Freeman: Low flying area 17 covers *(a)* parts of the counties of Cumbria, Durham, Lancashire and North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire and *(b)* the parliamentary constituencies of Barrow and Furness, Workington, Carlisle, Copeland, Westmorland and Lonsdale, and Morecambe and Lunesdale, and parts of the parliamentary constituencies of Penrith and The Border, Durham, North-West, Bishop Auckland, Sedgefield, Darlington, Richmond, Yorks, Skipton and Ripon, Keighley, Pendle, Ribble Valley, Lancaster and Wyre.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what geographical area, expressed *(a)* by county and *(b)* by parliamentary constituency, is covered by low flying area 18.

Mr. Freeman: Low flying area 18 covers *(a)* the Isle of Wight and parts of the counties of Kent, East Sussex and West Sussex, Dorset, and Hampshire and *(b)* the parliamentary constituencies of Thanet, North, Thanet, South, Canterbury, Dover, Folkestone and Hythe, Ashford, Hastings and Rye, Bexhill and Battle, Eastbourne, Lewes, Brighton, Kemptown, Brighton, Pavilion, Hove, Shoreham, Worthing, Arundel, Isle of Wight, Bournemouth, West, Bournemouth, East, Christchurch, Southampton, Test, Southampton, Itchen, Eastleigh, Gosport, Portsmouth, South, Portsmouth, North and Havant and parts of the parliamentary constituencies of Faversham, Mid-Kent, Maidstone, Tunbridge Wells, Wealden, Mid-Sussex, Crawley, Horsham, Chichester, Hampshire, East, Fareham, Winchester, Romsey and Waterside, New Forest, Dorset, North and Poole.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what geographical area, expressed *(a)* by county or region and *(b)* by parliamentary constituency, is covered by low flying area 15.

Mr. Freeman: There is currently no low flying area 15 in the United Kingdom low flying system.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what geographical area, expressed *(a)* by county or region and *(b)* by parliamentary constituency is covered by low flying area 13.

Mr. Freeman: Low flying area 13 covers *(a)* parts of the counties of Borders, Cumbria, Dumfries and Galloway, Durham and Northumberland and *(b)* parts of the parliamentary consitituencies of Roxburgh and Berwickshire, Hexham, Durham, North-West, Penrith and The Border, and Dumfries.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what geographical area, expressed *(a)* by county and *(b)* by parliamentary constituency, is covered by low flying area 9.

Mr. Freeman: Low flying area 9 covers *(a)* part of the counties of Shropshire and Staffordshire and *(b)* parts of the parliamentary constituencies of Shropshire, North, Wrexham, Stafford, The Wrekin, Ludlow, Shrewsbury and Atcham, and Montgomery.

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will list the number and dates of accidents since 1979 involving aircraft training in the United Kingdom low-flying system;

(2) if he will make it his policy to ensure that no aircraft or aircrew of any foreign country will be allowed to train in the extended United Kingdom low-flying system area announced on 9 June.

Mr. Freeman: I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what increase is planned in the number of night low-level training sorties over the United Kingdom as a result of the operational deployment of the Royal Air Force's thermal imaging and laser designator pod.

Mr. Freeman *[holding answer 5 May 1988]:* I assume that the hon. Member is referring to the requirement for an advanced airborne laser designating pod. No decision has yet been made regarding the purchase of such a system which, if procured, is unlikely to be in service before the end of the decade, when it would be only one of a number of electro-optical devices. As such, its introduction would be unlikely to have a significant effect on the night flying requirement.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what is the minimum permitted height for fixed-wing military aircraft operating in the Otterburn danger areas, D512 and D512A;

(2) what is the minimum permitted height for fixed-wing military aircraft operating in the Spadeadam danger areas, D510;

(3) what is the minimum permitted height for fixed-wing military aircraft operating in the Garelochhead danger areas, D601;

(4) what is the minimum permitted height for fixed-wing military aircraft operating over the landward portion of the danger area known as D119;

(5) what is the minimum permitted height for fixed-wing military aircraft operating over the landward portion of the South Uist danger area, D 701;

(6) what is the minimum permitted height for fixed-wing military aircraft operating over the landward portion of the Lydd danger area, D 044;

(7) what is the minimum permitted height for fixed-wing military aircraft operating over the landward portion of the Eastney danger area, D 035;

(8) what is the minimum permitted height for fixed-wing military aircraft operating over the landward portion of the Rosehearty danger area, D 708;

(9) what is the minimum permitted height for fixed-wing military aircraft operating over the landward portion of the Loch Ryan danger area, D 402;

(10) what is the minimum permitted height for fixed-wing military aircraft operating in the Porton danger area, D 127;

(11) what is the minimum permitted height for fixed-wing military aircraft operating in *(a)* the Warcop danger area, D 407, *(b)* the Catterick danger areas, D 408A, D 409A and D 409B, *(c)* the Stanford danger area, D 208, *(d)* the Ferrybridge danger area, D 203, *(e)* the Pontrilas danger area, D 147, *(f)* the Pembrey danger area, D 118, *(g)* the landward portion of the Cowden danger area, D 307, *(h)* the landward portion of the Donna Nook danger area, D 307, *(i)* the landward portion of the Wainfleet danger area, D 306, *(j)* the landward portion of the Holbeach danger area, D 207, and *(k)* the Dartmoor danger area, D 011;

(12) what is the minimum permitted height for fixed-wing military aircraft operating over the landward portion of the Luce bay danger area, D 403.

Mr. Freeman: The permitted height for fixed-wing military aircraft operating over ranges and danger areas varies according to the aircraft involved, the training being undertaken, the prevailing climatic conditions and whether activity is by day or by night. In general, aircraft may transit such areas at 250 ft minimum separation distance (msd) when a range or danger area has not been activated or, where it has been activated, with the prior approval of the danger area co-ordinating authority. Over certain ranges, service aircraft may descent to 100 ft msd during their final approach to target. Royal Air Force Harriers may descend to 85 ft msd. In exceptional circumstances and where specifically authorised, certain Royal Navy aircraft operating in danger areas and ranges may descent to 50 ft msd. Aircraft conducting trials under Procurement Executive auspices do so to meet trial aims; in each case the minimum permitted height is determined by safety considerations.

Body Searches

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what guidance has been issued to Ministry of Defence police concerning the compatibility of body searches of the type applied to Ms. Mann-Cairns at RAF Greenham common with the relevant provisions of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer the hon. Member to the reply which I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Dover (Mr. Shaw) on 27 July 1988.

World War 2 (Records)

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will take immediate steps to declassify records relating to the prisoners held by the Japanese at Mukden during world war 2; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: Documents relating to the prisoners held at Mukden during world war 2 are public records. Their status has been determined in accordance with the requirements of the Public Record Acts and there is no reason to change this.

Departmental Programmes

Mr. George: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much has been spent by his Department in each of the past five years on the evaluation of departmental programmes; and what proportion this constitutes of *(a)* the amount allocated for evaluation and *(b)* the Department's total budget.

Mr. Sainsbury: The Department gives careful evaluation to its programmes at every stage of the procurement process. This evaluation is part of the normal responsibilities of project managers and other MOD staff. The costs of this activity are included in the Department's overall running costs, but cannot be identified in the way requested.

Correspondence

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when the hon. Member for Taunton can expect a reply to his letter of 22 March, enclosing letters from Taunton United Nations Association and West Somerset CND, about statements and developments on NATO nuclear rearmament.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I am afraid that we have no record of having received the letter to which my hon.

Friend refers. However, if my hon. Friend would send a further copy of the correspondence to which he refers, we will, of course, provide a reply as soon as possible.

British Forces Overseas (Rates)

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will publish a table showing the total amount by receiving state of payments made by Her Majesty's Government to them in lieu of rates, or their equivalent, and direct payments for services provided for British service men; if such payments are made to central Government of the receiving states or the respective local authorities; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman *[holding answer 14 July 1988]:* Her Majesty's Government make the following payments for services provided for British service men to central Government or their respective local authorities:

		£
Belize	Water and drainage	8,190
Kenya	Water and drainage	2,817
Canada	Refuse collection	173
	Education Services	272,720
	Environmental Services	7,573
	Water and drainage	121,747
Norway	Water and drainage	148
	Refuse collection	19,650
Denmark	Water and drainage	195
	Refuse collection	4,000
Turkey	Water and drainage	700
	Refuse collection	938

TRANSPORT

Tractors

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will give the percentage change in first quarter tractor registrations for each United Kingdom region.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The information requested is as follows:

New registrations of tractors[1] 1st Quarter 1988 compared to 1st Quarter 1987.

	Percentage increase
North	56
Yorks and Humberside	16
East Midlands	8
East Anglia	−16
South East	8
South West	14
West Midlands	21
North West	52
Wales	80
Scotland	13
Northern Ireland[2]	36

[1] Agricultural machines, including agricultural tractors, fishermen's tractors, tractors, agricultural engines and locomotive ploughing engines.

[2] Agricultural machines, but also including digging machines, mobile cranes, works' trucks, mowing machines and showmen's and general haulage vehicles.

Cross-Channel Traffic

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether, further to his reply of 20 May concerning the 1973 forecasts for cross-Channel traffic, he will add the actual figures for 1980 and the latest forecast for 1990 and the year in which the tunnel is due to be completed; and who is responsible for ensuring that the fares charged by the cross-Channel ferries for passengers and accompanied vehicles are not fixed collusively.

Mr. Portillo: The actual figures for 1980, comparable with those given earlier for 1986 and which correspond as closely as possible to the 1973 forecast categories, are as follows:

Shipping Services	*1980 Passengers (millions)*
Accompanied vehicle passengers	9·0
Other passengers	7·7
Air Services	22·5
Total Passengers	39·2
Roll-on/Roll-off and Container Traffic	[1]15·4

[1] million tonnes

Regarding current forecasts for future years, I refer the hon. Member to the answer of 18 May, at column *460*, to my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley).

The tunnel is due to be completed in 1993. The Director General of Fair Trading is responsible for monitoring undertakings given by ferry companies. Any allegations of collusive pricing would be a matter for him to consider under the competition legislation.

M40 Extension

Mr. Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the progress on continuation of the M40 extension.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The two contracts on the Warwick section started last year and are well under way. Completion is expected in summer 1989. Three of the contracts on the Banbury section have now been let. Tenders for the remaining one, and also for the Gaydon section contract, are due to be returned on 5 August. We expect the whole of the Banbury section and the Gaydon section to be open to traffic by autumn 1990.

Revised proposals for the Waterstock to Wendlebury section, north-east of Oxford were considered at a public inquiry which ended earlier this year. The inspector's report is awaited.

EC Transport Ministers

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he last met his counterparts from the other European Community states; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he last attended the EEC Council of Transport Ministers; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Portillo: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has not met his European counterparts since the EC Transport Council on 20 and 21 June. I have therefore nothing to add to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Member for Eltham (Mr. Bottomley) on Monday 4 July, at column *488*.

Community Bus Schemes (Cornwall)

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received regarding community bus schemes in Cornwall; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: None since May 1987. Community bus schemes are flourishing in Cornwall. Eight of them receive support from the rural transport development fund.

Air Traffic Control

Mr. Stern: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans to privatise air traffic control.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: It is for the airport operator to decide who provides airport navigation services at a particular airport. At some airports these services are already provided by private sector suppliers. There are no plans to privatise en route air traffic control services.

Channel Tunnel (Rail Links)

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he last met the chairman of British Rail to discuss rail links to the north of England and Scotland from the Channel tunnel.

Mr. Portillo: Neither my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State nor my predecessor as Minister of State have discussed this specific subject with the chairman recently, but they have discussed the pattern of Channel tunnel rail services in general terms with him from time to time. Under section 40 of the Channel Tunnel Act, British Rail is required to publish by the end of 1989 a plan setting out its proposals for services through the Channel tunnel. It is are currently consulting interested parties.

London Transport (Fares)

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received regarding fare levels on public transport in London.

Mr. Portillo: I receive representations on fare levels from time to time but the level and distribution of fares is a matter for the public transport operators.

Aviation Fatal Accidents

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects the inquiry set up by the civil aviation authority into the increase in general aviation fatal accidents in 1987 to be completed; and whether any preliminary conclusions have been reached.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The investigation has been completed. The authority hopes to publish the report within the next few weeks. In the meantime the hon. Member might like to refer to the *Official Report*, 31 March 1988 at columns *1289-93*.

Heavy Lorries (PAC Report)

Mr. Allason: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to be in a position to announce what action he intends to take on the Public Accounts Committee's report on the regulation of heavy lorries.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I refer my hon. Friend to Cm. 367—the Public Accounts Committee's eighteenth report on the regulation of heavy lorries.

M6 (Congestion)

Mr. Roy Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the causes of the congestion and delays on the northbound carriageway of the M6 between junctions 6 and 23 on the afternoon of 8 July.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Traffic flows were heavy on the M6 that day. The major maintenance work under way between junctions 6 and 7, and essential resurfacing and bridge works between junctions 16 and 17 and junctions 21 and 23, all of which involved contraflow working, will have exacerbated the congestion.

East Coast Ports

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will publish tables showing the number of vessels using English east coast ports over the past 18 months; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: The numbers of ship arrivals in 1987, compiled from Lloyd's of London shipping data, are in the table. No figures are available yet for 1988.

	Number
North East	
Blyth	454
Tyne	1,441
Sunderland	528
Tees and Hartlepool	4,889
Other North East ports	854
Humber	
Hull	3,032
Goole	1,267
Ouse wharves	1,097
Trent wharves	2,349
Humber wharves	1,271
Immingham	3,975
Grimsby	721
Haven	
Felixstowe	5,355
Ipswich	1,981
Harwich	2,452
Other ports	374
Thames and Kent	
Colchester	1,084
London	[1]11,500
Medway	3,546
Ramsgate	2,250
Dover	22,112
Folkestone	2,076
Other ports	489
Wash and North East Anglia	
Boston	1,091
King's Lynn	1,045
Great Yarmouth	1,590
Other ports	1,141
All East Coast ports	79,964

[1] Provisional.

Central London Rail Study

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is *(a)* the earliest and *(b)* the latest date by which the central London rail study will be (i) completed and (ii) published.

Mr. Portillo: I hope to be able to announce the findings of the central London rail study before the end of the year.

Monorails

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information his Department has on the number of monorails in use in England and Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has no direct responsibility for monorail systems. As far as we are aware, the only systems currently in use are in amusement parks and similar locations.

Seat Belts

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the current front seat belt wearing rate; and what were the figures for each month since January 1983.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The latest survey for which results are available is October 1987. The table shows the seat belt wearing rates for front-seat drivers and passengers for each survey since January 1983:

Counting month	*Percentage wearing rates*	
	Drivers	*Passengers*
1983		
January	53	54
February	93	93
March	94	95
April	95	95
May	95	95
June	94	95
July	94	95
August	95	96
September	95	96
October	95	94
November	94	96
December	95	96
1984		
January	95	96
February	95	95
March	95	96
April	95	96
May	95	95
June	95	96
August	94	95
October	94	96
December	95	96
1985		
February	95	96
April	93	94
June	94	95
August	94	95
October	93	94
December	94	95
1986		
April	94	94
October	94	94
1987		
April	94	95
October	94	94

These rates are thought to be the highest in the world.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what representations he has received supporting the introduction of the compulsory wearing of rear seat belts by adults; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what is his Department's policy on the wearing of rear seat belts by adults; and if he will make a statement;

(3) if he has any plans to review the operation of section 33A of the Road Traffic Act 1972; and if he will make a statement;

(4) what estimate his Department has of the effect on the rate of road accidents fatalities in the United Kingdom in 12 months if the wearing of rear seat belts were made compulsory; and if he will make a statement;

(5) what evidence is available to his Department on the level and trend of voluntary use of rear seat belts either in the United Kingdom or abroad; and if he will make a statement;

(6) how much he expects to spend during the years 1988 and 1989, respectively, in campaigns to encourage the voluntary wearing of rear seat belts;

(7) what research his Department is currently undertaking on the effects of the compulsory wearing of front seat belts; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Seat belts save lives. The transport and road research laboratory and independent experts agree that the wearing of front seat belts saves at least 200 lives and prevents 7,000 serious injuries each year.

We continue to monitor the usage and effects of front-seat belt wearing. The usage rate remains high at 95 per cent. This autumn we shall undertake a survey of seat belt use among rear-seat occupants.

We have not received any recent representations supporting the introduction of compulsory wearing of rear-seat belts by adults, although responses to our road safety consultation paper "The Next Steps" generally supported the view that this should remain a goal for the longer term. Our current aim is to increase the voluntary use of rear restraints and their voluntary fitting in cars which do not already have them. We estimate that the wearing of rear-seat belts by adults could reduce deaths and serious injuries among rear seat adult passengers by at least 50 per cent.

All new cars registered from April last year must be fitted with rear restraints. That should encourage their use. It will take some years before most cars are fitted with them. We therefore believe that it would be premature at this stage to consider making rear-seat belt wearing by adults compulsory.

We will continue to take every opportunity to advise people to use seat belts. Over the next year some 27 million leaflets will be distributed with all vehicle excise licence reminders.

A27 (Worthing)

Mr. Higgins: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will place in the Library full details of the cost-benefit analysis carried out by the consultants he appointed to examine the future route of the A27 in the Worthing area.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Full details of the results of the economic analysis carried out by the consultants on each of their four favoured routes, using the Department of

Transport's 1986 cost-benefit analysis (COBA) computer programme, are contained in the consultants' report. A copy is now being placed in the Library.

Mr. Higgins: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what origin and destination surveys were carried out by the consultants he appointed to consider the future route of the A27 in the Worthing area.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: None. The consultants made use of traffic information surveys by West Sussex county council in 1978, 1982 and 1983, which included roadside interviews.

Settle-Carlisle Line

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what requests he has made to the transport users consultative committees for Yorkshire and the north-west regarding public hearings into any hardship caused by the closure of the Settle to Carlisle section of British Rail; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has requested a supplementary report from the transport users consultative committees for north-eastern and north-western England under section 56(10) of the Transport Act 1962 to notify him of any changes in the use of the line which would lead them to modify their advice. It is for the committees to decide their own procedure for undertaking this task.

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has as to what mileage of rail on the Settle to Carlisle section of British Rail is continuously welded flat-bottomed rail, as to its current value and as to what would be the replacement cost of either flat-bottomed or bull-head track of equivalent weight; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: This information is not available.

Pavement Parking

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will publish the responses to the discussion paper on pavement parking; what action he now proposes to take in respect of pavement parking; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Over 450 responses were received it would not be practicable to publish them. We shall announce the outcome of the review as soon as possible.

Refrigerated Vehicles

Mr. Irvine: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the expected effects of the recent European Community directive permitting an increase in the width of refrigerated vehicles to 2·6 m.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Thick-walled refrigerated vehicles operating between EC member states may be 2·6 m wide as from 1 January 1989. We are therefore circulating proposals to increase the permitted width of refrigerated vehicles in Britain. This will assist British operators who already use refrigerated vehicles complying with the maximum limit of 2·58 m currently allowed by the construction and use regulations. It will further help operators by allowing future vehicles to be built at 2·6 m wide.

Direction Signs

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the outcome of his consultation on the report of the review of direction signs.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The results of that consultation have been considered in the context of the wider revision of the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 1981. These regulations cover not only directional signs, but a wide range of signs which play an essential part in promoting safety on our roads. All signing needs reviewing from time to time in the light of new traffic needs, road safety research and new technology.

We intend to make a thorough overhaul of the current regulations with several purposes in mind. First, we need to implement the new arrangements for white on brown tourist signs, and certain other changes either proposed in the direction signs review or associated with our demonstration project at Guildford. Second, we need to make changes for road and rail safety reasons (in particular, in connection with signing on motorways, at low bridges and at level crossings). In addition, changes in signing are needed to cater for bus deregulation, to regularise changes already authorised by special procedure, to simplify certain signs (particularly for parking restrictions), to introduce greater flexibility in varying signs, and more generally to consolidate various amending regulations made since 1981.

I am in touch with my right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Scotland and Wales about the early issue of general consultation letters on the substance of all these changes. We shall be consulting local authority associations particularly on the financial implications of the proposals. When the comments received in response to this consultation have been considered, the intention is to circulate for more detailed comment a draft statutory instrument giving effect to the changes which it has been decided to make. Our target is to introduce the revised regulations by autumn 1989.

A3 (Grayshott)

Mr. Mates: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will publish details of the junction arrangements for access to Grayshott off the A3 at Hindhead following his recent announcement of the preferred route.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Full details will not be available until the detailed design has been completed. I will send my hon. Friend a plan giving an indication of what is currently envisaged.

Institute of Motorcycling

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what action he proposes to take in the light of the information pack provided by the Institute of Motorcycling for callers to its freephone number, an example of which has been sent to him; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Yes, I congratulate the Institute of Motorcycling on the emphasis in its material on road safety and the encouragement given to new and young riders to take proper training. I recommend anyone thinking of taking up motor cycling to ring the IMC's Bikeline on 0800 400 483.

Dim-dip Devices

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a further statement on the result of the recent European Court judgment with particular reference to the question of whether dim-dip devices should still be fitted to motor vehicles; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I refer the hon. Member to my reply of Tuesday 12 July, at columns *140-41*.

The requirement for all new cars to have dim-dip devices will be waived only where a vehicle fully meets the requirements of the EC vehicle lighting installation directive (76/756/EEC) and has a headlamp-levelling device.

The object of both types of device is to cut road accidents by enabling the headlights to be used to make the vehicle fully visible without dangerous dazzle. This is particularly important in towns where the interaction between street lights and vehicle lights can create hazards, especially on wet roads.

The advantage of the dim-dip system is that it is cheaper, always automatic rather than at the driver's discretion, and not dependent on the very precise initial setting for full effectiveness. I believe it will be in the interests of road safety, as well as to the advantage of manufacturers, car owners and other road users for all new cars to continue to be fitted with dim-dip devices.

Unlike other countries we have not made it directly illegal to drive on side lights. It is better to have self-working dim-dip.

We shall shortly be consulting in the usual way on the draft Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations to give effect to this judgment.

Driving Instructors

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what has been the effect of the current programme of check-testing of driving instructors on the register of approved driving instructors.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The object of the approval system is to ensure that driving instructors have the right skills to help their pupils learn to drive safely and with consideration. The rolling programme of check tests at the higher standard introduced in 1985 has revealed a significant number who fall below this standard. Instructors who cannot raise their performance are removed from the register. The programme of check tests over the next two years aims to cover all existing instructors.

Motor Cycles

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which motor cycle manufacturing companies have approached him individually to discuss road and machine safety.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Norton, Triumph and BMW.

Drinking and Driving

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will publish the results of the roadside surveys of drinking and driving conducted earlier in the current year.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: As soon as possible.

Suzuki Four-wheel Drive Vehicles

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what information he has on the safety record of four-wheel drive vehicles manufactured by Suzuki;

(2) what investigations have recently been conducted by his Department into the safety record of four-wheel drive vehicles manufactured by Suzuki;

(3) if he has any plans to seek to prevent further sales of four-wheel drive vehicles manufactured by Suzuki;

(4) if he has any plans to seek to obtain the recall of four-wheel drive vehicles manufactured by Suzuki.

Mr. Peter Bottomley *[holding answer 26 July 1988]:* The Department is investigating allegations by the Consumers' Association that these vehicles are unstable under certain conditions. The question is being discussed with both Suzuki and the Consumers' Association. The Department is studying the test results available and seeking to establish whether there is any unacceptable road safety risk.

Horses and Riders

Mr. Onslow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent steps he has taken to remind other road users of the need to give due consideration to horses and riders on the public highway; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Advice to road users on the consideration needed when encountering horses on the roads is given in the Highway Code and the Department's "Driving" manual. Our TV filler, "Passing Horses," is shown once a week on average. Valuable current guidance is also issued by the British Horse Society and the AA, and we endorse this.

The basic message is "slow down, allow plenty of room, and don't sound your horn or rev your engine."

Second Severn Crossing

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on his proposals for the second Severn crossing in the light of new estimates of *(a)* the capacity of the present bridge and *(b)* future traffic flows.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I refer the hon. Member to the statement which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State made to the House today.

Social Science Research

Mr. George: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much has been spent by his Department in each of the past five years on social science research; what percentage this constitutes of total departmental expenditure and of the Department's research budget; and how much of the research has been undertaken *(a)* within his Department, *(b)* by universities and polytechnics and *(c)* by independent research organisations.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The available information relates to gross expenditure on research and development including that performed elsewhere in central Government for research and development in total and for social science and humanities. On this basis the figures are in £ million pounded.

	1982-83 £ million	1983-84 £ million	1984-85 £ million	1985-86 £million	1986-87 £ million
Social science and humanities	1·0	1·0	1·2	2·4	2·2
Percentage of total Department of Transport expenditure (research and development plus social science and humanities)	3·8 per cent.	3·4 per cent.	3·5 per cent.	8·8 per cent.	8·3 per cent.
Social science and humanities within the Department of Transport	0·4	0·4	0·5	1·5	1·6
Social science and humanities within higher education institutions	0·2	0·2	0·2	0·2	0·2
Social science and humanities within industrial research associations and non-industrial research institutions	0·0	0·1	0·0	0·0	0·1

Zeros indicate less than £0·05 million.

Road Accident Statistics

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what was the number of *(a)* drivers and *(b)* front seat passengers (i) killed and (ii) injured in motor vehicle accidents in each month since 1980.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The information requested is given in the tables. The data refer to car occupants as seating position is only identified for these vehicles.

Drivers and front seat passengers of cars
Killed and injured
Great Britain 1980-1987

	Killed		Injured		Total	
	Drivers	Front seat passengers	Drivers	Front seat passengers	Drivers	Front seat passengers
1980						
January	115	47	7,065	2,936	7,180	2,983
February	95	35	5,636	2,543	5,731	2,578
March	92	48	6,607	2,967	6,699	3,015
April	100	39	5,281	2,669	5,381	2,708
May	95	62	5,958	3,107	6,053	3,169
June	114	64	6,305	3,177	6,419	3,241
July	102	50	6,436	3,482	6,538	3,532
August	104	75	6,223	3,569	6,327	3,644
September	132	58	6,298	3,114	6,430	3,172
October	136	47	7,508	3,520	7,644	3,567
November	117	43	7,379	3,452	7,496	3,495
December	137	69	7,758	3,497	7,895	3,566
Total	1,339	637	78,454	38,033	79,793	38,670

	Killed		Injured		Total	
	Drivers	Front seat passengers	Drivers	Front seat passengers	Drivers	Front seat passengers
1981						
January	111	45	6,476	2,890	6,587	2,935
February	106	38	5,982	2,829	6,088	2,867
March	98	48	6,841	3,187	6,939	3,235
April	84	46	5,810	3,003	5,894	3,049
May	94	52	6,438	3,358	6,532	3,410
June	105	64	5,794	2,912	5,899	2,976
July	123	56	6,632	3,436	6,755	3,492
August	109	58	5,929	3,344	6,038	3,402
September	130	51	7,057	3,545	7,187	3,596
October	153	62	7,963	3,726	8,116	3,788
November	134	49	7,394	3,254	7,528	3,303
December	99	44	7,417	3,460	7,516	3,504
Total	1,346	613	79,733	38,944	81,079	39,557

	Killed		Injured		Total	
	Drivers	Front seat passengers	Drivers	Front seat passengers	Drivers	Front seat passengers
1982						
January	115	44	6,355	2,665	6,470	2,709
February	104	54	5,875	2,567	5,979	2,621
March	131	46	6,507	2,904	6,638	2,950
April	108	56	5,656	2,825	5,764	2,881
May	103	49	6,304	3,201	6,407	3,250
June	115	46	6,760	3,375	6,875	3,421
July	122	65	6,225	3,444	6,347	3,509

	Killed		Injured		Total	
	Drivers	Front seat passengers	Drivers	Front seat passengers	Drivers	Front seat passengers
August	122	64	6,855	3,862	6,977	3,926
September	125	47	6,761	3,435	6,886	3,482
October	137	63	7,787	3,827	7,924	3,890
November	138	51	8,633	3,786	8,771	3,837
December	152	73	9,073	4,209	9,225	4,282
Total	1,472	658	82,791	40,100	84,263	40,758

	Killed		Injured		Total	
	Drivers	Front seat passenger	Drivers	Front seat passenger	Drivers	Front seat passenger
1983						
January	120	46	6,427	2,756	6,547	2,802
February	95	31	5,120	1,958	5,215	1,989
March	100	37	5,807	2,364	5,907	2,401
April	89	30	5,808	2,669	5,897	2,699
May	82	43	5,882	2,716	5,964	2,759
June	89	32	5,256	2,446	5,345	2,478
July	60	34	5,680	2,859	5,740	2,893
August	84	48	5,133	2,592	5,217	2,640
September	113	48	6,399	2,807	6,512	2,855
October	126	49	6,684	3,136	6,810	3,185
November	122	46	6,544	2,517	6,666	2,563
December	118	36	7,201	2,844	7,319	2,880
Total	1,198	480	71,941	31,664	73,139	32,144

	Killed		Injured		Total	
	Drivers	Front seat passenger	Drivers	Front seat passenger	Drivers	Front seat passenger
1984						
January	92	30	6,619	2,523	6,711	2,553
February	86	36	5,651	2,254	5,737	2,290
March	81	40	6,109	2,495	6,190	2,535
April	84	41	5,408	2,452	5,492	2,493
May	87	51	6,466	2,895	6,553	2,946
June	92	42	6,050	2,683	6,142	2,725
July	81	45	6,146	2,970	6,227	3,015
August	96	46	5,911	2,953	6,007	2,999
September	122	55	6,815	3,075	6,937	3,130
October	122	51	7,691	3,095	7,813	3,146
November	138	56	8,484	3,294	8,622	3,350
December	156	51	8,343	3,628	8,499	3,679
Total	1,237	544	79,693	34,317	80,930	34,861

	Killed		Injured		Total	
	Drivers	Front seat passenger	Drivers	Front seat passenger	Drivers	Front seat passenger
1984						
January	104	29	6,374	2,510	6,478	2,539
February	73	37	5,727	2,248	5,800	2,285
March	86	35	6,770	2,814	6,856	2,849
April	94	38	6,031	2,756	6,125	2,794
May	91	34	6,370	2,956	6,451	2,990
June	99	29	6,695	3,080	6,794	3,118
July	108	37	6,904	3,187	7,012	3,224
August	119	53	7,254	3,733	7,373	3,786
September	112	43	6,533	2,833	6,645	2,876
October	117	37	7,048	2,894	7,165	2,931
November	133	50	9,350	3,735	9,483	3,785
December	117	37	7,893	3,347	8,010	3,384
Total	1,253	459	82,949	36,102	84,202	36,561

	Killed		Injured		Total	
	Drivers	Front seat passengers	Drivers	Front seat passengers	Drivers	Front seat passengers
1986						
January	98	45	7,383	2,708	7,481	2,753
February	91	29	6,378	2,378	6,469	2,407
March	102	35	7,305	3,145	7,407	3,180
April	95	29	6,929	2,770	7,024	2,799
May	116	42	7,471	3,419	7,587	3,461
June	100	37	6,403	2,820	6,503	2,857
July	105	48	7,157	3,271	7,262	3,319
August	132	52	7,630	3,715	7,762	3,767
September	101	45	6,391	2,776	6,492	2,821
October	124	52	8,613	3,469	8,737	3,521
November	148	52	8,966	3,597	9,114	3,649
December	128	48	9,190	3,556	9,318	3,604
Total	1,340	514	89,816	37,624	91,156	38,138

	Killed		Injured		Total	
	Drivers	Front seat passengers	Drivers	Front seat passengers	Drivers	Front seat passengers
1987						
January	78	30	5,952	2,256	6,030	2,286
February	97	33	6,624	2,401	6,721	2,434
March	84	41	7,300	2,703	7,384	2,744
April	114	38	6,577	2,799	6,691	2,837
May	114	32	7,314	3,353	7,428	3,385
June	113	52	8,113	3,224	8,226	3,276
July	125	47	7,584	3,352	7,709	3,399
August	109	53	7,311	3,736	7,420	3,789
September	106	49	7,610	3,298	7,716	3,347
October	125	38	9,107	3,613	9,232	3,651
November	140	44	8,574	3,303	8,714	3,347
December	122	34	8,617	3,333	8,739	3,367
Total	1,327	491	90,683	37,371	92,010	37,862

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what was the number of rear seat passengers *(a)* killed and *(b)* injured in road accidents; and how many were restrained, in each month since 1980.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The information requested is given in the tables. The data refer to car occupants as seating position is only identified for these vehicles.

Rear seat passeng casualties by severity, use of restraint and month: Great Britain: 1980

	Killed		Injured		Total[1]	
	Restrained	Not restrained	Restrained	Not restrained	Restrained	Not restrained
January	1	14	35	1,199	36	1,213
February	—	9	32	1,089	32	1,098
March	—	16	21	1,318	21	1,334
April	—	13	29	1,223	29	1,236
May	1	24	32	1,617	33	1,641
June	—	19	36	1,497	36	1,516
July	—	21	47	1,691	47	1,712
August	1	15	54	2,012	55	2,027
September	—	25	26	1,462	26	1,487
October	—	20	38	1,407	38	1,427
November	—	21	36	1,440	36	1,461
December	—	14	22	1,535	22	1,549
TOTAL	3	211	408	17,490	411	17,701

[1] Excluding restraint usage unknown.

Rear seat passenger casualties by severity, use of restraint and month: Great Britain: 1981

	Killed		Injured		Total[1]	
	Restrained	Not restrained	Restrained	Not restrained	Restrained	Not restrained
January	1	15	32	1,125	33	1,140
February	1	10	25	1,160	26	1,170
March	—	22	22	1,273	22	1,295
April	—	17	33	1,493	33	1,510
May	—	17	49	1,635	49	1,652
June	—	26	44	1,439	44	1,465

	Killed		Injured		Total[1]	
	Restrained	Not restrained	Restrained	Not restrained	Restrained	Not restrained
July	—	22	56	1,793	56	1,815
August	—	23	48	1,949	48	1,972
September	—	32	55	1,587	55	1,619
October	—	26	35	1,790	35	1,816
November	1	22	37	1,426	38	1,448
December	—	15	53	1,375	53	1,390
TOTAL	3	247	489	18,045	492	18,292

[1] Excluding restraint usage unknown.

Rear seat passenger casualties by severity, use of restraint and month: Great Britain: 1982

	Killed		Injured		Total[1]	
	Restrained	Not restrained	Restrained	Not restrained	Restrained	Not restrained
January	—	9	46	1,030	46	1,039
February	—	19	49	1,141	49	1,160
March	1	21	44	1,262	45	1,283
April	—	16	38	1,367	38	1,383
May	3	21	62	1,580	65	1,601
June	1	23	65	1,581	66	1,604
July	—	27	65	1,688	65	1,715
August	2	27	78	2,083	80	2,110
September	—	24	71	1,539	71	1,563
October	1	21	58	1,703	59	1,724
November	—	22	65	1,502	65	1,524
December	—	9	49	1,635	49	1,644
TOTAL	8	239	690	18,111	698	18,350

[1] Excluding restraint usage unknown.

Rear seat passenger casualties by severity, use of restraint and month: Great Britain: 1983

	Killed		Injured		Total[1]	
	Restrained	Not restrained	Restrained	Not restrained	Restrained	Not restrained
January	—	10	49	1,204	49	1,214
February	—	13	123	1,034	123	1,047
March	1	21	92	1,324	93	1,345
April	—	27	144	1,677	144	1,704
May	—	24	131	1,826	131	1,850
June	—	19	103	1,544	103	1,563
July	1	30	140	1,992	141	2,022
August	—	20	109	1,910	109	1,930
September	—	32	129	1,810	129	1,842
October	2	29	122	1,946	124	1,975
November	5	26	85	1,438	90	1,464
December	1	26	109	1,666	110	1,692
Total	10	277	1,336	19,371	1,346	19,648

[1] Excluding restraint usage unknown.

Rear seat passenger casualties by severity, use of restraint and month: Great Britain: 1984

	Killed		Injured		Total[1]	
	Restrained	Not restrained	Restrained	Not restrained	Restrained	Not restrained
January	—	21	80	1,367	80	1,388
February	—	16	85	1,284	85	1,300
March	—	17	77	1,469	77	1,486
April	1	19	116	1,621	117	1,640
May	1	20	101	1,851	102	1,871
June	2	31	137	1,824	139	1,855
July	1	28	127	2,069	128	2,097
August	1	39	125	2,083	126	2,122
September	2	33	112	1,831	114	1,864
October	—	26	114	1,809	114	1,835
November	—	19	146	2,003	146	2,022
December	2	33	154	2,022	156	2,055
Total	10	302	1,374	21,233	1,384	21,535

[1] Excluding restraint usage unknown.

Rear seat passenger casualties by severity, use of restraint and month: Great Britain: 1985

	Killed		Injured		Total[1]	
	Restrained	Not restrained	Restrained	Not restrained	Restrained	Not restrained
January	—	13	107	1,308	107	1,321
February	—	22	85	1,365	85	1,387
March	—	22	84	1,629	84	1,651
April	1	22	111	1,853	112	1,875
May	3	27	125	1,822	128	1,849
June	1	24	126	1,793	127	1,817
July	2	30	140	2,255	142	2,285
August	1	33	162	2,509	163	2,542
September	—	26	120	1,729	120	1,755
October	1	12	104	1,693	105	1,705
November	—	23	128	2,038	128	2,061
December	2	14	116	1,893	118	1,907
Total	11	268	1,408	21,887	1,419	22,155

[1] Excluding restraint usage unknown.

Rear seat passenger casualties by severity, use of restraint and month: Great Britain: 1986

	Killed		Injured		Total[1]	
	Restrained	Not restrained	Restrained	Not restrained	Restrained	Not restrained
January	—	24	131	1,427	131	1,451
February	—	12	109	1,154	109	1,166
March	3	29	125	1,898	128	1,927
April	1	16	132	1,507	133	1,523
May	3	32	188	2,084	191	2,116
June	1	25	179	1,643	180	1,668
July	1	19	199	2,022	200	2,041
August	—	26	203	2,435	203	2,461
September	3	24	156	1,517	159	1,541
October	—	25	170	1,964	170	1,989
November	2	29	178	2,025	180	2,054
December	—	17	190	1,897	190	1,914
TOTAL	14	278	1,960	21,573	1,974	21,851

[1] Excluding restraint usage unknown

Rear seat passenger casualties by severity, use of restraint and month: Great Britain: 1987

	Killed		Injured		Total[1]	
	Restrained	Not restrained	Restrained	Not restrained	Restrained	Not restrained
January	2	16	106	1,154	108	1,170
February	1	14	138	1,216	139	1,230
March	—	10	154	1,374	154	1,384
April	1	26	200	1,544	201	1,570
May	—	17	189	1,825	189	1,842
June	3	20	219	1,664	222	1,684
July	3	24	233	2,025	236	2,049
August	2	26	287	2,226	289	2,252
September	1	29	240	1,687	241	1,716
October	1	19	269	1,869	270	1,888
November	1	16	183	1,560	184	1,576
December	3	25	267	1,668	270	1,693
TOTAL	18	242	2,485	19,812	2,503	20,054

[1] Excluding restraint usage unknown

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the proportion of rear seat passengers, who are killed on being thrown clear of their vehicles in an accident.

Mr. Peter Bottomley : Provisional figures for 1987 show that of 164,396 casualties in cars and light vans, 26,810, or 16 per cent. were rear seat occupants. Of these, 2,486 were wearing a safety restraint.

Information is not collected on a national basis on occupants thrown from the vehicle in which they were travelling. In-depth crash injury studies have been taking place in selected areas since January 1984 in which a sample of accidents involving cars less than six years old is selected for investigation. Of a total of 6,201 cars in 2,342 accidents of all severities, there were 790 rear seat occupants, of which 593 were casualties. Of these, 37 (5 per cent.) died of their injuries, three of them being partially ejected and a further nine completely ejected.

Cars (Child Safety Restraints)

Mrs. Mahon: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if the Government are considering any cash incentives for the purchase of car safety seats, with a view to encouraging their take-up; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: No. People who can afford a car can afford either to buy the child restraints necessary to carry their children safely, or to take advantage of one of the many loan schemes now operating.

More important is the question of information and publicity. The Child Accident Prevention Trust recently published an excellent report, "The Safety of Children in Cars". We are discussing with the CAPT how to take forward its recommendations on increasing the use of child restraints by voluntary means.

Tolls

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans to announce the abolition of tolls on *(a)* the Severn bridge and *(b)* other estuarial crossings.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: No.

Motorways

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many miles of new motorway were completed in each of the last five years; and at what cost.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The information is as follows:

	Length of new motorway completed (miles)	*Cost (£ million)*
1983-84	49·4	357·1
1984-85	14·1	92·3
1985-86	54·3	328·1
1986-87	29·5	219·0

No new motorway was completed in 1987-88; 43·6 miles are currently under construction at a cost of £237·9 million.

Motorway (Accidents)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* fatal and *(b)* non-fatal accidents occurred on each motorway for each of the last five years; and if he will express the figures as a percentage of the total number of road accidents for those years.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The information required is given in the following tables. The data for 1987 are provisional. They are not expected to change.

Accidents on individual motorways: by severity: GB 1983-1987

	Fatal	*Non-fatal*	*All*	*Percentage of all road accidents*
1983				
M1	30	796	826	0·34
M2	2	81	83	0·03
M3	4	85	89	0·04
M4	25	581	606	0·25
M5	14	283	297	0·12
M6	30	562	592	0·24
M7	0	0	0	0·00
M8	8	138	146	0·06
M9	0	27	27	0·01
M10	1	7	8	0·00
M11	4	83	87	0·04
M18	0	21	21	0·01
M20	3	53	56	0·02
M23	0	32	32	0·01
M25	3	91	94	0·04
M26	2	2	4	0·00
M27	1	31	32	0·01
M40	0	51	51	0·02
M42	0	7	7	0·00
M45	0	5	5	0·00
M50	0	12	12	0·00
M53	2	25	27	0·01
M54	1	0	1	0·00
M55	0	13	13	0·01
M56	3	72	75	0·03
M57	1	30	31	0·01
M58	0	29	29	0·01
M61	1	46	47	0·02
M62	10	237	247	0·10
M63	0	50	50	0·02
M65	0	0	0	0·00
M66	0	17	17	0·01
M69	0	15	15	0·01
M73	0	6	6	0·00
M74	1	18	19	0·01
M80	2	6	8	0·00
M90	0	28	28	0·01
M180	0	15	15	0·01
M181	0	0	0	0·00
M271	0	10	10	0·00
M275	0	11	11	0·00
M876	1	7	8	0·00
Rest	3	122	125	0·05
All	152	3,705	3,857	1·59

Accidents on individual motorways: by severity: GB 1983-1987

	Fatal	*Non-fatal*	*All*	*Percentage of all road accidents*
1984				
M1	33	868	901	0·36
M2	9	81	90	0·04
M3	2	112	114	0·05
M4	17	623	640	0·25
M5	14	262	276	0·11
M6	37	658	695	0·27
M7	0	1	1	0·00
M8	7	121	128	0·05
M9	0	20	20	0·01
M10	0	5	5	0·00
M11	5	125	130	0·05
M18	0	33	33	0·01
M20	2	60	62	0·02
M23	0	47	47	0·02
M25	5	181	186	0·07
M26	0	1	1	0·00
M27	4	49	53	0·02
M40	4	85	89	0·04
M42	0	5	5	0·00
M45	0	4	4	0·00
M50	1	16	17	0·01
M53	1	31	32	0·01
M54	1	17	18	0·01
M55	0	17	17	0·01
M56	3	79	82	0·03
M57	0	36	36	0·01
M58	1	21	22	0·01
M61	2	46	48	0·02
M62	7	282	289	0·11
M63	1	56	57	0·02
M65	0	0	0	0·00
M66	0	15	15	0·01
M69	0	11	11	0·00
M73	0	5	5	0·00
M74	4	26	30	0·01
M80	1	10	11	0·00
M90	4	30	34	0·01

	Fatal	Non-fatal	All	Percentage of all road accidents
M180	1	13	14	0·01
M181	0	1	1	0·00
M271	0	7	7	0·00
M275	0	8	8	0·00
M876	0	1	1	0·00
Rest	6	171	177	0·07
All	172	4,240	4,412	1·74

Accidents on individual motorways: by severity: GB 1983-1987

	Fatal	Non-fatal	All	Percentage of all road accidents
1985				
M1	50	903	953	0·39
M2	1	58	59	0·02
M3	9	134	143	0·06
M4	20	619	639	0·26
M5	18	314	332	0·14
M6	28	604	632	0·26
M7	0	2	2	0·00
M8	4	145	149	0·06
M9	2	24	26	0·01
M10	0	7	7	0·00
M11	3	121	124	0·05
M18	1	30	31	0·01
M20	3	74	77	0·03
M23	3	45	48	0·02
M25	15	271	286	0·12
M26	0	5	5	0·00
M27	2	62	64	0·03
M40	2	56	58	0·02
M42	0	7	7	0·00
M45	0	5	5	0·00
M50	0	14	14	0·01
M53	0	45	45	0·02
M54	1	11	12	0·00
M55	1	12	13	0·01
M56	2	86	88	0·04
M57	0	44	44	0·02
M58	0	23	23	0·01
M61	3	40	43	0·02
M62	12	317	329	0·13
M63	1	72	73	0·03
M65	0	3	3	0·00
M66	0	13	13	0·01
M69	1	13	14	0·01
M73	0	15	15	0·01
M74	1	24	25	0·01
M80	1	10	11	0·00
M90	3	29	32	0·01
M180	1	25	26	0·01
M181	0	0	0	0·00
M271	0	3	3	0·00
M275	0	7	7	0·00
M876	0	3	3	0·00
Rest	4	164	168	0·07
All	192	4,459	4,651	1·89

Accidents on individual motorways: by severity: GB 1983-1987

	Fatal	Non-fatal	All	Percentage of all road accidents
1986				
M1	42	962	1,004	0·41
M2	4	87	91	0·04
M3	4	136	140	0·06
M4	24	725	749	0·30
M5	17	313	330	0·13
M6	35	659	694	0·28
M7	0	0	0	0·00
M8	6	152	158	0·06

	Fatal	Non-fatal	All	Percentage of all road accidents
M9	3	26	29	0·01
M10	0	11	11	0·00
M11	4	119	123	0·05
M18	2	39	41	0·02
M20	2	51	53	0·02
M23	2	53	55	0·02
M25	15	517	532	0·21
M26	0	6	6	0·00
M27	0	80	80	0·03
M40	2	73	75	0·03
M42	0	22	22	0·01
M45	0	6	6	0·00
M50	0	11	11	0·00
M53	0	29	29	0·01
M54	0	23	23	0·01
M55	1	16	17	0·01
M56	4	67	71	0·03
M57	1	20	21	0·01
M58	0	19	19	0·01
M61	4	45	49	0·02
M62	11	293	304	0·12
M63	2	64	66	0·03
M65	0	7	7	0·00
M66	1	21	22	0·01
M69	2	21	23	0·01
M73	2	11	13	0·01
M74	0	26	26	0·01
M80	2	9	11	0·00
M90	4	29	33	0·01
M180	2	18	20	0·01
M181	0	3	3	0·00
M271	0	9	9	0·00
M275	1	8	9	0·00
M876	0	4	4	0·00
Rest	3	170	173	0·07
All	202	4,960	5,162	2·08

Accidents on individual motorways: by severity: GB 1983-1987

	Fatal	Non-fatal	All	Percentage of all road accidents
1987				
M1	43	1,033	1,076	0·45
M2	2	75	77	0·03
M3	5	174	179	0·07
M4	27	664	691	0·29
M5	16	295	311	0·13
M6	41	728	769	0·32
M7	0	3	3	0·00
M8	8	150	158	0·07
M9	0	19	19	0·01
M10	0	3	3	0·00
M11	7	142	149	0·06
M18	1	35	36	0·02
M20	5	65	70	0·03
M23	2	69	71	0·03
M25	15	672	687	0·29
M26	0	9	9	0·00
M27	3	85	88	0·04
M40	4	65	69	0·03
M42	1	44	45	0·02
M45	0	2	2	0·00
M50	0	8	8	0·00
M53	1	44	45	0·02
M54	0	18	18	0·01
M55	3	12	15	0·01
M56	0	95	95	0·04
M57	1	21	22	0·01
M58	0	34	34	0·01
M61	6	40	46	0·02
M62	9	310	319	0·13
M63	0	49	49	0·02
M65	0	8	8	0·00

	Fatal	Non-fatal	All	Percentage of all road accidents
M66	0	23	23	0·01
M69	0	18	18	0·01
M73	0	6	6	0·00
M74	2	31	33	0·01
M80	0	2	2	0·00
M90	2	27	29	0·01
M180	1	20	21	0·01
M181	0	2	2	0·00
M271	0	8	8	0·00
M275	0	6	6	0·00
M876	0	8	8	0·00
Rest	7	192	199	0·08
All	212	5,314	5,526	2·31

Motor Cyclists (Leg Protection)

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will take into account the comments on the draft specification for leg protection by Dynamic Research Inc. of California, a copy of which has been sent to him, in his current research into leg protectors for motor cyclists.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: All useful contributions to developing effective leg protectors will be taken into account.

I hope soon to be able to read a commentary on the Dynamic Research Inc. comments.

Motorways (Repairs)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many miles of new motorway are proposed up to December 1989; what are the estimated costs involved; how many miles of motorway are expected to be repaired by December 1989; what is the cost involved; and if he will list the number of miles and cost per motorway.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Sixteen miles of new motorway are under construction and expected to be open by December 1989, at a total cost of £96 million. They are:

Scheme	Length miles	Cost £ million
M40 Oxford-Birmingham (Warwick section)	11·0	52·0
M63/M66 Portwood-Denton	5·0	44·4

The following new motorway is under construction:

Scheme	Length miles	Cost £ million
M40 Oxford-Birmingham (Banbury bypass)	27·6	141·9

Seven motorway widening schemes are also expected to be completed by the end of December 1989, widening 24·6 miles at a cost of £103·6 million.

Our plans have been to renew 80 miles of motorway in each of the years 1988-89 and 1989-90, at a cost of £102 million in 1988-89. We are considering the effect of the rephasing of capital maintenance works announced in my answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Hornchurch (Mr. Squire) on 20 June.

The figures for individual motorways in the original programme of major renewal schemes for 1988-89 are set out in the table; minor schemes are not included. The programme for 1989-90 has not yet been drawn up.

Motorway	Length (miles)	Cost (£ million)
M1	11·9	18·4
M2	4·4	7·6
M3	3·5	3·0
M4	5·5	5·3
M5	7·7	6·6
M6	10·5	10·7
M11	1·9	2·1
M25	6·4	10·8
M40	2·7	1·0
M42	1·9	3·4
M50	2·3	3·5
M56	3·7	3·5
M62	4·8	3·2
M63	2·1	1·5
M69	2·5	3·5
A1(M)	5·8	5·5
	77·6	89·6

Written Answers to Questions

Friday 29 July 1988

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Student Grant

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish in the *Official Report* the allowances for parental contributions to student grants since 1985-86; and if he will show parental contributions as a percentage of the full student grant in each year.

Mr. Jackson: Parental contributions to mandatory student awards are assessed on the basis of the parents' residual income in accordance with specified scales. The levels of residual income below which no parental contribution would be assessed are as follows:

Academic year	*Residual income* £
1985-86	8,100
1986-87	8,700
1987-88	9,300
1988-89	9,900

The average assessed parental contribution expressed as a percentage of the average mandatory award in 1985-86 and 1986-87 (the latest year for which this information is available) is:

	Per cent.
1985-86	38·8
1986-87	38·4

Expenditure

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what were the figures for average expenditure per pupil in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in each shire county education authority and the average for all shire counties in 1984-85 and the latest year for which information is available.

Mr. Jackson: The information requested is given in the following table.

Average Net Institutional Expenditure (1) Per Pupil (£ cash)

Local Education Authority	*1984-85*		*1986-87*	
	Primary	*Secondary*	*Primary*	*Secondary*
	£	£	£	£
Isles of Scilly	1,125	1,670	1,330	2,205
Avon	735	1,085	850	1,310
Bedfordshire	770	1,060	875	1,250
Berkshire	725	1,055	845	1,280
Buckinghamshire	710	1,095	845	1,320
Cambridgeshire	680	960	815	1,205
Cheshire	710	1,010	810	1,235
Cleveland	750	1,075	890	1,355
Cornwall	670	965	795	1,175
Cumbria	735	1,025	915	1,315
Derbyshire	730	1,020	875	1,305
Devon	670	980	800	1,225
Dorset	700	960	870	1,190
Durham	730	965	920	1,225
East Sussex	705	1,000	825	1,235
Essex	685	1,015	820	1,255
Gloucestershire	695	1,015	835	1,260
Hampshire	685	980	825	1,220
Hereford and Worcester	680	955	815	1,180
Hertfordshire	730	1,075	870	1,350
Humberside	815	1,040	915	1,270
Isle of Wight	705	960	785	1,150
Kent	645	935	760	1,145
Lancashire	670	1,015	780	1,255
Leicestershire	755	1,100	885	1,390
Lincolnshire	665	985	795	1,185
Norfolk	710	1,010	850	1,230
North Yorkshire	730	1,035	850	1,240
Northamptonshire	705	1,035	815	1,250
Northumberland	720	1,000	840	1,230
Nottinghamshire	785	1,110	935	1,365
Oxfordshire	765	1,070	905	1,350
Shropshire	715	1,040	850	1,285
Somerset	655	950	780	1,195
Staffordshire	770	1,025	880	1,255
Suffolk	725	975	830	1,165
Surrey	675	1,030	820	1,260
Warwickshire	710	1,010	845	1,220
West Sussex	660	965	785	1,220
Wiltshire	695	975	850	1,230
Average for all English shire counties	710	1,020	840	1,255

Note:

Net institutional recurrent expenditure covers the cost of salaries and wages, premises and certain supplies and services. It does not include the cost of school meals, central administration and inspection, debt charges or revenue contributions to capital outlay.

Pupil-Teacher Ratios

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what were the average pupil-teacher ratios in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools for each shire county education authority and the average for all shire counties in 1984-85 and the latest year for which information is available.

Mrs. Rumbold: The average pupil-teacher ratios in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools for each shire county local education authority and the average for all shire counties in 1984-85 and 1986-87 (the latest year for which information is available) are as follows:

Pupil-teacher ratio

	Primary schools		*Secondary schools*	
	January 1984	*January 1987*	*January 1984*	*January 1987*
Avon	23·9	24·1	16·4	16·4
Bedfordshire	23·3	22·0	17·5	17·1
Berkshire	23·0	23·6	16·2	16·0
Buckinghamshire	24·3	24·4	16·5	16·1
Cambridgeshire	23·6	23·2	16·8	16·2
Cheshire	22·7	23·2	16·9	16·7
Cleveland	22·1	22·1	16·2	15·5
Cornwall	23·7	23·2	16·9	16·5
Cumbria	21·2	21·2	15·9	15·2

	Primary schools		Secondary schools	
	January 1984	January 1987	January 1984	January 1987
Derbyshire	22·2	21·3	16·9	15·5
Devon	23·6	22·6	16·9	16·5
Dorset	23·5	22·9	17·1	16·5
Durham	21·7	22·1	16·8	16·7
East Sussex	22·1	22·4	17·1	16·4
Essex	24·1	23·1	17·1	16·8
Gloucestershire	22·9	22·4	17·0	16·1
Hampshire	24·0	23·3	17·1	16·5
Hereford and Worcester	25·1	24·1	17·5	16·8
Hertfordshire	22·4	21·8	16·1	15·5
Humberside	20·9	21·4	16·2	15·6
Isle of Wight	23·6	23·5	18·0	17·1
Kent	23·9	24·0	17·1	16·6
Lancashire	23·2	23·6	16·4	15·9
Leicestershire	22·5	22·9	16·0	15·5
Lincolnshire	24·1	24·0	17·0	16·6
Norfolk	22·3	22·4	16·6	16·2
North Yorkshire	21·8	21·9	16·4	16·3
Northamptonshire	22·1	22·7	16·5	16·3
Northumberland	23·3	23·1	17·4	16·3
Nottinghamshire	21·1	20·7	15·8	15·1
Oxfordshire	23·9	23·0	17·2	16·5
Salop	21·6	21·3	16·2	15·5
Somerset	23·8	22·9	17·6	16·7
Staffordshire	22·3	22·9	16·3	16·5
Suffolk	22·1	22·5	16·9	16·8
Surrey	22·5	21·3	16·4	15·8
Warwickshire	22·5	21·7	17·1	16·5
West Sussex	23·3	22·8	17·0	16·4
Wiltshire	23·5	22·8	17·0	16·7
Non-Metropolitan Counties	22·9	22·6	16·7	16·2

Voluntary Organisations

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when the London Voluntary Service Council can expect a reply to its letters to the Minister of State of 18 and 26 May about the future funding for voluntary organisations working in the field of education in inner London.

Mrs. Rumbold: A reply has been sent today.

Endometriosis

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if the Medical Research Council has carried out any research into the disease endometriosis; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: The MRC reproductive biology unit is currently carrying out studies on the treatment and causes of endometriosis. Two MRC project grants:

Steroid hormone control of phospholipid turnover in the regulation of menstrual bleeding; and

Psychiatric disorders and measured menstrual loss in women having hysterectomies for excessive menstruation

both of which have just ended, are relevant to this subject.

The MRC also supports research in the areas of obstetrics and gynaecology, fertility and human reproduction which may have indirect relevance to the understanding of this disease. The council is always willing to consider soundly based research grant applications in competition with other applicants.

Teachers

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what percentage of English teachers in secondary schools have *(a)* higher degrees, *(b)* first degrees, *(c)* A-level pass, *(d)* O-level pass and *(e)* other academic qualifications in this subject.

Mrs. Rumbold: In January 1984, the latest date for which full figures of post-A-level qualifications are available, there were an estimated 45,700 full and part-time teachers who taught English in maintained secondary schools in England. The percentages of these teachers qualified in English beyond A-level are as follows. No information is available on the A and O-level qualifications of secondary school teachers.

	Percentage of teachers
Main subject of higher degree	2
Main subject of degree (including BEd)	36
Main subject of other post A level qualification	17
Subsidiary subject of degree (including BEd)	3
Subsidiary subject of other post A level qualification	13
No qualification in the subject beyond A level	29

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is his latest estimate of the numbers of teachers required to teach *(a)* science, *(b)* mathematics and *(c)* modern languages by 1992.

Mrs. Rumbold: Estimates of the numbers of teachers required to teach subjects within the national curriculum will depend on the timetable for the introduction of its various requirements, on my right hon. Friend's proposals in respect of each subject and on the outcome of the National Curriculum Council's subsequent consultations.

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) what were the numbers of entrants into teacher training for *(a)* science, *(b)* mathematics and *(c)* modern languages in each of the last available five years;

(2) how many graduates of *(a)* universities and *(b)* polytechnics entered the teaching profession for each of the last available five years.

Mrs. Rumbold: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what were the numbers of teachers qualifying from training in *(a)* science, *(b)* mathematics and *(c)* modern languages for each of the last available five years.

Mrs. Rumbold: Numbers entering secondary courses of initial teacher training in English universities, polytechnics and colleges in, respectively, science, mathematics and modern languages, in each of the last five years were:

	Science	Mathematics	Modern languages
1983	1,400	1,041	724
1984	1,300	917	716
1985	1,215	791	697
1986	1,310	848	631
1987	1,573	1,140	681

Notes:

1. Figures based on returns of intakes to secondary initial teacher training courses made each autumn by universities, polytechnics and colleges to the DES.
2. Figures on entrants to primary courses of initial teacher training are not disaggregated by subject specialism.

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many teachers left the profession before the official retirement age for each of the last available five years.

Mrs. Rumbold: The numbers of full-time maintained nursery, primary and secondary teachers leaving the maintained, assisted and grant-aided sector before the age of 60 in each of the last five available years are as follows:

Financial year	*Teachers*
1980-81	28,600
1981-82	26,345
1982-83	25,627
1983-84	25,382
1984-85	27,171
[1]1985-86	27,224

[1]Provisional.

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many places there were for graduates in English on postgraduate teaching courses for each of the last available five years.

Mrs. Rumbold: Aggregate numbers of target places in English universities, polytechnics and colleges for secondary PGCE courses in English in each of the last five years were:

Year	*Places*
1983	775
1984	716
1985	729
1986	763
1987	758

In addition, over this period it was open to graduates in English, as in other subjects, to proceed to PGCE courses for intending primary teachers.

City Technology Colleges

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) if he will list the consultants advising the Government on city technology colleges; and what is his estimate of the cost of this exercise;

(2) if he will list the consultants advising those city technology colleges already announced, giving an estimate of the cost.

Mrs. Rumbold: As from January 1987 the Government have been advised by a group of four, and latterly five individual experts, plus the Organisation for Rehabilitation through Training, on the curriculum and related issues of city technology colleges. The estimated cost to the Department to date is £40,000.

Kinghurst, Nottingham and Teesside CTC trusts are each employing the services of a number of advisers to help them establish their CTCs. Details are available from the CTC trust concerned in each case. The Department is contributing an estimated £225,000 towards the cost of these services over a period of three years.

Post-16 Education

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what plans he has to ensure that post-16 educational opportunities in England and Wales are comparable with those available in the other European Economic Community countries by 1992.

Mrs. Rumbold: The Government's priority is to ensure that wide-ranging opportunities for post-16 education and training are available in this country, and to encourage more young people to take advantage of them. To that end we have developed important new programmes such as the two-year YTS and the certificate of pre-vocational education. Our examination reforms and the Education Reform Bill will help to give more 16-year-olds the motivation and the qualifications they need to stay on. We are working to produce a more rational system of vocational qualifications. We are emphasising to young people and to employers the importance of continuing education and training, not least in order to produce the skilled and productive work force which we will need if we are to continue to compete effectively in Europe after 1992.

Student Unions

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will seek to place upon heads of polytechnics and colleges of further education and upon university vice-chancellors a legal duty to ensure that college students unions do not misappropriate their funds or apply them to causes other than the material welfare of students.

Mr. Jackson: I refer to the reply given to my hon. Friend the Member for Thurrock (Mr. Janman) on 18 April, at column 292, in which my right hon. Friend indicated the Government's intention to collect up-to-date information on a number of issues relating to student unions and thereafter to reach conclusions and consult all concerned on the best action to take. A questionnaire will be issued to a sample of institutions shortly.

In the meantime, all student unions covered by the law of charity are already under a duty to apply their funds only on activities designed to promote the interests of students as students.

Co-ordinating Committee for Marine Science and Technology

Mr. Ken Hargreaves: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he has now completed the appointments to the Co-ordinating Committee for Marine Science and Technology.

Mr. Jackson: Yes. The full committee membership is now:

Members	
Sir John Mason, CB, DSc, FRS	Chairman
Non-Governmental Members	
Mr. George C. Band	Director General, UK Offshore Operators Association Ltd.
Admiral Sir Lindsay Bryson, FRSE, FEng	Chairman, Marine Technology Directorate Ltd.
Dr. Douglas Georgala, CBE	Industrial Consultant, Laboratory of the Government Chemist.

Members	
Sir Anthony Laughton, FRS	Former Director, Institute of Oceanographic Sciences, Deacon Lab.
Mr. Don Lennard	Managing Director, Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion Systems Ltd.
Prof. Ernest Naylor, DSc, FIBiol	Lloyd Roberts Professor of Zoology, University College of North Wales, Bangor.
Prof. Tom Patten, CBE, FEng, FIMechE, FRSE	Chairman, Seaboard Lloyd Ltd.
Sir David Smith, FRS	Vice Chancellor of Edinburgh University.
Departmental Members	
Prof. Michael Burdekin, FEng, FICE, FIMechE	Professor of Civil and Structural Engineering at the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology. Science and Engineering Research Council representative.
Mr. Peter Carter	Director of R&D Branch, Offshore Supplies Office, Department of Energy.
Dr. Anthony Hawkins	Director Aberdeen Marine Laboratory, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland.
Mr. Harold Hill	Director of Fisheries Research, Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food.
Mr. Peter O'Neill	Head of Science and Research Policy and Programming Division, Department of Transport.
Mr. Charles Robson	Head of Chief Scientist Group, Department of Environment.
Dr. Mike Sutton	Engineering Markets Division, Department of Trade and Industry.
Dr. David Tyte	Deputy Director, (Underwater) Admiralty Research Establishment, Portland, Ministry of Defence.
Dr. John Woods	Director of Marine Sciences, Natural Environment Research Council.
Assessors	
Miss Rowena Harris	Science and Technology Secretariat, Cabinet Office
Mr. Henry Hogger	Assistant Head of Maritime, Aviation and Environment Department, Foreign & Commonwealth Office
Mr. Robin Ritzema	Head of Division Science Branch, Department of Education and Science
Secretary	
Dr. Nicholas Flemming	

Recruitment and Promotion

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what measures he has implemented to ensure that recruitment and promotion policy in his Department does not directly or indirectly discriminate against applicants who were mature students or women returning to work following a career break due to child care.

Mrs. Rumbold: For the grades of administration officer and below, where the Department recruits direct, we are trying to widen our recruitment field, particularly to married women returning to work and mature people, by using centrally devised tests as an alternative to formal qualifications. Staff are encouraged to return to the Department following a career break for child care or other circumstances and they retain the grade and seniority that they had achieved at the date of leaving. Promotion at all levels is based on ability.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Development Projects

Mr. Canavan: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will give a breakdown, by project, of the resources reallocated to development projects resulting from the savings arising from the United Kingdom's withdrawal from UNESCO.

Mr. Chris Patten: In the financial year 1986-87, the latest for which figures are available, the £6·4 million saved by our withdrawal from UNESCO was reallocated in full to aid projects, as shown in the following table.

Re-Allocation of 1986/87 UNESCO Savings
Final Expenditure 1986/87

	£ *Committed*	£ *Spent*
1. ODA Technical Co-operation Training Programme		
Country—		
Botswana	300,000	203,370
Mauritius	150,000	—
Swaziland	150,000	43,378
Gambia	40,000	40,000
Ghana	150,000	150,000
Kenya	200,000	200,000
Nigeria	75,000	75,000
Sierra Leone	55,000	55,000
Tanzania	80,000	80,000
Sri Lanka	100,000	100,000
Maldives	50,000	50,000
Cyprus	17,000	—
Caribbean Commonwealth	100,000	100,000
Fiji, Tonga, Solomons, Vanuatu, Kiribati, Tuvalu	52,000	52,000
	1,519,000	1,148,748
British Council Aid Administration Charges	353,000	266,510
Total	£1,872,000	£1,415,258
2. English Language Training Courses		
Country—		
Senegal	46,000	46,000
Ivory Coast	10,000	10,000
Guinea	30,000	30,000
Mali	30,000	30,000
Benin	32,000	32,000
Niger	30,000	30,000
Cameroon	50,000	50,000
Morocco	66,000	66,000
Mauritius	40,000	28,000
Madagascar	40,000	40,000
Mozambique	40,000	40,000
Djibouti	75,000	—
Bangladesh	150,000	112,173
Burma	50,000	50,000
	689,000	564,173
British Council Aid Administration Charges	110,000	90,268
Total	799,000	654,441
3. ODA Shared Scholarship Scheme	300,000	300,000

	£ *Committed*	£ *Spent*
4. Foreign and Commonwealth Office Scholarships and Awards Schemes	600,000	600,000
5. ODA Cultural Projects International Centre for the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property: Training course for African museum conservators	100,000	100,000
6. PES transfer to FCO for cultural projects: Visiting Arts Heritage Trust Arts Council Latin American Arts Association European Youth Theatre Encounter	100,000	100,000
7. Chinese student scholarships in United Kingdom	950,000	—
8. Distance learning project in Commonwealth countries	100,000	100,000
9. Nassau fellowships	500,000	370,853
10. Commonwealth Media Development Fund	100,000	100,000
11. Royal Society		
i. International Geological Correlation Programme	23,400	—
ii. International Council of Scientific Unions	17,900	—
iii. International Centre for Theoretical Physics	15,500	—
iv. Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research	9,000	—
v. Commission for the Geological Map of The World	3,900	—
vi. International Brain Research Organisation	1,600	—
vii. International Cell Research Organisation	3,800	—
viii. International Union of Microbiological Sciences	2,000	—
ix. International Union of Geological Sciences	1,400	—
x. International Union for Conservation of Nature	2,700	—
xi. International Federation of Automatic Control	9,300	—
xii. International Centre for Pure and Applied Mathematics	1,900	—
xiii. World Federation of Engineering Organisations	3,400	—
	95,800	—
Royal Society charges	9,580	—
Total	105,380	105,380
12. Research in Arid Commonwealth Africa	400,000	400,000
13. Inter-governmental Oceanographic Commission	96,000	96,000
14. Man and the Biosphere/International Hydrological Programme/International Association of Hydrological Sciences	189,000	189,000
15. Dissemination of results of research	200,000	170,000
Grand Total items 1-15=	£6,411,380	[1]£4,700,932 (73·32%)

[1] Full use of the total amount was not possible because of the late start on the allocations following announcement of the programme in mid-April.

Departmental Programmes

Mr. George: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much has been spent by his Department in each of the past five years on the evaluation of departmental programmes; and what proportion this constitutes of *(a)* the amount allocated for evaluation and *(b)* the Department's total budget.

Mr. Chris Patten *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* Information in respect of the Overseas Development Administration is as follows:

	Expenditure on evaluation[1] *£ thousand*	*Expenditure on evaluation as percentage of allocation*	*Expenditure on evaluation as percentage of total net aid programme*
1983-84	293	78	0·02
1984-85	369	68	0·02
1985-86	375	81	0·02
1986-87	375	86	0·02
1987-88	425	95	0·03

[1] Virtually all expenditure on evaluation has been in respect of evaluation of Departmental programmes.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Heavy Vehicles (Fines)

Mr. Onslow: To ask the Attorney-General what action the Lord Chancellor is taking, in his capacity as chairman of the Magistrates Association, to draw magistrates' attention to the conclusions of the report of the National Audit Office concerning the financial advantage of regularly overloading a 38-tonne vehicle relative to the national average fine imposed for such an offence.

The Attorney-General: The Lord Chancellor, in his capacity as president of the Magistrates Association, will take the opportunity of expressing his personal views on this matter on a suitable occasion when addressing members of the association. When addressing west midlands magistrates in July 1986, Lord Chancellor Hailsham said, referring in particular to offences of overloading commercial vehicles:

"Where the motive is profit and the rewards are high, a swingeing fine may be the right penalty or the offender will simply recou himself in a very short time by further offences."

This was reported in the November 1986 issue of *The Magistrate*.

PRIME MINISTER

Ministers (Correspondence)

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: To ask the Prime Minister whether she will remind Ministers that when the regular staff of their private offices are on holiday, they must not omit to instruct the replacement staff of the necessity to enclose a second copy with all Ministers' letters sent to right hon. and hon. Members.

The Prime Minister: My right hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury has written to Ministers accordingly.

Iranian Airbus (Incident)

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Prime Minister, further to her replies dated 11 July on the shooting down of the Iranian Airbus, *Official Report*, column *4*, whether Royal Navy ships in the vicinity had indirect information on the Iranian Airbus's flight path; and whether the equipment of the Royal Navy is such as to preclude a similar error.

The Prime Minister: HMS Beaver heard warnings to an unidentified aircraft on the international civil distress frequency at the time of the incident. The equipment and operating procedures of Royal Navy ships are designed to minimise the risk of misidentifications.

Single European Act

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Prime Minister why she agreed to the Single European Act; and what are its implications for national sovereignty.

The Prime Minister: The provisions of the Single European Act were fully debated by the House during the various stages of the European Communities (Amendment) Bill, which completed its passage through the House on 10 July 1986.

Scientific Officers and Scientists

Mrs. Wise: To ask the Prime Minister (1) what is the typical salary of a Civil Service scientific officer after three years' service, and of a National Health Service scientist after the same service; and if she will make a statement on the implications of the disparity;

(2) what is the starting salary of *(a)* a Civil Service scientific officer and *(b)* a National Health Service graduate scientist; and if she will make a statement on the implications of the disparity between them.

The Prime Minister: The information requested is a follows:

	Starting salary £	*After 3 years* £
Civil Service scientific officer	8,284-9,687	9,687-10,622
NHS scientist	8,255-10,369	9,452-11,073

Notes:
NHS figures are those in the current offer which, if accepted, would become effective from 1 April 1988; Civil Service figures are subject to review from 1 August 1988.
Starting salaries depend on individual qualifications and relevant experience.

Economic and Monetary Union

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Prime Minister when she first agreed to the principle of economic and monetary union within the European Economic Community or any development of that principle at a meeting of the Heads of Governments of member states or at any meeting of the European Council established by the Single European Act.

The Prime Minister: The first of the many meetings at which Community Heads of Government, with United Kingdom participation, reaffirmed the objective of economic and monetary union took place on 19-20 October 1972.

Departmental Responsibilities

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Prime Minister which Department will be responsible for *(a)* social services, *(b)* disability and *(c)* children; and if she will make it her policy that the titles of the new Departments of state reflect these as responsibilities.

The Prime Minister: Responsibility for the personal social services at central Government level falls to the Secretary of State for Health. Health care and personal social services for children, and those for people with a disability are matters for him. Benefits for all client groups are the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Social Security. The Minister for Social Security and the Disabled exercises the Department's responsibility for the co-ordination of Government policies concerning disabled people. The two Departments will be known as the Department of Social Security and the Department of Health.

10 Downing Street

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Prime Minister what work on the interior and exterior of No. 10 Downing street is envisaged during the next 12 months; what is the estimated cost; and how much in total has been spent on *(a)* fixtures and fittings, *(b)* interior and exterior decoration and *(c)* the grounds of No. 10 Downing street since 1979.

The Prime Minister: Work on the interior and exterior of 10 Downing street envisaged during 1988-89 consists of refurbishment, restorations, electrical and security improvements and general maintenance at an estimated cost of £975,000. Information on how much in total has been spent on fixtures and fittings, interior and exterior decoration and the grounds of 10 Downing street since 1979 is not available.

Ministers (Advisers)

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list in the *Official Report* the grades of, and or salaries paid to political and special advisers to *(a)* herself, *(b)* Secretaries of State and *(c)* Ministers, showing each Department separately.

The Prime Minister *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* The number of special advisers in each Department is as follows:

	Number
Cabinet Office (including No. 10)	9
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	2
Her Majesty's Treasury	3
Department of Health Department of Social Security	12
Department of Education and Science	1

	Number
Department of Employment	1
Department of Trade and Industry	2
Home Office	2
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food	1
Department of Energy	1
Department of Transport	1
Scottish Office	1
Department of the Environment	2
Ministry of Defence	1
Lord President of the Council	1

[1] The allocation of special advisers is still under consideration.

None of these posts is graded.

Two special advisers are unpaid and four are on secondment from the private sector. Apart from the three most senior advisers, the remainder are paid on a common pay spine, as follows:

Point No.	Salary	No. of advisers
1	13,715	1
2	14,587	[1]1
3	15,047	
4	15,591	
5	16,479	[1]1+1
6	17,090	
7	17,686	
8	18,287	
9	18,966	
10	19,859	
11	20,497	
12	21,270	
13	22,117	
14	22,927	1
15	23,736	3
16	24,755	1
17	26,359	1
18	27,702	1
19	29,050	1
20	30,398	[1]1
21	31,741	3
22	33,021	1
23	34,301	
24	35,952	2
25	37,159	
26	38,366	
27	39,312	[1]1
28	40,258	1

[1] These four advisers are paid on a pensionable basis, as members of the principal Civil Service pension scheme and their pay is reduced accordingly. The pay of all other special advisers is non-pensionable.

Children and Young People

Miss Lestor: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list the responsibilities of each Government Department, broken down by departmental divisions, for matters relating to children and young people aged under 18 years.

The Prime Minister *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* Government responsibility for services relating to children and young people covers a wide range of activities and involves a number of departments. The main responsibilities within England are as follows:

Department of Education and Science
—Promotion of education, including the organisation of primary and secondary education, school curriculum and assessment policy, and public examinations.

Department of Employment
—Responsibility for training, employment and vocational education schemes for young people, such as YTS, TVEI and other educational programmes.
—Central responsibility for the career service.

Department of Environment
—Provision of play for pre-school children.
—Provision of play for pre-school children.
—Grants under the urban programme for projects benefiting children.

Department of Health
—Health services for children and young people in hospital and in the community, including child health surveillance and dental and school health services.
—Policy for social services for children, including day-care, foster-care and adoption, and prevention of child abuse.
—Nutrition, including infant feeding.
—Care and protection of children.
—Social services for socially deprived families and children in care.
—Care, control and treatment of juvenile delinquents.

Home Office
—Criminal justice policies.
—Arrangements for offenders given custodial sentences.
—Magistrates' court proceedings involving the custody and maintenance of children.

Lord Chancellor's Department
—Family law relating to children.

Department of Social Security
—Policy on social security benefits affecting children and young people, including cash benefits for disabled people, unemployment benefits (family credit, child benefit, and one-parent benefit), the social fund, state and occupational pensions, income support and housing benefits.
(Payments of benefits is undertaken by the Department and by local authorities. Payment of unemployment benefits is undertaken by the Department of Employment on an agency basis.)

In Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, some of the functions are carried out by the Departments listed above; others or their equivalents are, subject to apropriate legislation, performed by the Welsh, Scottish and Northern Ireland Offices.

Further breakdown by departmental divisions would be possible only at disproportionate cost.

THE ARTS

Elstree Studios (Nitrate Film)

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Minister of the Arts if he will make provision for the stocks of nitrate film at present stored at Elstree studios; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce: The British Film Institute could carry out the necessary conservation work, and it is in discussion with the owners at present.

Public Expenditure

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will publish in the *Official Report* an analysis of receipts to his programme, consistent with the reply of 27 May, *Official Report*, columns *375-376*, analysing by function or nature of item *(a)* the receipts classified as charges with respect to programme expenditure, *(b)* the receipts classified as charges with respect to running costs expenditure and *(c)* the amounts of receipts in respect of (i) programme expenditure and (ii) running costs expenditure estimated to have been met from other public expenditure programmes.

Mr. Luce *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* An analysis in the precise form requested is not available, but the arts and

libraries receipts detailed in the reply of 27 May relate to programme expenditures. They fall into the following categories, and the table covers the last three years for which firm figures are known.

£ million

	1984-85	*1985-86*	*1986-87*
Museums and Galleries	−8	−11	−8
Libraries (Central)	−16	−18	−16
LA Museums and Galleries	−10	−11	−11
LA Libraries	−37	−39	−42
TOTAL	−71	−79	−77

It is not possible to identify the amounts that originate in other public expenditure programmes.

English National Opera and London Festival Ballet

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will make a statement on the future funding of the English National Opera and London Festival Ballet.

Mr. Luce *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* These companies receive their public funding from the Arts Council and from Westminster city council, on behalf of London generally. I am aware of the anxieties which have been expressed about the continuation of Westminster's contribution when the basis of local authority finance is changed. I hope that all the parties which currently contribute will continue to do so, and that means will be found to adjust their contributions as may become necessary and appropriate.

Sponsors (TV Advertising)

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will make a statement on the relaxation of television advertising rules for sponsors of major arts events.

Mr. Luce *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* I welcome recent efforts by both the IBA and BBC to relax their guidelines on the credits which may be given to arts sponsors. I believe the IBA changes will be very helpful, but I am still concerned at the disparity of treatment between the arts and sport in the BBC guidelines and I shall continue to press for equality.

Museums

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will publish in the *Official Report* for each year in the period 1970 to 1987 and for the institutions listed in his earlier reply of 26 May, *Official Report* columns *259-260* *(a)* the number of adult entrants, *(b)* the number of concession entrants and *(c)* admission revenue.

Mr. Luce *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* This information is not available in the precise form requested. However, total attendances at each of the institutions listed in my reply of 26 May in each year since 1978 were as follows:

Number[1] of visitors to National museums and galleries 1978-1987

	1978	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*
British Museum (Natural History)	2,901	2,869	2,410	3,299	2,869	3,193	3,022	3,354	3,240	1,999
Imperial War Museum	1,462	1,419	1,449	1,160	1,180	1,256	1,366	1,291	1,176	1,185
National Maritime Museum	1,260	1,102	1,145	997	997	600	600	600	380	442
NMGM	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1,163	1,329
Science Museum	5,176	5,147	5,790	5,464	4,554	4,784	4,510	4,608	4,825	4,733
Tate Gallery	1,081	1,141	1,331	891	1,219	1,270	1,266	997	1,153	1,742
Victoria and Albert Museum	1,937	1,992	1,724	1,711	2,058	2,221	2,079	2,067	1,439	1,399
Total	13,817	13,670	13,849	13,522	12,877	13,324	12,843	12,917	13,376	12,829

[1] in thousands.

Estimates Definitions (Expenditure)

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table covering each of the votes on class XIII and for each of the years 1979-80 to 1990-91, which shows gross expenditure on estimates definitions.

Mr. Luce *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* The Office of Arts and Libraries was established in 1983. The following table shows gross spending since then on the votes which in the last closed year, 1987-88, comprised class XIII.

£'000s

	1983-84	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*1987-88*
British Museum	12,350 (Class X,12)	12,771 (Class V,1)	13,096 (Class V,1)	13,345 (Class XIII,1)	13,938 (Class XIII,1)
British Museum (Natural History)	9,416 (Class X,10)	9,731 (Class X,10)	11,415 (Class X,10)	11,787 (Class XII,10)	17,958 (Class XII,10)
Imperial War Museum	3,997 (Class X,15)	4,100 (Class V,2)	4,445 (Class V,2)	4,497 (Class XIII,2)	4,727 (Class XIII,2)
National Gallery	6,659 (Class X,16)	6,992 (Class V,3)	6,571 (Class V,3)	6,771 (Class XIII,3)	7,017 (Class XIII,3)
National Maritime Museum	3,988 (Class X,17)	4,275 (Class V,4)	4,218 (Class V,4)	4,462 (Class XIII,4)	4,677 (Class XIII,4)
National Portrait Gallery	1,757 (Class X,18)	1,886 (Class V,5)	1,777 (Class V,5)	1,814 (Class XIII,5)	1,819 (Class XIII,5)
Science Museum	7,642	8,483	8,954	9,171	9,589

	1983-84	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*1987-88*
	(Class X,13)	(Class V,6)	(Class V,6)	(Class XIII,6)	(Class XIII,6)
Tate Gallery	5,320	5,594	5,644	5,782	6,497
	(Class X,19)	(Class V,7)	(Class V,7)	(Class XIII,7)	(Class XIII,7)
Victoria and Albert Museum	10,299	11,340	10,670	11,023	11,680
	(Class X,14)	(Class V,8)	(Class V,8)	(Class XIII,8)	(Class XIII,8)
Wallace Collection	781	822	876	906	939
	(Class X,20)	(Class V,9)	(Class V,9)	(Class XIII,9)	(Class XIII,9)
Arts and the Heritage	111,671	124,111	129,871	173,670	183,514
	(Class X,21)	(Class V,10)	(Class V,10)	(Class XIII,10)	(Class XIII,10)

£'000

	1983-84	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*1987-88*
Libraries	45,324	47,286	48,719	53,143	54,238
	(Class X,22)	(Class V,11)	(Class V,11)	(Class XIII,11)	(Class XIII,11)
OAL Administration	[1]600	906	1,186	1,165	1,288
	(Class X,23)	(Class V,12)	(Class V,12)	(Class XIII,12)	(Class XIII,12)

[1]Part-year only.

The Vote Structure of class XIII was reorganised and simplified in 1988-89. The details are as follows:

		£'000
Vote 1.	Museums and Galleries	153,576
Vote 2.	Arts and the Heritage	174,364
Vote 3.	Libraries	89,668
Vote 4.	Office of Arts and Libraries Administration	1,522

Supply Expenditure

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table, covering each of the institutions for which a vote is taken on class XIII and for each of the years 1979-80 to 1990-91, which shows the public expenditure content of such Supply expenditure.

Mr. Luce *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to his earlier question on the matter. All the Supply expenditure referred to is classified as public expenditure.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Cash Dispensers

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg: To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will make a statement on progress in discussions on providing an automated cash dispensing teller machine within the precincts of the House for the convenience of hon. Members and staff.

Mr. Wakeham: I replied to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Warrington, South (Mr. Butler) about cash dispensing facilities in the House on 23 May, at column *22*. I have received no further representations on this subject. I understand, however, that this facility is being considered by the relevant sub-committee of the Services Committee as one of the possible amenities and facilities to be provided in the new parliamentary buildings.

Written Answers (Cost)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Lord President of the Council what information he has about the total estimated cost of providing answers to written parliamentary questions in the current Session of Parliament; and how many such questions have been tabled.

Mr. Wakeham: Records of the total cost of answering parliamentary questions are not kept centrally. However, following an interdepartmental exercise in 1972, an assessment was made of the average cost of answering a written parliamentary question. This average figure is updated regularly and currently stands at £51. A total of 43,128 written and priority written parliamentary questions have been tabled to date this Session.

CIVIL SERVICE

Departmental Programmes

Mr. George: To ask the Minister for the Civil Service how much has been spent by his Department in each of the past five years on the evaluation of Department programmes; and what proportion this constitutes of *(a)* the amount allocated for evaluation and *(b)* the Department's total budget.

Mr. Luce *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* The Office of the Minister for the Civil Service's management accounting system provides for the continuous review of the Department's work in addition to an annual evaluation of all its programmes. The system is an integral part of the process of management in the Department and it is therefore not possible to identify separately the resources involved.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Furnishing Fabrics (Fire Safety)

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether any guidance has recently been issued by his Department in order to indicate with whom responsibility rests for ensuring that furnishing fabrics conform to the new furniture fire safety regulations.

Mr. Forth: In answer to inquiries about responsibility for ensuring that these requirements of the new regulations are met, I have said that the primary responsibility lies with suppliers of furniture; suppliers of furnishing fabrics

direct to the public also have a legal responsibility. The enforcement of the regulations will be a matter for the local authority trading standards department.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) if he will list the types of interliners or barrier cloths which currently meet the ignition source five test; and if he will place in the Library full details of the interliners' performance;

(2) what recent representations he has now received from furnishing fabric suppliers concerning their inability to find interliners or barrier cloths that will meet the ignition source five test;

(3) what tests have been carried out by his Department to check the validity of manufacturers' claims that their products meet the ignition source five test for furnishing fabrics.

Mr. Forth: I recognise the concerns which have been expressed by some parts of the furniture industry about the availability of interliners which will meet the ignition source 5 test which is to be carried out over standard polyurethane foam. No specific tests have been carried out by my Department to verify the statements of manufacturers about their products, but I am satisfied by the information available to me that there are materials which will meet the test. I understand that the manufacturers are generally known in the industry and I have no doubt that they will co-operate with the furniture industry in meeting the requirements of the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988.

Patents Designs and Trade Marks

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table, covering the years 1982-83 to 1990-91, which collates on the same basis *(a)* the non-capital receipts and expenditure account published in the annual report of the Comptroller-General of Patents Designs and Trade Marks, *(b)* the presentation of voted expenditure in the supply estimates and appropriation accounts for class V, Vote 2, section E (protection of innovation) and *(c)* the protection of innovation component in the support for industry line of table 5.1 of column 288.

Mr. Forth: The table shows the voted expenditure figures in the Supply Estimates and Appropriation Accounts for class V, vote 2, section E, for the years 1982-83 to 1988-89. Expenditure for the other years requested has not yet been voted. These figures cannot readily be collated on the same basis as the non-capital receipts and expenditure account published in the annual report of the Comptroller-General of Patents, Designs and Trade Marks, because the financial information in this annual report is presented on a calendar year basis. The figures for the protection of innovation component in the support for industry line of table 5.1 of column 288 are the same as the net total figures in the table given here.

Point II *(£'000)*

Voted Expenditure	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85 Outturn*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*1987-88 Provisional Outturn*	*1988-89 Supply Estimates*
Patent Office (current expenditure)	19,501	19,253	24,668	25,690	26,427	28,136	30,043
Contributions to International Agencies	308	355	375	379	491	785	926
Advisory (Grant in Aid)	0	0	0	0	56	60	60
Computers	1	0	18	311	2,618	2,463	2,630
Gross Total	19,810	19,608	25,061	26,380	29,592	31,444	33,659
Receipts	−27,292	−29,211	−31,342	−33,464	−35,828	−36,520	−39,900
Net Total	−7,482	−9,603	−6,281	−7,084	−6,236	−5,076	−6,241

Public Expenditure

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will publish a table in the *Official Report*, in the same format as his written reply of 11 July, *Official Report*, columns *31-34*, on receipts classified as charges in respect of his programme expenditure over the years 1982-83 to 1990-91, but consistent with the reply of 27 May *Official Report*, Volume 134, columns *375-76*, indicating the receipts in respect of running costs expenditure together with a supplementary analysis indicating, separately, the amounts of receipts in respect of programme expenditure and of running costs expenditure estimated to have been met from other public expenditure programmes.

Mr. Forth: The information requested by the hon. Member for receipts in respect of programme expenditure was given in my hon. Friend's reply of 11 July, at columns *31-34*, which also explained why the totals differed from those provided by my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary in his reply of 27 May. The information requested for receipts in respect of running costs expenditure is as follows:

Table 1

Trade and Industry public expenditure: receipts in respect of running costs included in other Departments

Departments running costs 1982-83 to 1990-91

(000's)

Sub programme	Title	1982-83 outturn	1983-84 outturn	1984-85 outturn	1985-86 outturn	1986-87 outturn	1987-88 provisional outturn	1988-89 supply estimates	1989-90 plan	1990-91 plan
040109	Individual firms	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
040201	Research establishments	−213	−3,093	−4,806	−2,851	−11,949	−12,176	−12,480	−12,972	−13,112
040202	Industrial research and development and other	0	−3	−5	−795	−675	0	0	0	0
040203	Standards	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
040204	Protection of innovation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
040205	Aircraft and aero-engine R and D	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
040206	Miscellaneous support services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
040209	Space technology	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
040301	Concorde	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
040302	Assistance to Rolls-Royce Ltd.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
040306	Assistance to the shipbuilding industry	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
040501	Export promotion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
040602	Registered trading practices etc.	0	0	7,163	−332	−294	−147	−168	−287	−294
040801	Departmental administration	−2,153	−2,258	−65	−2,145	−2,334	−3,058	−2,205	−2,795	−2,815
040803	Other services	0	3	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Totals	−2,366	−5,351	2,292	−6,123	−15,252	−15,381	−14,853	−16,054	−16,221

Table 2

Trade and Industry public expenditure: receipts in respect of running costs included in other Departments 1982-83 to 1990-91

(000's)

Sub programme	Title	1982-83 outturn	1983-84 outturn	1984-85 outturn	1985-86 outturn	1986-87 outturn	1987-88 provisional outturn	1988-89 supply estimates	1989-90 plan	1990-91 plan
040109	Individual firms	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
040201	Research establishments	−15	−21	−24	0	0	0	0	0	0
040202	Industrial research and development and other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
040203	Standards	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
040204	Protection of innovation	0	0	−31,342	−33,464	−35,829	−35,994	−39,900	−37,721	−38,664
040205	Aircraft and aero-engine R and D	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
040206	Miscellaneous support services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
040209	Space technology	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
040301	Concorde	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
040302	Assistance to Rolls Royce Ltd.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
040306	Assistance to the shipbuilding industry	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
040501	Export promotion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
040602	Registered trading practice etc.	−28,184	−11,014	−11,358	−15,559	−18,717	−20,775	−19,381	−18,164	−18,728
040801	Departmental administration	−928	−975	4	−1,450	−1,989	−7,169	−2,556	−2,200	−2,255
040803	Other services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Totals	−29,127	−12,010	−42,720	−50,473	−56,534	−63,938	−61,837	−58,085	−59,647

Job Creation (Northern Region)

Mr. Trotter: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list those schemes for which his Department is responsible which are aimed at industrial support and or job creation in the northern region, showing the annual cost in each case.

Mr. Atkins: Those schemes which were open for application during 1987-88 (the latest year for which figures are available), for which my Department was responsible and which were aimed at industrial support and/or job creation, are listed as follows. A regional analysis of expenditure for these schemes is not always available; accordingly, the list of schemes is divided into those for which information is available and other.

Schemes for which expenditure in the northern region is available:

	£ million
Old regional development grant	29·0
Revised regional development grant	33·6
Regional selective assistance	24·9
Microelectronics support scheme	less than 0·1
Fibre optics scheme	Nil
Advanced manufacturing technology scheme	Nil
Support for major projects	Nil

In addition, capital expenditure by English Estates on behalf of the Department in the northern region was £21·7 million.

Schemes for which no regional analysis is available:

Business improvement scheme.
Exchange risk guarantee scheme.
Certification schemes.
Support for the private sector shipbuilding industry.

In addition, to the foregoing, and as part of the enterprise initiative announced earlier this year, my Department is now also responsible for assistance to exceptional projects and regional enterprise grants.

Manufactures

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he will publish for 1958, 1969, 1977, 1987 and the current year to date at an annual rate *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* West German balance of trade in manufactures with each of the EEC countries, and the real rate of exchange between sterling and the deutschmark in nominal and real terms based on relative export unit values in 1975.

Mr. Alan Clark: The available information is in the following table:

Crude balances in manufactures

United Kingdom trade with: *US $ million*

	Belgium/ Luxembourg	Denmark	France	Fed. Rep. Germany	Greece	Ireland	Italy	Netherlands	Portugal	Spain
1958	−39	−114	−35	60	−40	−146	−49	−89	−44	−40
1969	271	220	127	−272	111	333	49	63	38	190
1977	558	459	−482	−2,322	286	894	−677	497	178	293
1987	−866	−94	−1,903	−12,220	249	800	−2,548	−1,833	−161	410
1988[1]	−1,021	−135	−2,045	−14,696	249	716	−3,197	−3,387	−110	124

[1] January to May (annual rate).

Federal Republic of Germany trade with:

	Belgium/ Luxembourg	Denmark	France	United Kingdom	Greece	Ireland	Italy	Netherlands	Portugal	Spain
1969	118	−150	1,269	268	225	76	77	1,090	166	395
1977	1,082	−718	3,441	2,284	532	71	−1,140	4,320	400	870

	Nominal exchange rate Deutschmark/£	Relative export prices[1] 1975 = 100
1969	9·38	89
1975	5·45	100
1977	4·05	99
1987	2·94	84
1988 (Q1)	3·01	80
(Q2)	3·14	—

[1] The export unit value index for manufactures for Germany divided by that for the United Kingdom, both expressed in a common currency.

Sources: OECD, Overseas Trade Statistic, IMF.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he will publish in the *Official Report* for each year since 1970 the index of the volume of *(a)* West German and *(b)* United Kingdom exports of manufactures and finished manufactures to the EEC.

Mr. Alan Clark: This information is not available.

Constant price data are available only at the level of total trade or by commodity. Geographical analyses in volume terms of individual countries' trade are not available.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what was the deficit on trade with the EEC in manufactures less precious stones in the first five months of 1988 and in 1970 after taking into account the change in import and export unit values.

Mr. Alan Clark: Data on export and import unit values are not available for United Kingdom trade analysed by area. The information requested is therefore not available.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each year since 1978 gross and net investment in manufacturing per head of the population in the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Japan, France, Italy and Germany.

Mr. Maude: Comparable figures for OECD countries over this period are not available. Available information is contained in the publication "OECD National Accounts 1973-85".

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he will publish an updated table showing various indices of competitiveness and the relative volume of trade in manufactures in the manner of the written reply of 22 October, 1979, *Official Report*, columns 56-60, together with a column showing the relative value of trade in manufactures with the EEC.

Mr. Alan Clark: Competitiveness indices are published in table F3 of the "Monthly Review of External Trade Statistics and Annual Supplement." The other data requested are in the following table.

	Terms of trade in manufactures	Relative volume of trade in manufactures	1980 = 100 Relative value of trade in manufactures with EC countries
1975	90	128	98
1976	86	128	102
1977	89	126	103
1978	92	112	93
1979	96	98	90
1980	100	100	100
1981	102	96	91
1982	101	90	84
1983	100	79	75
1984	100	78	76
1985	101	79	78
1986	103	77	76
1987	103	76	79

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the relative volume of United Kingdom exports to imports of manufactures from the United States of America and Germany, respectively, together with relative export prices based on 1975 = 100.

Mr. Alan Clark: The information about relative export prices is available in the "Monthly Review of External Trade Statistics." Information is not available for the relative volume of United Kingdom trade by country.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each year since 1970 imports of manufactured less precious stones from the EEC as a percentage of the United Kingdom market for manufactures and United Kingdom exports of manufactures less precious stones as a percentage of the EEC market for manufactures;

(2) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for 1958, 1968 and each year since 1970 the European Economic Community share of United Kingdom exports and imports of manufactures less precious stones;

(3) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for 1958, 1968, 1978 and 1987 the United Kingdom share of European Economic Community imports of manufactures.

Mr. Alan Clark: Data excluding trade in precious stones are not readily available. The available information on the United Kingdom share of EC imports is published in table E3 of annual supplement of the "Monthly Review of External Trade Statistics." Data on the shares of United Kingdom imports and exports of manufactures accounted for by the other member states of the EC are in the following table:

Shares of United Kingdom international trade accounted for by other EC countries, per cent.
Balance of payments basis

Year	Exports	Imports
[1]1958	19	36
[1]1968	29	34
1970	31	35
1971	30	39
1972	32	42
1973	33	44
1974	35	46
1975	32	47
1976	35	49
1977	36	50
1978	37	53
1979	41	56
1980	40	52
1981	38	52
1982	39	54
1983	40	54
1984	40	53
1985	42	55
1986	44	57
1987	46	56

[1] Overseas Trade Statistics basis.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each year since 1970 and 1988 to date the United Kingdom visible trade balance in *(a)* manufactures less precious stones and *(b)* total trade less fuels and precious stones with the EEC and with the rest of the world, together with the export-import ratios in each case.

Mr. Alan Clark: Information excluding data for trade in precious stones is not readily available. The available information is in the following table:

United Kingdom overseas trade with EC and non-EC countries[1]

Balance of payments basis

	Balance £ Billion				Ratio of exports to imports, percentage			
	Manufactures[2]		Non fuel goods[2]		Manufactures[2]		Non fuel goods[2]	
	EC	Non EC	EC	Non EC	EC	Non EC	EC	Non EC
1970	+0·6	+1·9	+0·2	+0·3	143	168	108	105
1971	+0·4	+2·6	−0·1	+1·0	123	191	97	119
1972	+0·1	+2·1	−0·5	+0·4	102	162	86	108
1973	−0·4	+1·9	−1·2	−0·4	90	139	76	95
1974	−0·5	+2·5	−1·9	−0·0	90	140	74	100
1975	−0·6	+4·3	−2·2	+2·0	90	167	73	119
1976	−0·5	+5·4	−2·0	+2·1	94	167	81	116
1977	−0·5	+6·7	−2·0	+2·6	95	167	85	116
1978	−1·7	+6·8	−2·9	+3·5	86	163	81	121
1979	−2·6	+5·3	−4·0	+1·6	83	140	80	108
1980	−1·2	+6·6	−2·1	+3·6	92	147	89	118
1981	−2·6	+7·2	−4·0	+4·6	84	150	80	123
1982	−4·3	+6·7	−6·0	+4·3	77	142	75	119
1983	−7·2	+4·9	−9·2	+2·1	69	125	68	108
1984	−8·1	+4·2	−10·5	+0·8	70	118	69	102
1985	−8·7	+5·7	−11·2	+2·5	72	123	70	108
1986	−10·1	+4·6	−12·8	+1·6	70	118	69	105

	Balance £ Billion				Ratio of exports to imports, percentage			
	Manufactures[2]		Non fuel goods[2]		Manufactures[2]		Non fuel goods[2]	
	EC	Non EC	EC	Non EC	EC	Non EC	EC	Non EC
1987	−10·2	+3·0	−13·3	+0·5	73	110	72	101
1988 first quarter	−3·2	−0·4	−4·0	−1·0	69	94	68	90

[1] Data for 1970 to 1987 are classified to SITC (Rev. 2).
[2] Data for 1988 are classified to SITC (Rev. 3).

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is the change in the volume of exports of finished manufactures in *(a)* the latest three months and *(b)* the fourth quarter of 1987; what assessment he has made of the causes of this change; and what further change he expects as a result of the increase in the real value of the pound sterling since the fourth quarter of 1987.

Mr. Alan Clark *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* The volume of exports of finished manufactures increased by 7 per cent. between the first and second quarters of 1988. For the third and fourth quarters of 1987 the increase was 3 per cent.

There are many factors, as well as relative prices, which influence changes in the volume of United Kingdom exports, such as the growth in the world economy and the success of United Kingdom industry in producing goods which, in design, quality and marketing, meet the requirements of world markets.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is his estimate of the effect of an increase of 10 per cent. in the real exchange rate on United Kingdom imports and exports of manufactures.

Mr. Major: I have been asked to reply.

United Kingdom manufacturing trade performance depends on many factors other than just the exchange rate. The effects of changes in cost or price competitiveness build up over a period of years, and may well be dominated by changes in non-price competitiveness.

EC (Trade Deficit)

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether, further to his reply of 20 July, *Official Report*, columns 621-2, giving the trade deficit with the EEC in the first five months of the current year, he will publish in the *Official Report* his estimate of the number of British jobs represented by the trade deficit.

Mr. Alan Clark: The deficit in our balance of trade in manufactured goods with the European Community reflects many interrelated factors, including the pattern of our trade in other goods and services with other areas. Since changes in the deficit cannot take place in isolation, no meaningful estimates can be made of the number of jobs represented by the deficit.

Departmental Recruitment and Promotion Policy

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what measures he has implemented to ensure that recruitment and promotion policy in his Department does not directly or indirectly discriminate against applicants who were mature students or women returning to work following a career-break due to child care.

Mr. Forth: The DTI's policy statement on equal opportunities, which was issued in 1984 in agreement with the Department trades unions and which takes account of the code of practice issued under the Equal Opportunities Act 1975, has been placed in the Library of both Houses. All DTI staff serving on recruitment and promotion duties are particularly briefed to guard against any form of direct or indirect discrimination in any circumstance.

EC (Investments)

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he will bring up to date the figures on direct investment in tables 6 and 7 of the evidence submitted by Her Majesty's Government to the Treasury and Civil Service Committee on the Financial and Economic Consequences of United Kingdom Membership of the European Communities (pages 22-3 of HC 57-II Session 1984-85).

Mr. Maude: The available information is given in the tables.:

Table 6
United Kingdom: Inward Direct Investment
(figures for 1960-1983 exclude oil companies)

£ million

	World total	EC[3] total	Non-EC total	of which: USA	Japan
1960	135	4	131	85	—
1961	238	18	220	185	−2
1962	130	3	127	95	—
1963	160	10	150	105	1
1964	162	18	144	113	—
1965	197	15	182	151	−2
1966	196	11	185	155	1
1967	170	54	116	94	2
1968	274	26	248	208	2
1969	322	34	288	205	8
1970	363	62	301	226	8
1971	450	38	412	286	−4
1972	408	51	357	268	14
[3]1973	734	117	617	393	18
1974	854	80	774	410	−22
1975	615	96	519	310	−41
1976	799	174	625	550	−16
1977	1,326	270	1,056	636	99
1978	1,261	291	970	809	−24
[3]1979	1,740	218	1,522	994	51
[3]1980	2,541	3	2,538	1,912	14
[3]1981	980	12	968	118	173
1982	1,137	171	966	372	−48
1983	2,063	434	1,629	1,131	170
1984	−246	−2,073	1,827	1,505	−6
1985	4,123	1,319	2,804	2,183	36
1986	4,078	2,338	1,740	1,276	15

[1] EC includes Denmark, Irish Republic, Greece, Spain and Portugal in all years.
[2] Figures for 1979, 1980 and 1981 were affected by exceptional loan arrangements between United Kingdom affiliates and their overseas parents.
[3] United Kingdom joined EC.

Table 7
Values of US Outward Non-oil Direct Investment[2]
$ million excluding oil

	World	Europe	EC[1]	UK	UK as percentage of EC Per cent.	UK as percentage of world Per cent.
1966	4,473	1,721	n/a	480		
1967	3,522	1,326	n/a	174		
1968	3,898	1,329	n/a	441		
1969	5,067	2,093	n/a	455		
1970	5,390	2,305	n/a	593		
1971	5,553	2,654	n/a	671		
1972	6,093	2,424	n/a	320		
1973	9,759	4,945	3,827	1,137	29·7	11·6
1974	12,548	5,105	3,541	934	26·4	7·4
1975	9,367	3,248	2,206	535	24·3	5·7
1976	9,528	4,112	3,141	440	14·0	4·6
1977	10,094	4,538	3,857	1,513	39·2	15·0
1978	14,579	7,171	5,743	1,916	33·4	13·1
1979	15,414	8,445	6,561	2,838	43·3	18·4
1980	17,201	10,908	8,908	5,210	58·5	30·3
1981	6,637	2,536	1,051	54	5·1	0·8
1982	−5,6 81	1,798	1,329	228	17·2	n/a
1983	1,070	1,749	572	768	n/a	71·8
1984	3,386	89	−200	−243	n/a	na/
1985	18,995	12,413	11,062	3,730	33·7	19·6
1986	24,627	14,144	12,681	2,240	17·7	9·1

[1] Nine member countries up to 1980; including Greece from 1981 onwards.
[2] All figures cover all industries except oil. Direct investment is the amount invested in the year in unremitted profits, shares, loans, and short-term indebtedness by US companies in their overseas subsidiaries, branches and associates.
n/a = Not available.
Source: Survey of Current Business published by US Department of Commerce.

Japanese direct investment overseas[1]

	UK	EC	World	UK share of EC	Share of world investment UK	Share of world investment EC	Share of world investment USA
	US$ million	US$ million	US$ million	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.
1973-82	1,230	3,323	26,403	37	5	13	—
1983-86	1,538	5,655	30,509	27	5	19	49

[1] These Japanese direct investment figures cover only share capital and long-term loans and unlike the US figures do not include unremitted profits, short-term loans and trade credit.
Source: Japanese Balance of Payments.

Import Unit Values

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if, further to his answer of 20 July, *Official Report*, columns 621-2, concerning the increase in import and export unit values for finished manufactures since 1983, he will publish in the *Official Report* the percentage increase in the terms of trade for finished manufactures in *(a)* May 1988, *(b)* 1980-81, *(c)* the first quarter of 1987 and *(d)* the first half of 1973; and what estimate he has made of the effect of the increase on the balance of trade in finished manufactures.

Mr. Alan Clark: The information is as follows:

Terms of trade for finished manufactures

	percentage change	over:
May 1988	+1·8	April 1988
Year 1980	−6·2	Year 1979
Year 1981	+1·5	Year 1980
1987 quarter 1	−0·8	1986 quarter 4
1973 first half	−1·9	1972 second half

No estimates of the effects of changes in the terms of trade on the balances have been made.

Motor Cars (United States)

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what information he has on the reason for the decline in United Kingdom exports of motor cars to the United States in the first five months of 1988; and if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the number of United Kingdom cars exported to the United States in each year since 1958 and 1988 to date, together with the real value of sterling based on 1975 relative export prices.

Mr. Alan Clark: Data on number of cars exported for the years 1958 to 1969 are not available.

As the table illustrates, United Kingdom exports of cars to the United States were at an exceptionally high level in 1987. On the basis of the figures in the first five months of this year, it looks likely that exports for 1988 as a whole will be well up on the levels achieved in 1986 and earlier years.

United Kingdom exports to the United States of America of motor cars 1970 to May 1988

	Number	Relative export prices 1975 = 100
1970	77,725	112
1971	110,549	107
1972	68,560	101
1973	65,785	102
1974	73,607	101
1975	69,142	100
1976	82,661	111
1977	55,909	102
1978	56,192	89
1979	47,184	85
1980	31,951	77
1981	13,645	93
1982	14,767	107
1983	18,608	115
1984	21,892	121
1985	25,700	120
1986	27,805	107
1987	50,937	94
[1]1988	15,082	n/a

[1] January to May.
Source: Overseas trade statistics.
Note: 1987 and 1988 figures provisional.
Motor cars defined as:
1970-77: Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) revised, sub-Group 732.1.
1978-87: SITC Revision 2, sub-Group 781.0.
1988: SITC Revision 3, sub-Group 781.2.
Relative export prices expressed as ratio of United States unit value of exports to that of the United Kingdom.

EC (Imports)

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table similar to that in table 15.10 of the Monthly Digest of Statistics showing imports from the European Economic Community as a percentage of home demand.

Mr. Alan Clark: Estimates are given in the following table:

Imports from the European Community as a percentage of United Kingdom Home Demand

		1981	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*
Divisions 2-4	Manufacturing industries	13·7	14·9	16·1	17·2	18·2	18·8	20·0
Division 2	Ores, metals, chemicals and non-fuel minerals	13	15	16	19	20	20	25
Class 21	Extraction and preparation of metalliferous ores	7	6	4	7	7	n.a.	n.a.
Class 22	Metal manufacturing	12	14	14	19	21	20	24
Class 23	Extraction of minerals nes	8	9	9	7	8	4	[1]30
Class 24	Non-metallic mineral products	6	7	8	9	10	12	11
Class 25	Chemical industry	20	21	23	25	27	27	30
Class 26	Production of man-made fibres	41	47	51	50	52	49	54
Division 3	Metal goods, engineering and vehicles	19	20	22	22	23	25	26
Class 31	Metal goods nes	6	7	8	8	9	10	11
Class 32	Mechanical engineering	18	19	19	20	22	24	26
Class 33	Office Machinery and data processing equipment	42	48	47	41	43	46	44
Class 34	Electrical and electronic engineering	15	16	18	18	22	21	22
Class 35	Motor vehicles and parts	32	37	41	39	39	40	35
Class 36	Other Transport Equipment	15	13	14	16	12	14	16
Class 37	Instrument Engineering	26	23	22	24	23	24	30
Division 4	Other manufacturing industries	10	10	11	12	13	13	13
Classes 41/42	Food, drink and tobacco	9	9	10	11	11	12	11
Class 43	Textile industry	21	22	24	26	27	27	27
Class 44	Leather and leather goods	14	15	16	16	20	19	18
Class 45	Footwear and clothing industries	14	15	16	18	18	19	15
Class 46	Timber and Wooden Furniture	8	9	9	10	10	11	9
Class 47	Paper, printing and publishing	5	5	6	7	7	8	8
Class 48	Processing of rubber and plastics	15	15	17	17	18	19	20
Class 49	Other manufacturing industries	13	11	12	11	13	12	19

[1] High figure caused by erratic trade in precious stones.
n.a.—Not available.

Secured Loans

Mr. Shersby: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will place in the Library any information at his disposal concerning consumer understanding of the concept of a secured loan including any research carried out by his Department and any advice tendered by the Office of Fair Trading and other consumer bodies.

Mr. Forth: I will write to my hon. Friend as soon as possible and place a copy in the Library.

Credit Advertisements

Mr. Janner: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) what percentage of credit advertisements in the county of Leicestershire appeared to be in breach of relevant legislation during the period from 1 April 1987 to 31 March; how many and what percentage of such breaches led to prosecutions; and with what results;

(2) how many and what percentage of credit advertisements in each county in the United Kingdom during the year from 1 April 1987 to 31 March appeared to be in breach of relevant legislation; how many and what percentage led to prosecution; and with what results.

Mr. Maude: I will write to the hon. and learned Member as soon as possible and place a copy in the Library.

Halifax

Mrs. Mahon: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he has any plans to visit Halifax in the near future to view the prospects for industry.

Mr. Atkins: I have no plans to visit Halifax at present.

Regional Policy

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on the progress of Her Majesty's Government's new regional policy.

Mr. Atkins: In January 1988 the White Paper, "DTI —the department for Enterprise" (Cm. 278), announced changes in regional policy designed to reflect the Government's aim of encouraging enterprise. Since the beginning of the year over 1,250 applications for regional selective assistance have been received by the Department and the Scottish and Welsh Offices. Since January, over 5,400 applications have been approved (following an initial two-day business review) for the new consultancy initiatives, and preliminary indications are that over 40 per cent. of them have been from the assisted areas of Great Britain. There have also been over 450 applications under the regional enterprise grants scheme which was introduced on 1 April 1988.

Manufacturing Investment

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster which Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries have had a greater increase in manufacturing investment than the United Kingdom since 1979.

Mr. Alan Clark: Figures of manufacturing investment for OECD countries are not available on a comparable basis over the period since 1979. Available figures for OECD countries are published in "OECD National Accounts 1973-1985."

Single European Market

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a further statement on the implications of the completion of the single European market in 1992 for his Department's regional policy.

Mr. Maude: The single market will provide competitive businesses in the regions with major opportunities. My Department took due account of the implications of the single market for the regions when we introduced reforms to regional policy, as part of the enterprise initiative, at the beginning of this year.

Frogs Legs

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what has been the total by value and weight and country of origin of frogs legs imported into the United Kingdom to each year since 1980; and if he will make it his policy to ban any further imports.

Mr. Alan Clark: Prior to 1988 frogs legs were not separately identified in the OTS.

For the period January to May 1988 imports of frogs legs were:

Country of origin	*m/tonnes*	*£ 000*
Belgium/Luxembourg	8·5	24·9
Indonesia	7·9	23·4
France	1·1	3·5

I have no immediate plans to ban imports of this product.

Stainless Steel

Mr. Speller: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what action he proposes to take in response to anti-competitive price-fixing arrangements for stainless steel within EEC and EFTA countries.

Mr. Atkins: It is for the European Commission to investigate alleged violations of European Community competition rules. Any restrictive agreements involving only one United Kingdom party would not fall under the scope of United Kingdom restrictive trade practices legislation.

English Estates

Mr. Heddle: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will publish in the *Official Report* the terms of reference of English Estates.

Mr. Atkins: The English Industrial Estates Corporation is a non-departmental public body which trades as English Estates. It is funded by the Government to provide and facilitate the provision of industrial and commercial premises and sites in certain parts of the country in support of regional and inner city policies. It carries out two main programmes on behalf of the Department of Trade and Industry. One is in the assisted areas of England and the other is a new programme in the inner cities under which it funds managed workspace projects in partnership with the private sector. It also provides premises on behalf of the Rural Development Commission in rural development areas.

A E Services

Mrs. Golding: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on the circumstances which led the Registrar of Companies to give notice in February that the company AE Services would be dissolved.

Mr. Maude: The Registrar of Companies informs me that, in October 1987, he received information from a director of AE Services Limited to confirm that the company was no longer in business. The Registrar therefore gave notice in the *London Gazette* of his intention to strike the company's name off the register. There were no objections to this course of action and the company was therefore dissolved on 21 June 1988.

Elstree Studios

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what assurances were given by Cannon Films to his Department on the purchase by the company of Elstree studios regarding retaining them for film production.

Mr. Atkins: The Secretary of State's decision not to refer the acquisition by Cannon of Screen Entertainment Ltd. to the MMC did not depend on any assurances about the future use of Elstree studios.

National Engineering Laboratory

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if any foreign-based company or organisation has submitted a bid, or is connected with any of the bids, for the National Engineering Laboratory.

Mr. Forth: There are no foreign-based companies or organisations submitting a bid for the National Engineering Laboratory. There are two United Kingdom-based bidders with links to companies overseas, Moore Barrett and Redwood Limited, part of the SGS group, whose ultimate parent is the Societe de Surveillance Holding SA of Switzerland; YARD Limited, which is a member of the CAP Group plc and which has some Belgian, French, German, Netherlands and Spanish subsidiaries plus other overseas.

Petrol Companies (Pricing Operations)

Mr. Hill: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will refer the pricing operations of the major petrol companies to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Mr. Maude: I will write to my hon. Friend as soon as possible and place a copy in the Library.

Films

Mr. Favell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on the conclusions which he has drawn from his consultations with the cinema and film industries about follow-up action to the 1983 Monopolies and Mergers Commission report on the supply of films and the subsequent experimental films release scheme; and whether he will make an early order under the Fair Trading Act 1973 to implement the two main recommendations by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission concerning barring and popular films.

Mr. Maude: I will write to my hon. Friend as soon as possible and place a copy in the Library.

Secondhand Furniture

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what representations he has received about safety standards on the sale of secondhand furniture; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Forth: I will write to my hon. Friend as soon as possible and place a copy in the Library.

Post Office

Mr. Hill: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if, in the light of its profits before taxation in the last financial year, he will make a statement on whether there are any plans for privatising the Post Office.

Mr. Forth: It is the Government's view that there are significant benefits to be gained in transferring activities from the public to the private sector. We have made it clear that because of its special character we have no intention of privatising the Royal Mail. But we do not rule out other parts of the Post Office as possible candidates for privatisation. My right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Rushcliffe (Mr. Clarke) announced that the Post Office would be selling Girobank on 7 June. We have not made any further decisions about privatisation.

Special Telephone Number

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how much his Department has paid for the special telephone number 200 1992.

Mr. Maude: I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible and place a copy in the Library.

Barlow Clowes

Dr. Glyn: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what consideration will be given to the number of stockbrokers and financial intermediaries who advised their clients to invest with Barlow Clowes during the course of the inquiry into the circumstances surrounding its collapse.

Mr. Maude: I will write to my hon. Friend as soon as possible and place a copy in the Library.

Recorded Message Services

Mr. Lewis: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list the telephone recorded message services which have been terminated by British Telecom under the Telecommunications Act 1984 due to the offensive content of the service.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* British Telecom does not have powers of its own under the Telecommunications Act 1984 to terminate these services. Its ability to do so arises out of the terms of its contracts with message service providers. As such, the actions it takes are a commercial matter between the parties concerned subject to BT fulfilling the obligations of its licence.

Nevertheless, I understand from BT that the company has withdrawn its facilities from 15 services following adjudications by the Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information Services (ICSTIS) that the services were in breach of the ICSTIS code of practice. This is in addition to cases in which service providers have withdrawn recorded message services voluntarily when ICSTIS has notified them that complaints have been lodged.

Social Science Research

Mr. George: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how much has been spent by his Department in each of the past five years on social science research; what percentage this constitutes of total departmental expenditure and of the Department's research budget; and how much of the research has been undertaken *(a)* within his Department, *(b)* by universities and polytechnics and *(c)* by independent research organisations.

Mr. Maude *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* The available information relates to gross expenditure on research and development including that performed elsewhere in central Government for R and D in total and for R and D in social science and humanities. The figures for total departmental expenditure exclude that on public corporations and are net of receipts. The information is given in the table:

Gross expenditure on R and D for social science and humanities[1]

	1982-83 £ million	*1983-84 £ million*	*1984-85 £ million*	*1985-86 £ million*	*1986-87 £ million*
Expenditure	0·10	0·15	0·22	0·11	0·09
As a percentage of total expenditure	0·01	0·01	0·02	0·01	0·00
As a percentage of total R and D expenditure	0·02	0·04	0·05	0·02	0·02
Performed within the department			None		
Performed in higher education	0·05	0·04	0·00	0·00	0·01
Performed in industrial research associations and non industrial research institutes	0·05	0·09	0·01	0·01	0·01

[1] Figures have been rounded to second decimal place.

Third-world Exports

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list the main features of the preferential trading arrangements available to Third-world countries wishing to export to Britain, together with a list of those countries to which such arrangements apply.

Mr. Alan Clark *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* As a member of the European Community, the United Kingdom is party to the following preferential trading arrangements.

The Lomé convention grants preferential treatment to products imported into the Community from the 66 African, Caribbean and Pacific states in Table 1. All ACP industrial products, except textiles and rum, and the great majority of agricultural products, are granted duty-free access and the remainder benefit from either a reduced rate of duty or exemption from duty for a limited quantity of imports. There is a parallel arrangement between the EC and the dependencies of member states in table 2.

The EC generalised scheme of preferences grants preferential treatment to products imported into the Community from the countries in table 3. All industrial products are granted duty-free access, and agricultural products access at reduced rates of duty, subject to quantitative limits in the case of certain products sensitive to Community interests.

In addition, the Community has preferential trade agreements with the countries listed in table 4. Under these agreements the Community also gives duty-free access to industrial products, and access at reduced rates of duty to agricultural products, subject to limits in the case of certain sensitive products.

Table 1.

List of ACP signatories to the third Lomé Convention

Angola
Antigua and Barbuda
Bahamas
Barbados
Belize
Benin
Botswana
Burkina Faso
Burundi
Cameroun
Cape Verde
Central African Republic
Chad
Comoros
Congo
Djibouti
Dominica
Equatorial Guinea
Ethiopia
Fiji
Gabon
Gambia
Ghana
Grenada
Guinea
Guinea-Bissau
Guyana
Ivory Coast
Jamaica
Kenya
Kiribati
Lesotho
Liberia
Madagascar
Malawi
Mali
Mauritania
Mauritius
Mozambique
Niger
Nigeria
Uganda
Papua New Guinea
Rwanda
St. Christopher and Nevis
St. Lucia
St. Vincent and the Grenadines
São Tomé and Principe
Senegal
Seychelles
Sierra Leone
Solomon Islands
Somalia
Sudan
Surinam
Swaziland
Tanzania
Togo
Tonga
Trinidad and Tobago
Tuvalu
Vanuatu
Western Samoa
Zaire
Zambia
Zimbabwe

Table 2

List of overseas countries and territories

Anguilla
Aruba
British Antarctic Territory
British Indian Ocean Territory
British Virgin Islands
Cayman Islands
Falkland Islands
French Polynesia
French Southern and Antarctic Territories
Greenland
Mayotte
Montserrat
Netherlands Antilles
New Caledonia and Dependencies
Pitcairn
St. Helena and Dependencies
St. Pierre and Miquelon
South Sandwich Islands and Dependencies
Turks and Caicos Islands
Wallis and Futuna Islands

Table 3

List of developing countries and territories enjoying generalised tariff preferences

Afghanistan
Algeria
Angola
Antigua and Barbuda
Argentina
Bahamas
Bahrain
Bangladesh
Barbados
Belize
Benin
Bhutan
Bolivia
Botswana
Brazil
Brunei Darussalam
Burkina Faso
Burma
Burundi
Cambodia
Cameroon
Cape Verde
Central African Republic
Chad
Chile
China
Colombia
Comoros
Congo
Costa Rica
Cuba
Cyprus
Djibouti
Dominica
Dominican Republic
Ecuador
Egypt
El Salvador
Equatorial Guinea
Ethiopa
Fiji
Gabon
Gambia
Ghana
Grenada
Guatemala
Guinea
Guinea Bissau
Guyana
Haiti
Honduras
India
Indonesia
Iran
Iraq
Ivory Coast
Jamaica
Jordon
Kenya
Kiribati
Korea
Kuwait
Laos
Lebanon
Lesotho
Liberia
Libya
Madagascar
Malawi
Malaysia
Maldives
Mali
Mauritania
Mauritius
Mexico
Morocco
Mozambique
Nauru
Nepal
Nicaragua
Niger
Nigeria
North Yemen
Oman
Pakistan
Panama
Papua New Guinea
Paraguay
Peru
Philippines
Qatar
Romania
Rwanda
Samoa
Sao Tome and Principe
Saudi Arabia
Senegal
Seychelles and dependencies
Sierra Leone
Singapore
Solomon Islands
Somalia
South Yemen
Sri Lanka
St. Christopher and Nevis
St. Lucia
St. Vincent
Sudan
Surinam
Swaziland
Syria
Tanzania
Thailand
Togo
Tonga
Trinidad and Tobago

Tunisia
Tuvalu
Uganda
United Arab Emirates
Uruguay
Vanuatu
Venezuela
Vietnam
Western Samoa
Yugoslavia
Zaire
Zambia
Zimbabwe

American Oceania
Anguilla
Aruba
Australian Antarctic Territories
Australian Oceania (Christmas Island, Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Heard Island and McDonald Islands, Norfolk Island)
Bermuda
British Antarctic Territories
British Indian Ocean Territory
British Virgin Islands and Montserrat
Cayman Islands
Falkland Islands and Falkland dependencies
French Polynesia
French Southern and Antarctic Territories
Gibraltar
Greenland
Hong Kong
Macao
Mayotte
Netherlands Antilles
New Caledonia and dependencies
New Zealand Oceania (Tokelau and Niue Islands; Cook Islands)
Pitcairn
South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands
St. Helena
St. Helena dependencies
St. Pierre and Miquelon
Turks and Caicos Islands
Virgin Islands of the United States
Wallis and Futuna Islands

Table 4
List of Mediterranean countries enjoying preferential trading arrangements with the EC

Algeria
Cyprus
Egypt
Israel
Jordan
Lebanon
Malta
Morocco
Syria
Tunisia
Turkey
Yugoslavia

WALES

Welsh Development Agency (Grants)

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will place in the Library details of the projects in Wales that have received Welsh Development Agency section 10 grants for each of the past five years.

Mr. Peter Walker: The WDA's section 10 powers have not been exercised during the period concerned.

NHS Expenditure

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to his reply of 14 July to the hon. Member for Ynys Môn (Mr. Jones), if he will express the 11 per cent. real increase in National Health Service spending in Wales since 1985-86 on a year by year basis, indicating in the case of 1988-89 what percentage is attributable to the nurses' pay settlement.

Mr. Grist: I do not recognise the figure of 11 per cent. to which the right hon. Gentleman refers: the increase in spending on the National Health Service in Wales since 1985-86 is nearly 16 per cent. in real terms. The year-on-year increases are 3·9 per cent., 6·1 per cent. and 5·0 per cent. respectively. The nurses' pay settlement following the fifth report of the review body accounts for 3 per cent. of the increase since 1987-88.

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Ynys Môn (Mr. Jones) of 14 July, *Official Report*, column 342, he will give the information on National Health Service expenditure for Wales expressed as gross domestic product per head of population.

Mr. Grist: Expenditure on the National Health Service in Wales was £921·055 million in 1985-86 and GDP per capita in Wales was £4,509 in 1985. The ratio between these sums is 204,270:1.

Rating Reform

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish a table showing in respect of each district and county in Wales *(a)* the rate amount per adult for 1988-89, *(b)* the relevant equivalent community charge for 1988-89 and *(c)* the variation of *(b)* from *(a)* in cash terms and proportionate terms; and if he will show for *(a)* above the equivalent rate per adult excluding from rate levies the use of, and rating for, balances and contributions to and from special funds, and for both exclusive and inclusive of community councils' precepts and charges.

Mr. Grist: Illustrative figures for 1988-89 are given in the following table.

The figures for each district and county are averages of the total precepts of all relevant councils in the area and all figures exclude the use of balances.

Average rates per adult are calculated on a theoretical basis which is comparable with the community charge calculations; both assume the same spending levels.

Community charge calculations are based on present needs assessments which are under review and no allowance has been made for transitional safety net arrangements.

	Average Rates per adult including Community Councils	*Community Charge per adult including Community Councils*	*Difference*		*Average Rates per adult excluding Community Councils*	*Community Charge per adult excluding Community Councils*	*Difference*		*Average Rates per adult excluding use of special funds and including Community Councils*	*Average Rates per adult excluding use of special funds and excluding Community Councils*
			£ per adult	per cent			£ per adult	per cent		
	£	£			£	£			£	£
Alyn and Deeside	176	143	33	19	170	136	33	20	190	183
Colwyn	198	150	48	24	198	150	48	24	204	203
Delyn	177	152	24	14	171	146	24	14	159	153
Glyndwr	155	151	4	3	152	148	4	3	160	156
Rhuddlan	170	139	31	18	166	135	31	19	175	171
Wrexham Maelor	162	155	7	4	156	148	7	5	166	160
Carmarthen	123	153	−30	−24	112	142	−30	−27	133	122
Ceredigion	136	142	−6	−4	129	135	−6	−5	140	133
Dinefwr	110	138	−28	−25	105	133	−28	−26	113	108
Llanelli	137	162	−24	−18	121	146	−24	−20	156	140
Preseli Pembrokeshire	126	138	−12	−9	122	133	−12	−9	124	120

	Average Rates per adult including Community Councils	Community Charge per adult including Community Councils	Difference £ per adult	Difference per cent	Average Rates per adult excluding Community Councils	Community Charge per adult excluding Community Councils	Difference £ per adult	Difference per cent	Average Rates per adult excluding use of special funds and including Community Councils	Average Rates per adult excluding use of special funds and excluding Community Councils
	£	£			£	£			£	£
South Pembrokeshire	152	142	10	7	144	133	10	7	155	147
Blaenau Gwent	116	158	−42	−36	114	156	−42	−37	129	128
Islwyn	127	156	−29	−23	127	156	−29	−23	136	136
Monmouth	167	147	21	12	163	142	21	13	174	169
Newport	185	151	33	18	184	150	33	18	192	191
Torfaen	154	153	0	0	150	149	0	0	155	152
Aberconwy	173	138	35	20	169	135	35	20	175	172
Arfon	129	136	−8	−6	124	132	−8	−6	130	126
Dwyfor	160	137	22	14	157	134	22	14	162	159
Meirionnydd	158	142	16	10	154	138	16	10	154	150
Ynys Môn	154	132	22	14	150	128	22	15	156	152
Cynon Valley	108	158	−50	−46	107	157	−50	−47	108	107
Merthyr Tydfil	124	170	−46	−37	123	169	−46	−38	124	123
Ogwr	151	167	−15	−10	149	165	−15	−10	156	154
Rhondda	85	159	−74	−86	85	159	−74	−86	101	101
Rhymney Valley	139	174	−35	−25	136	171	−35	−26	139	136
Taff Ely	145	165	−20	−14	139	159	−20	−14	145	139
Brecknock	131	135	−4	−3	124	128	−4	−3	138	131
Montgomeryshire	128	119	9	7	123	114	9	7	137	132
Radnor	134	125	9	7	132	122	9	7	148	145
Cardiff	179	112	67	37	179	112	67	38	179	179
Vale of Glamorgan	166	123	43	26	157	114	43	28	168	160
Port Talbot	154	207	−53	−34	154	207	−53	−34	155	155
Llw Valley	142	187	−45	−32	137	182	−45	−33	143	138
Neath	141	172	−31	−22	134	165	−31	−23	155	148
Swansea	192	201	−9	−5	191	200	−9	−5	206	205
Clwyd	172	149	23	13	167	144	23	14	175	170
Dyfed	131	147	−15	−12	122	138	−15	−13	138	129
Gwent	154	153	2	1	152	150	2	1	162	160
Gwynedd	154	136	17	11	150	132	17	12	155	151
Mid Glamorgan	130	166	−36	−28	127	164	−36	−28	133	131
Powys	130	126	4	3	125	121	4	3	140	134
South Glamorgan	176	115	60	34	173	113	60	35	176	174
West Glamorgan	169	195	−25	−15	167	192	−25	−15	179	177
Total Wales	151	151	0	0	147	147	0	0	156	152

Departmental Recruitment and Promotion Policy

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what measures he has implemented to ensure that recruitment and promotion policy in his Department does not directly or indirectly discriminate against applicants who were mature students or women returning to work following a career break due to child care.

Mr. Peter Walker: My Department has implemented the following measures: high age limits for the main recruitment grades; the issue of guidance to members of selection and promotion boards which, inter alia, stresses the need to avoid direct or indirect discrimination on age or other grounds; fields of review for promotion which mean that length of service is not the major factor in determining promotion; staff who take career breaks and are later reinstated do so without any loss of seniority in their grade; and expansion of opportunities for part-time work, including job-sharing arrangements.

School Nurses

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list in the *Official Report*, for each year over the last five up to the latest for which figures are available, the following information with respect to school nurses: *(a)* the total number employed (given as total, whole-time, part-time, and whole-time equivalent), *(b)* the establishment figures and *(c)* the number of vacant posts.

Mr. Grist: There are currently no reliable figures which distinguish school nurses. However, district health authorities are, in conjunction with Welsh Office officials, improving coding procedures to enable information on school nurses in post to be obtained.

Welsh Water Authority (Fish Farm Licences)

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations have been received by his Department concerning the granting of fish farm licences by the Welsh water authority to companies established by the authority; what steps have been taken to ensure that the authority will act in an impartial manner in both its planning and regulatory functions in relation to its subsidiaries; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: I have received correspondence from the owners of one commercial fish farm on the subject of abstraction licences.

The Welsh water authority is a body corporate and the exercise of its planning function is a matter for the authority. Applications for licences to abstract water and consent to discharge effluent which are required by the authority for its own operations would be called in for my determination. There are also rights of appeal to me against the terms of licences and consents which the authority proposes to issue to third parties.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will investigate the circumstances in which the Welsh water authority granted a section 30 consent under the Freshwater and Salmon Fisheries Act on 23 June to Acquanorse plc to place cages in the Llysyfran reservoir; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: The statutory responsibilities for consents issued under section 30 of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act rests with the Welsh water authority. I have no locus in the matter.

Political Parties

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what resources of his Department are deployed in maintaining and developing relationships with political parties and their members in *(a)* in England and *(b)* in Wales; and if he will indicate the resources that are devoted to each such party.

Mr. Peter Walker: None.

Civil Servants

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the amount of time spent, by percentage, of total hours worked by Welsh Office civil servants, on the analysis on his behalf of political material.

Mr. Peter Walker: I supply the analysis; my Department provides facts.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was the approved establishment of the Welsh Office at 1 April and at 1 April for each of the preceding five years; and what was the numbers of civil servants in post, by grade, at those dates.

Mr. Peter Walker: On 1 April each year my Department's manpower ceilings were as follows:

	Staff
1983	2,220
1984	2,195
1985	2,287
1986	2,294
1987	2,278
1988	2,215

I shall write to the hon. Gentleman with the detailed information requested, and will place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Political Literature

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what consultations are undertaken by *(a)* Conservative constituency associations and *(b)* other political groups in England and Wales with his Department, on the factual content of literature produced by them.

Mr. Peter Walker: Wherever I think it necessary.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list those occasions since June 1987, when his Department has made unsolicited official responses to literature distributed free of charge to the public by political parties in Wales; and if he will indicate for each occasion the nature of the response.

Mr. Peter Walker: So far as I am aware, none.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when his Department first obtained the copy of the *Caerphilly Labour Herald* issue No. 1, which formed the basis of his letter to the hon. Member for Caerphilly of 15 July.

Mr. Peter Walker: On 9 June 1988.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will place in the Library a copy of his letter of 15 July to the hon. Member for Caerphilly, together with a copy of the *Caerphilly Labour Herald* which was the subject of that correspondence.

Mr. Peter Walker: I have placed a copy of my letter in the Library of the House. It is for the hon. Gentleman to place a copy of the newsletter from his constituency Labour party in the Library of the House if he so wishes.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) if he will list the issues of political literature, held by his Department distributed by *(a)* the Labour party, *(b)* the Conservative party, *(c)* Plaid Cymru and *(d)* the Liberals, Alliance, SLD or SDP, in each case showing that received (i) since the general election of 1987 and (ii) between the general elections of 1983 and 1987;

(2) what is his policy with respect to the purchase by his Department of literature produced by local political organisations;

(3) if it is the policy of his Department to collect systematically literature distributed by political parties in Wales.

Mr. Peter Walker: The Welsh Office places orders for the policy documents of the main political parties, but we do not have regular arrangements for the purchase of literature produced by local political organisations. Detailed lists of publications held could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make it his policy to obtain for his Department's library all future issues of the newsletter produced by the Caerphilly constituency Labour party.

Mr. Peter Walker: No. We are not interested in works of fiction.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is his estimate of the cost of Civil Service time incurred during the research by his Department into the edition of the *Caerphilly Labour Herald* which was the subject of his correspondence of 15 July to the hon. Member for Caerphilly.

Mr. Peter Walker: £5.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales on how many occasions since June 1987 his Department has carried out analyses of literature distributed free of charge to the public by political parties in Wales; and if he will indicate any subsequent action taken by him in each case.

Mr. Peter Walker: Once, when I wrote to the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was the cost to his Department of purchases of literature produced by political parties in Wales during 1987-88; and if he will list such purchases.

Mr. Peter Walker: My Department spent £240 on literature produced by the political parties in Wales last year. £235 of this was accounted for by the purchase of Welsh manifestos prior to the election for the purposes of briefing incoming Ministers.

Water Supplies (Disconnections)

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many households in Wales were disconnected from their water supplies in 1987-88.

Mr. Grist: The information is not available in the form requested. In 1987-88 the Welsh water authority disconnected 2,067 properties within their area of supply. Of these, 1,400 were reconnected after payment of bills.

Member's Correspondence

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many copies of his letter to the hon. Member for Caerphilly of 15 July were made; and if he will list the recipients.

Mr. Peter Walker: Thirty. One copy was sent in reply to correspondence; one was sent to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment; six copies were for internal departmental use and 22 copies were supplied to the lobby correspondents at Westminster representing the Welsh and the main national media in the hope that they would inform the public of the rebates available to people on low incomes so as to eradicate the considerable unfounded fears that have been created in the Caerphilly area.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is his estimate of the cost of preparing his letter of 15 July to the hon. Member for Caerphilly and of the additional copies to the press.

Mr. Peter Walker: A total of £24.

Voluntary Organisations (Information)

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether he will make it his policy to make available the resources of his Department, free of charge, to any voluntary organisation wishing to inform the public of the nature and consequences of recent legislation.

Mr. Peter Walker: Each case is considered on its merits.

Bed-and-breakfast Accommodation

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was the number of people in bed-and-breakfast accommodation in Wales, paid for by public funds at the latest date for which statistics are available.

Mr. Grist: The information available relates to numbers of families, not to individuals. On 31 March 1988, there were 59 homeless families in Wales who had been placed in bed-and-breakfast accommodation funded by local authorities.

Housing

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to his answers to the hon. Member for Torfaen (Mr. Murphy) of 19 July, *Official Report*, column *564*, how much of the £457 million to be spent on housing in the valleys is accounted for by expenditure allocated to housing within the planning totals set out in the public expenditure White Paper, and what is the figure for each year.

Mr. Peter Walker: Within the £457 million to be spent on housing in the valleys over the next three years, gross public expenditure is expected to be around £225 million. I anticipate that this amount will be spread more or less equally over the three years.

Social Science Research

Mr. George: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much has been spent by his Department in each of the past five years on social science research; what percentage this constitutes of total departmental expenditure and of the Department's research budget; and how much of the research has been undertaken *(a)* within his Department *(b)* by universities and polytechnics and *(c)* by independent research organisations.

Mr. Peter Walker *[pursuant to his reply, 27 July 1988]:* The available information relates to gross expenditure on research and development including that performed elsewhere in central Government for R and D in total and for social sciences and humanities. The information is given in the following table:

Research spending

	1982-83	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*
Departmental expenditure on social science R and D and humanities (£ million)	0·9	0·6	0·7	1·5	2·0
Percentage of total[1] departmental expenditure (per cent.)	0·04	0·02	0·03	0·05	0·07
Percentage of total departmental research spending (per cent.)	1·5	1·6	1·6	2·6	3·5
Expenditure on research[2] undertaken within my Department (£ million)	0·2	0·1	0·1	0·2	0·2
Expenditure on research[2] undertaken by higher education establishments (£ million)	0·2	0·2	0·2	0·3	0·3
Expenditure on research[2] undertaken by industrial research associations and non-industrial research institutes (£ million)	0·3	0·2	0·3	0·9	1·4

[1] Percentage of total expenditure within my responsibility as given in the Government expenditure White Paper.
[2] Figures may not add due to rounding.

Health Spending

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give for each year since 1974 in Wales (i) total National Health Service expenditure, (ii) current expenditure on hospital and community health services, (iii) capital expenditure on hospital and community health services. (iv) expenditure on family practitioner services, (v) expenditure on centrally funded National Health Service services and (vi) expenditure on personal social services; if he will give each *(a)* in cash terms, *(b)* adjusted using the relevant pay and prices index and *(c)* adjusted using the gross domestic product deflator; and if he will place in the Library details of the methods used to make the adjustments.

Mr. Grist *[holding answer 18 February 1988]:* The information requested is set out in the tables. Figures relating to pay and prices terms have been constructed by reference to indices maintained by the Department of Health from English data, as separate pay and prices indices for Wales are not available.

(i) Total National Health Services Gross Expenditure at 1987-88 prices

	£ million cash	*Adjusted by the relevant pay and prices index*	*Adjusted by the GDP deflator*
1974-75	207·0	872·7	761·8
1975-76	278·1	913·8	814·5
1976-77	312·3	909·1	808·1

	£ million cash	Adjusted by the relevant pay and prices index	Adjusted by the GDP deflator
1977-78	353·4	939·3	802·9
1978-79	405·2	970·5	831·6
1979-80	474·9	950·7	833·9
1980-81	611·9	965·0	906·2
1981-82	697·8	1,009·0	940·4
1982-83	769·3	1,035·5	967·9
1983-84	816·4	1,045·8	981·0
1984-85	882·9	1,067·4	1,016·0
1985-86	942·1	1,081·5	1,023·0
1986-87	1,013·5	1,094·6	1,064·5
[1]1987-88	1,129·2	1,129·2	1,129·2

[1] provisional outturn.

(ii) Hospital and community health services: gross current expenditure

at 1987-88 prices

	£ million cash	Adjusted by the relevant pay and prices index	Adjusted by the GDP deflator
1974-75	142·3	598·7	523·7
1975-76	190·0	620·5	556·5
1976-77	216·9	622·5	561·3
1977-78	244·2	645·4	554·8
1978-79	277·1	668·1	568·7
1979-80	329·3	658·9	578·3
1980-81	428·2	669·3	634·2
1981-82	482·6	697·4	650·4
1982-83	521·0	707·0	655·5
1983-84	548·4	708·0	659·0
1984-85	589·3	718·9	678·1
1985-86	629·3	730·0	683·4
1986-87	671·6	728·7	705·4
[1]1987-88	749·4	749·4	749·4

[1] Provisional outturn.

(iii) Hospital and community health services: Gross capital expenditure

at 1987-88 prices

	£ million cash	Adjusted by the relevant pay and prices index	Adjusted by the GDP deflator
1974-75	15·3	56·5	56·3
1975-76	23·1	65·4	67·7
1976-77	18·0	45·5	46·6
1977-78	21·1	46·7	47·9
1978-79	23·7	46·9	48·6
1979-80	24·4	40·0	42·8
1980-81	32·1	41·8	47·5
1981-82	41·4	52·2	55·8
1982-83	47·1	58·5	59·3
1983-84	49·9	60·8	60·0
1984-85	53·3	62·3	61·3
1985-86	55·1	60·8	59·8
1986-87	60·6	63·7	63·7
[1]1987-88	62·9	62·9	62·9

[1] provisional outturn.

(iv) Family Practitioner Services: Gross expenditure

at 1987-88 prices

	£ million cash	Adjusted by the relevant pay and prices index	Adjusted by the GDP deflator
1974-75	46·2	188·2	170·0
1975-76	60·8	193·0	178·1
1976-77	72·3	206·6	187·1
1977-78	82·3	215·8	187·0
1978-79	97·2	225·5	199·5
1979-80	113·0	221·6	198·4
1980-81	142·3	228·1	210·7
1981-82	162·4	234·8	218·9
1982-83	187·9	251·2	236·4
1983-84	202·3	256·5	243·1
1984-85	221·0	262·1	254·3
1985-86	234·2	263·9	254·3
1986-87	252·6	271·0	265·3
[1]1987-88	282·2	282·2	282·2

[1] Provisional outturn.

Note: Includes the costs of the family practitioner services administration and related services.

(v) Centrally financed National Health Services: Gross expenditure

At 1987-88 prices

	£ million cash	Adjusted by the GDP deflator
1974-75	3·2	11·8
1975-76	4·2	12·3
1976-77	5·1	13·2
1977-78	5·8	13·2
1978-79	7·2	14·8
1979-80	8·2	14·4
1980-81	9·3	13·8
1981-82	11·4	15·4
1982-83	13·2	16·6
1983-84	15·7	18·9
1984-85	19·3	22·2
1985-86	23·4	25·4
1986-87	28·6	30·0
[1]1987-88	34·7	34·7

[1] provisional outturn.

Note:

1. Because of the variety and multiplicity of individual budgets it is not meaningful to derive a single inflation factor for this expenditure.

(vi) Personal Social Service: Gross expenditure

at 1987-88 prices

	£ million cash	Adjusted by the relevant pay and prices index	Adjusted by the GDP deflator
1974-75	37·1	132·5	136·5
1975-76	50·4	149·5	147·6
1976-77	57·9	151·6	149·8
1977-78	63·0	150·5	143·1
1978-79	76·9	169·6	157·8
1979-80	92·7	173·4	162·8
1980-81	111·6	173·8	165·3
1981-82	120·3	166·6	162·1
1982-83	131·3	169·6	165·2
1983-84	143·5	176·1	172·4
1984-85	147·8	174·4	170·1
1985-86	155·9	174·1	169·3
1986-87	169·3	180·5	177·8
[1]1987-88	182·1	182·1	182·1

[1] Provisional outturn.

ENERGY

British Nuclear Fuels Ltd.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is the current budget for trainees at British Nuclear

Fuels Ltd.; what is the estimate for next year's budget; and what is the nature and extent of the future provision for trainees at British Nuclear Fuels Ltd.

Mr. Michael Spicer: This is a management matter for British Nuclear Fuels plc.

UKAEA Training School

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) if there are any plans for the possible closure of the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority's training school at Risley;

(2) whether any studies have been carried out or commissioned concerning the cost-effectiveness of the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority's training school at Risley.

Mr. Michael Spicer: This is a management matter for the UKAEA.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what information he has as to the intake at the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority's training school at Risley for the academic year starting in September; what has the intake been for the last five years; and whether British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. will continue to send trainees to the training school after 1988.

Mr. Michael Spicer: These are management matters for the UKAEA and BNFL.

Offshore Oil and Gas (Safety)

Mr. Doran: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) what is the definition of serious injury used in the reporting of offshore accidents;

(2) what changes in the definition of serious injury used in the reporting of offshore accidents have been made in the last 10 years;

(3) what changes in the definition of offshore worker used in the reporting of offshore accidents has been made in the last 10 years; and what is the current definition;

(4) what changes in the definition of offshore accidents have been made in the last 10 years; and what is the current definition.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The Offshore Installations (Inspectors and Casualties) Regulations 1973 (SI 1973/1842) require owners of offshore installations to notify me of all casualties or other accidents involving loss of life or danger to life in respect of all persons on offshore installations or attendant vessels, whether or not those persons are working. There are no definitions of 'serious injury', 'offshore worker' or 'offshore accident' in the regulations but owners have been informed that serious injury includes:

(a) Fracture of skull, spine, pelvis, arm, forearm, thigh or leg.
(b) Dislocation of shoulders, elbow, hip, knee or spine.
(c) Amputation of hand or foot, or substantial part of hand or foot.
(d) Loss of sight of an eye.
(e) Other serious bodily injuries, eg. internal haemorrhage, burns asphyxia, bends, or other injury likely to endanger life, cause permanent incapacity for work or substantially impair efficiency.
(f) Any person who suffers such an electric shock or burn, by coming into contact with any conductor in a circuit in which the voltage for the time being exceeds 25, that he requires first aid or medical treatment.
(g) Undue exposure of any person to doses of radiation from radio active materials.

These criteria have not been altered during the past 10 years.

Mr. Doran: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will introduce legislation to extend the provisions of the Building (Scotland) Acts to offshore oil and gas installations.

Mr. Peter Morrison: No. The Offshore Installations (Construction and Survey) Regulations 1974 (SI 1974/289), supported by the guidance notes on design and construction for offshore installations, issued by my Department, set down specific requirements for the design and construction of offshore installations.

Mr. Doran: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will introduce legislation to extend the provisions of the Fire Precautions Acts to offshore oil and gas installations.

Mr. Peter Morrison: No. There are specific requirements for the provision of fire and gas detection systems and for fire-fighting equipment on offshore installations in the Offshore Installations (Fire-Fighting Equipment) Regulations 1978 (SI 1978/611).

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list the prosecutions in date order brought since 1977 regarding North sea offshore safety requirements; which company or person was prosecuted in each case; what was the exact charge brought in each case; and what was the penalty imposed in each case.

Mr. Peter Morrison *[holding answer 25 July 1988]:* A register of convictions of companies under the provisions of the relevant offshore safety legislation is being assembled in my Department and will be available for inspection by members of the public on appointment from 15 August. If the hon. Member wishes, I shall make arrangements for him to come and inspect it.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

European Community (Membership Consequences)

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will bring up to date the figures in table 1 of the evidence submitted by Her Majesty's Government to the Treasury and Civil Service Committee on the financial and economic consequences of United Kingdom membership of the European Communities (page 59 of HC57-II, Session 1984-85).

Mr. Donald Thompson: Table 1 of the evidence submitted by Her Majesty's Government to the Treasury and Civil Service Committee on the financial and economic consequences of United Kingdom membership of the European Communities is updated as follows:

Agricultural land prices by land class in England and Wales[1] all properties, both vacant possession and tenanted sales

Year	Average price by predominant grade of land[2] 1 and 2 £/ha	3 £/ha	4 and 5 £/ha	All grades £/ha	Index of average prices of all grades of land[2] In current terms 1967-68 to 1970-71 = 100	In real terms 1967-68 to 1970-71 = 100
1983-84	4,938	3,857	2,225	3,497	732	149
1984-85	5,058	4,006	2,020	3,585	750	148
1985-86	4,320	3,838	2,425	3,499	732	135
1986-87[4]	3,879	3,498	2,224	3,311	653	116

Sources and footnotes [1], [2] and [3] are as in the original table.
[4] Figures for 1986-87 relate to England only as data for England and Wales combined are not available after 1985-86.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will bring up to date the figures in tables f1 and f2 of the evidence submitted by Her Majesty's Government to the Treasury and Civil Service Committee on the financial and economic consequences of United Kingdom membership of the European Communities (pages 39-40 of HC 57-II Session 1984-85).

Mr. Donald Thompson: The information requested in respect of table f1 is as shown. Information updating table f2 appears at table 25 in the White Paper on the "Annual Review of Agriculture 1988" (Cm. 299).

Net farm income on full-time farms by farm type: England 1982-83 to 1986-87

	All dairy farms Money terms (£'000)	Index in real terms 1982-83 = 100	All livestock farms Money terms (£'000)	Index in real terms 1982-83 = 100	All cropping farms Money terms (£'000)	Index in real terms 1982-83 = 100	Pig & poultry farms Money terms (£'000)	Index in real terms 1982-83 = 100	Horticultural farms Money terms (£'000)	Index in real terms 1982-83 = 100
1982-83	13·5	103	5·3	110	17·2	103	*11·5	81	*2·3	28
1983-84	7·8	57	4·8	96	20·7	119	*8·7	59	*16·8	198
1983-84	8·3	61	5·2	103	21·5	123	13·4	91	15·2	179
1984-85	8·7	60	4·6	86	21·1	115	33·5	215	7·3	82
1984-85	9·0	62	5·1	97	21·1	116	30·1	193	7·2	81
1985-86	11·4	74	4·1	73	5·2	27	21·8	132	3·2	34
1985-86	12·9	84	4·4	78	4·9	25	20·0	121	3·2	34
1986-87	14·4	91	2·7	46	14·7	73	16·4	96	7·6	78

Source: Farm Business Survey.
Notes: Pairs of years relate to an identical sample of farms. Full-time farms are defined as those of 4 British Size Units (BSU) or more except for farm types asterisked where there is a range of 4-250 BSU. One BSU represents 2,000 ECU of standard gross margin at average 1978-80 values.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will bring up to date the figures in table M of the evidence submitted by Her Majesty's Government to the Treasury and Civil Service Committee on the financial and economic consequences of United Kingdom membership of the European Communities (page 56 of HC57-II Session 1984-86).

Mr. Donald Thompson: Estimates are no longer prepared on the basis requested. Detailed information on the incomes, assets and liabilities of farm businesses by farm type and country is contained within the 1988 edition of "Farm Incomes in the United Kingdom", a copy of which is in the Library of the House.

Products (Statistics)

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for 6 January and for the latest available date the United Kingdom levy/threshold price for products covered by the common agricultural policy, the United Kingdom levy and the world price together with the amount consumed in the United Kingdom in the latest period of 12 months for which figures are available.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The information is set out in the table. I remind the hon. Member that the "world" prices shown are generally the lowest offer prices at the Community frontier which underlie the Commission's calculation of the variable import levies. These prices are the lowest recorded and it is likely that, on average, higher prices would have to be paid if larger quantities were to be purchased on world markets or if suppliers on world markets diminished.

I must caution strongly against drawing conclusions from the information requested.

Levy applicable in the United Kingdom, threshold price and notional "world" price on 6 January and 23 July 1988; supplies for consumption in the United Kingdom; information for the main food items covered by the Common Agricultural Policy

Commodity	6 January 1988 [1]Threshold (or equivalent) price	[2]Levy applicable in UK	[3]Notional "world" price	23 July 1988 [1]Threshold (or equivalent price)	[2]Levy applicable in UK	[3]Notional "world" price	[4]Supplies for human consumption in UK
	£/tonne	£/tonne	£/tonne	£/tonne	£/tonne	£/tonne	'000 tonnes
Common wheat	173	135	51	165	85	88	5,466
Barley	158	126	43	150	65	92	1,967
Maize	158	117	51	163	83	88	1,160

Commodity	6 January 1988 [1] Threshold (or equivalent) price	6 January 1988 [2] Levy applicable in UK	6 January 1988 [3] Notional "world" price	23 July 1988 [1] Threshold (or equivalent price)	23 July 1988 [2] Levy applicable in UK	23 July 1988 [3] Notional "world" price	[9] Supplies for human consumption in UK
	£/tonne	£/tonne	£/tonne	£/tonne	£/tonne	£/tonne	'000 tonnes
Sugar (white)	440	[4]313	140	435	[4]249	196	2,111
Butter (82 per cent. fat)	2,336	[5]1,853	553	2,336	[5]1741	641	266
Cheese (Cheddar)	2,365	1,715	771	2,365	1,615	830	396
Skimmed milk powder	1,302	794	553	1,302	788	541	121
Beef and veal	2,708	[6]1,756	1,138	2,708	[6]1,765	1,075	1,124
Pigmeat	1,412	565	590	1,431	556	616	1,300
Sheepmeat	2,821	[7]	[8]	2,821	[7]	[8]	362
Poultrymeat	1,016	451	696	1,015	401	699	1,022
Eggs	869	293	687	822	571	305	738

Notes to table:

All figures have been rounded to nearest pound.

[1] For commodities for which there is no threshold price the following have been used: beef and veal—guide price converted to deadweight (using a killing out percentage of 53·8 per cent.); pigmeat and sheepmeat—basic price; poultrymeat and eggs—sluicegate prices plus basic levy converted at the green rate.

[2] Levy is net of monetary compensatory amounts. Rates of levy vary for different tariff headings. The rates quoted are: beef and veal and pigmeat—carcase; poultrymeat—70 per cent. chickens; eggs—in shell.

[3] Notional "world" prices have been calculated by subtracting the levy applicable from the "threshold" price. The beef price is also adjusted for duty. For pigmeat, poultrymeat and eggs the "world" price has been taken as the sluicegate price, less supplementary levy, where appropriate. The resulting estimate has been converted from ecu/t at the appropriate market rate of exchange: £0·694909 = 1 ecu on 6 January and £0·656335 = 1 ecu on 23 July.

[4] In practice the United Kingdom's imports from third countries are normally covered by the Lomé convention and enter the Community levy-free.

[5] A special lower rate of levy is applicable to imports of butter from New Zealand.

[6] Most imports of beef from third countries are subject to special arrangements allowing entry at reduced levy rate.

[7] Imports of lamb under voluntary restraint arrangements with principal suppliers and related agreements are subject to a reduced charge of 10 per cent. ad valorem. Any imports outside these arrangements are subject to levies which cannot exceed the 20 per cent. tariff bound in the GATT.

[8] No appropriate "world" price is available.

[9] Total United Kingdom new supplies mainly for human consumption (1987 forecast): the figures for cereals include grains used for brewing, distilling and industrial uses but exclude animal feed. The figures for butter and cheese include all types of these products.

Agricultural Imports

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the United Kingdom levies on imports of agricultural products from outside the EEC on 6 January and at the latest available date as a percentage of the world price and the intervention price.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The information is set out in the table. I remind the hon. Member that the "world" prices derived for the purpose of this calculation are the lowest recorded and do not represent those which might obtain if larger quantities were purchased from world markets or if supplies on world markets diminished.

United Kingdom levy[1] as percentage of (a) the "world" prices[2] and (b) the intervention price[3] in the United Kingdom

Commodity	6 January 1988 (a)	6 January 1988 (b)	23 July 1988 (a)	23 July 1988 (b)
Common wheat	265	111	97	72
Barley	294	109	70	58
Maize	230	96	94	70
Sugar (white)	223	80	127	64
Butter (82 per cent. fat)	335	89	272	84
Cheese (cheddar)	223	—	195	—
Skimmed milk powder	144	69	146	68
Beef and veal	154	72	164	72
Pigmeat	96	51	90	50
Poultrymeat	65	—	57	—
Eggs	43	—	187	—

[1] The levies taken are at the full rate. In the case of beef, butter and sugar, the United Kingdom obtains a large proportion of its supplies at reduced rates of levy.

[2] "World" prices have been calculated by subtracting the common import levy from the "threshold" price. The beef price is also adjusted for duty. For pigmeat, poultrymeat and eggs the "world" price has been taken as the sluicegate price, less supplementary levy where appropriate.

[3] "Intervention prices" have been defined as:
Common wheat—relevant month's intervention price for bread-making wheat of standard quality.
Barley and maize—relevant month's intervention price.
Sugar—intervention price for white sugar plus storage levy.
Butter—intervention price for 82 per cent. butter.
Skimmed milk powder—intervention price.
Beef and veal—intervention price converted to carcase equivalent using 53·8 per cent. killing out coefficient.
Pigmeat—lowest intervention price.
There are no intervention price for cheddar cheese, poultrymeat and eggs. The intervention prices used will differ in some cases from buying in prices.

Recruitment and Promotion Policy

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what measures he has implemented to ensure that recruitment and promotion policy in his Department does not directly or indirectly discriminate against applicants who were mature students or women returning to work following a career break due to child care.

Mr. Donald Thompson: My Department is directly responsible for the recruitment of administrative officers, equivalent grades, and below. Selection panels are instructed on the need to guard against any form of discrimination. Selection criteria based, for example, on sex are strictly forbidden as are criteria which might discriminate on age grounds against mature students or women returning to work following a career break.

All staff have been issued with guidance entitled, "How to cope with changes in domestic responsibilities and still have a job," a copy of which has been placed in the Library. This encourages staff to consider alternatives to

resignation and also contains guidance on rejoining the Civil Service after a period away from work. A scheme designed to give preferential consideration for reinstatement when staff resign for domestic reasons is also under discussion with my Department's trade union side. This will give staff who resign for domestic reasons further encouragement to rejoin my Department when they are ready to return to work, and I hope the scheme will be introduced shortly.

Those responsible for assessing staff for promotion are regularly reminded of the need to guard against any form of discrimination, and to avoid making any assumptions about mobility or length of future service in reaching decisions.

My Department began monitoring the progress of women through all stages of recruitment competitions last year. Monitoring of promotion and allocation to duties will start this year. The need for further action will be considered in the light of the results which emerge.

Advisory Committees

Sir Richard Body: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will give a list of his advisory committees, stating in each case how many members are also members of the National Farmers Union.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The main advisory bodies sponsored by my Department are listed in "Public Bodies 1987," of which a copy is in the Library. Complete information as to how many members are also members of the National Farmers Union is not readily available.

Milk

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the reductions in *(a)* milk production and *(b)* milk quota in each European Community country in 1987-88 as a percentage of (i) national production and (ii) European Community production, together with the cumulative total for all years since 1984.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The information requested is contained in the following tables:

	(i) National Production 1986-87	*(ii) EC 10 Production 1986-87*
Belgium*	−4·3	−0·14
Denmark	−5·7	−0·28
France*	−4·0	−1·02
Germany*	−10·0	−2·39
Greece*	+8·8	+0·04
Ireland	−4·7	−0·26
Italy	+0·9	+0·08
Luxembourg	−5·3	−0·02
Netherlands	−8·0	−0·98
United Kingdom	−5·9	−0·93
EC 10		−5·9
Spain*	−4·0	[1]0·18
EC 11	−4·0	−5·9

[1] Per cent. of EC 11.

Note: Quota in all member states was reduced by 6 per cent. in 1987-88 although this was partially offset in the members states marked with an asterisk by transfers between direct sale and wholesale quota. In addition, Spain was allocated a further 50,000 tonnes of wholesale quota from the Community reserve.

Change in quota (wholesale) between 1986-87 and 1987-88 as a percentage of:

	(i) National Production 1986-87	*(ii) EC 10 Production 1986-87*
Belgium	−5·7	−0·19
Denmark	−6·0	−0·29
France	−5·6	−1·43
Germany	−5·7	−1·37
Greece	−7·1	−0·03
Ireland	−5·7	−0·32
Italy	−6·2	−0·53
Luxembourg	−5·5	−0·02
Netherlands	−5·9	−0·72
United Kingdom	−5·9	−0·92
EC 10	—	−5·79
Spain	−3·9	[1]−0·17
EC 11	−5·71	−5·70

[1] percentage of EC 11

Cumulative change in production between 1983-84 and 1987-88 as a percentage of 1983-84 production:

	Cumulative change
Belgium	− 3·5
Denmark	−12·9
France	− 6·2
Germany	−15·3
Greece	+15·5
Ireland	− 2·9
Italy	+ 3·8
Luxembourg	− 2·7
Netherlands	−13·4
United Kingdom	−12·0
EC 10	− 9·7

Cumulative change in milk production (EC 10) between 1983-84 and 1987-88 compared with difference between 1983-84 production and 1987-89 quota:

Production reduction	*Quota reduction*
9·7	10·1

Note: Data on milk production was obtained from Eurostat, and the latest available information for 1987-88. Wholesale quota allocations were taken from the appropriate EC regulations and include allocations of quota from the Community reserve. The Eurostat figures are for "deliveries to dairies"; this differs slightly from the definition of "wholesale deliveries" for quota purposes so that the Eurostat milk production figures are not strictly comparable with quota.

Farming (National Laws)

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what proposals have been made by the EEC Commission for the harmonisation of national laws on pesticides, insecticides, fertiliser and organic farming; what is the current position of each proposal in relation to EEC Council approval; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: As regards EC pesticides (including insecticides), the EC Commission put forward a draft directive harmonising aspects of national laws on the approval of "plant protection products" in 1976. No progress has been made on this text since 1983, and the Commission is understood to be preparing a revised text for discussion.

I am aware that the Commission is working on a draft proposal on the production and marketing of agricultural

products and foodstuffs obtained without the use of synthetic chemicals, but as no proposals have been published I cannot comment any further.

Council directive 76/116 published in 1975 sets certain standards on labelling and composition of some inorganic fertilisers traded between member states. Proposals by the EC Commission to extend these harmonisation measures have included a recent new directive on fluid fertilisers agreed by the Council, and a further proposal for one on secondary nutrients is currently under consideration by the Council.

Butter

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what changes have taken place in the consumption of butter per person in each EEC country since 1973.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Information on butter consumption since 1973 is contained in the Commission publication "The Agricultural Situation in the Community —1987 Report", page T/165. A copy is in the Library of the House.

Set-aside Scheme

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what provisions he is making under the set-aside scheme to ensure that land set aside which is crossed by public rights of way is kept clear; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ryder: Farmers are already required to keep rights of way over their land unobstructed. This will not be affected by their joining the set-aside scheme. The advisory guidelines to be issued shortly will remind farmers of the need to conform to obligations as regards rights of way on their land. Enforcement is a matter for highways authorities.

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the countries which have banned the import of United Kingdom cattle following the discovery of bovine spongiform encephalopathy in British herds.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Australia and Israel have told us that they will not permit imports of cattle from this country because of bovine spongiform encephalopathy.

Soil Erosion

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what plans he has to continue to support the joint scheme with soil survey for monitoring soil erosion by aerial photography.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The practical work in the joint scheme with the Soil Survey and Land Research Centre for monitoring soil erosion by aerial photography is now complete. The results are being interpreted and, together with advice from the Priorities Board for Research and Development in Agriculture and Food, will inform decisions on the need for further studies.

Bovine Somatrophin

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received from Waitrose, Tesco and Sainsbury supermarket companies on the subject of bovine somatrophin.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Earlier this year my officials met the British Retailers' Association (whose membership includes various supermarket chains) to discuss the subject.

Disease Eradication Schemes

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the percentage valuation payments made in respect of compensation paid to farmers for the various disease eradication schemes.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The compensation payable for animals slaughtered in the event of disease occurring is as follows:

African swine fever (which has never occurred in this country)—if the animal is affected, 50 per cent. of the value immediately before it became affected; if not, the value of the animal immediately before it was slaughtered.

Aujeszky's disease—for all animals slaughtered, their market value immediately before they were slaughtered had they not been affected or suspected or exposed to infection of Aujeszky's disease, up to a maximum of £300. (For Aujeszky's disease the cost of compensation is paid in full from a statutory levy on pig producers).

Bovine spongiform encephalopathy—for an affected or suspected animal an amount equal to 50 per cent. of either

(a) the market value of the animal; or

(b) 125 per cent. of the average price in respect of the month which occurred two months prior to the month in which the market value of the animal was determined rounded down to the nearest multiple of £2,

whichever is the less.

For an animal in which bovine spongiform encephalopathy cannot be confirmed post mortem, an amount equal to either

(a) the market value of the animal; or

(b) 125 per cent. of the average price in respect of the month which occurred two months prior to the month in which the market value of the animal was determined rounded down to the nearest multiple of £2,

whichever is the less.

(The Order providing for compensation in respect of bovine spongiform encephalopathy comes into effect on 8 August 1988.)

Brucellosis—where the slaughtered animal is an affected animal or a reactor an amount equal to 75 per cent. of either

(i) its market value or

(ii) 125 per cent. of the average price in respect of the month which occurred two months prior to the month in which the market value of the animal was determined rounded down to the nearest multiple of £4.

Where the slaughtered animal is not an affected animal or a reactor, an amount equal to either

(i) its market value or

(ii) 125 per cent. of the average price in respect of the month which occurred two months prior to the month in which the market value of the animal was determined rounded down to the nearest multiple of £4.

Cattle plague (which has not occurred in this country since 1877)—if the animal is affected, 50 per cent. of its value immediately before it became affected but not more than £20; if not, the value immediately before it was slaughtered but not more than £40.

Classical swine fever (which is not present in this country)—if the animal is affected, 50 per cent. of the value of the animal immediately before it became affected; if not, the value of the animal immediately before it was slaughtered.

Foot and mouth disease (which is not present in this country)—if the animal is affected, the value of the animal immediately before it became affected; if not, the value of the animal immediately before it was slaughtered.

Pleuro-pneumonia (which has not occurred in this country since 1898)—if the animal is affected, 75 per cent. of the value immediately before it became so affected, but not more than £30; if not, the value immediately before it was slaughtered.

Rabies (which is not present in this country)—where the animal was affected, 50 per cent. of its market value immediately before it became affected; in every other case the market value of the animal immediately before it was slaughtered.

Swine vesicular disease (which is not present in this country)—where the animal was affected, its value immediately before it became affected, in every other case the value of the animal immediately before it was slaughtered.

Tuberculosis—where the slaughtered animal is an affected animal or a reactor an amount equal to 75 per cent. of either

(i) its market value or

(ii) 125 per cent. of the average price in respect of the month which occurred two months prior to the month in which the market value of the animal was determined rounded down to the nearest multiple of £4.

Where the slaughtered animal is not an affected animal or a reactor, an amount equal to either

(i) its market value or

(ii) 125 per cent. of the average price in respect of the month which occurred two months prior to the month in which the market value of the animal was determined rounded down to the nearest multiple of £4.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will give, in respect of each environmentally sensitive area *(a)* the total extent, in hectares, *(b)* the extent of agricultural land, *(c)* the number of farmers eligible to enter into management agreements, *(d)* the number of agreements concluded with farmers and *(e)* the total area of land covered by agreements.

Mr. Ryder: The total area in hectares of each environmentally sensitive area in England is as follows:

	Hectares
Broads	29,870
Somerset Levels and Moors	26,970
South Downs	48,820
Pennine Dales	15,900
West Penwith	7,200
Breckland	88,480
North Peak	50,250
Suffolk River Valleys	38,000
Shropshire Borders	21,360
Test Valley	2,690

The figures are provisional and subject to minor amendment when final measurement and checking has been completed. The extent of agricultural land in each ESA is still being measured and will be presented in the report to Parliament referred to in my answer of today's date. Information on the number of farmers eligible to enter the ESA scheme in each area is not available.

The number of agreements concluded in 1987 and total area of land covered in each ESA are as follows:

	Number	[1]*Area*
Broads	389	6,735
Somerset Levels and Moors	523	7,709
South Downs (East)	58	3,104
Pennine Dales	218	8,130
West Penwith	139	5,552

[1]Hectares.

The other areas were not open for applications until 1988. Applications received in 1988 for all areas are still being processed.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, in respect of land within each environmentally sensitive area, how many applications have been received from voluntary conservation bodies wishing to enter into management agreements; what is the total area of land involved; how many agreements have so far been concluded with voluntary conservation bodies; and what is the total area of land involved.

Mr. Ryder: The information requested on applications is not available for 1988. In England 11 agreements covering some 570 hectares were concluded with voluntary conservation bodies in 1987. The information could not be given for individual environmentally sensitive areas without risking disclosure of information on individual agreements.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he expects to report to the House, in accordance with the requirements of section 18(8) of the Agriculture Act 1986, on the performance of management agreements in environmentally sensitive areas; and whether any such report will describe the steps taken to monitor the effect of the agreements on wildlife and the landscape in each area.

Mr. Ryder: I expect to place a report, as required by section 18(8) of the Agriculture Act 1986, in the Libraries of both Houses by the autumn. The report will describe how the Ministry is monitoring the effects of ESA agreements in England, including on wildlife and the landscape, and will provide statistical information about each ESA.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what contribution he expects to receive from European Community funds towards the costs incurred in 1987 and 1988 in making payments to farmers in environmentally sensitive areas in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Ryder: The European Community will contribute 25 per cent. of the cost of payments to farmers of up to 60 ecu (£39) per hectare in the case of land on which hill livestock compensatory allowances are paid and 100 ecu (£65) per hectare on other land. I expect the contribution to amount to approximately £340,000 in 1987 but it is too early to make a firm estimate for 1988. The United Kingdom is a net contributor to the European Community budget so all payments to this country from the Community are funded by the Exchequer.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his estimate of the savings which will be made in expenditure under the common agricultural policy on commodities produced on farms in environmentally sensitive areas in the United Kingdom in 1987 and 1988.

Mr. Ryder: It is too early to make a reliable estimate. Estimation of such savings will be made as part of the programme of monitoring and evaluation of the environmentally sensitive areas scheme.

Sheep (Radioactive Marking)

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food on what date, and in which country or region, in each of the four countries in the United Kingdom, the last sheep were marked blue between 28 September 1987 and 10 January 1988 subsequently re-monitored and tagged for slaughter prior to entering the food chain.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The last dates on which blue-marked sheep were presented for remonitoring were as follows:

	Date
England	8 April 1988
Northern Ireland	15 January 1988
Scotland	22 April 1988
Wales	5 May 1988

All of these sheep were below the action level and tagged so that they were released from slaughter restriction.

Restrictions were lifted from all blue-marked on 1 June 1988.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Sports Clubs (Grants)

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what grants were made in each of the last three years to *(a)* rugby clubs, *(b)* soccer clubs, *(c)* hockey clubs, *(d)* cricket clubs, *(e)* athletic clubs and *(f)* the Gaelic Athletic Association; and what provision has been made for specific clubs in the above categories in the 1988-89 financial year.

Dr. Mawhinney: I will write to the hon. Gentleman.

Flooding

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what sums are being expended on flood prevention works in Strabane in the current and following financial years.

Mr. Needham: I will write to the hon. Gentleman.

Shootings (Gibraltar)

Sir Eldon Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will call for a report from the Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary as to the cost to public funds of the security operation mounted by the Royal Ulster Constabulary in relation to the return of the bodies of Irish Republican Army terrorists killed in Gibraltar, including the cost required to guard their respective homes and to police the funerals.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I will write to my hon. Friend.

Sir Eldon Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is his policy as to how the additional costs arising from the police operations in relation to the return of the Irish Republican Army members killed in Gibraltar shall be recouped.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The costs will be contained within existing provisions.

Sir Eldon Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make available to the police authority and the Royal Ulster Constabulary extra funds to cover the additional costs of policing that arose in relation to the return to Northern Ireland of the three Irish Republican Army members killed in Gibraltar.

Mr. Ian Stewart: In any financial year there will be a number of known and unexpected events which will involve increased police activity. Such matters are taken into account during the preparation of the police authority's estimates.

Gaelic

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the status of Gaelic will be in the proposed educational reform; and if he will make a statement.

Dr. Mawhinney: I will write to the hon. Member.

Public Expenditure

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish a further table in the *Official Report*, in the same format as the written reply of 7 July, *Official Report*, columns *733-34*, on receipts classified as charges in respect of his programme expenditure over the years 1982-83 to 1990-91, indicating the receipts in respect of running costs expenditure together with a supplementary analysis indicating, separately, the amounts of receipts in respect of programme expenditure and of running costs expenditure estimated to have been met from other public expenditure programmes.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 7 July 1988, at columns *733-34*, for the information on charges in respect of programme expenditure. Information on the source of these receipts is not readily available but it is estimated that receipts to the Northern Ireland programme from other public expenditure programmes is minimal.

The information on receipts in respect of running costs expenditure for the years 1987-88 to 1990-91 is shown in the table; the information for the years 1982-83 to 1986-87 is not presently available in the same format and I will write to the hon. Member when the information comes to hand.

Receipts in respect of Northern Ireland running costs expenditure coming from other public expenditure programmes cannot be readily distinguished from receipts coming from one Department to another within the Northern Ireland programme. The figures shown in the secondary analysis in the table therefore contain both elements.

Public expenditure Receipts in respect of running costs expenditure 1987-88 to 1990-91

£ million

	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91
Agriculture, Fishery and Forestry Support				
Agency fees etc	3	3	3	3
Trade, Industry Energy and Employment				
Miscellaneous	1	2	2	2
Roads and Transport				
Car Parking	1	1	1	1
Vehicle and Driver Testing and Driver Licensing Fees	4	4	4	4
Agency Services Driver Licensing	2	2	2	2
Environmental and Miscellaneous Services				
Water and Sewerage Charges etc	16	16	17	17
Accommodation Services	11	12	12	12
Planning Service	2	2	2	2
Other Environmental Services	4	5	5	5
Law, Order and Protective Services				
Forensic Science and Other Services	4	4	4	4
Health and Personal Social Services				
Agency Services etc	1	1	1	1
Social Security				
Recoupment from National Insurance Fund for Agency Services	23	27	28	28
Other Agency Services etc	1	1	1	1
Other Public Services				
Computer and Other Recoveries	2	2	2	2
Total	76	83	84	86
of which	[1]38	[1]42	[1]43	[1]45

Notes:
[1] is estimated to relate to running costs expenditure included in public expenditure programmes.
(1) Figures in the table are consistent with Cm. 288.
(2) Individual figures may not sum to totals because of roundings.

Debt (Benefit Reductions)

Ms. Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish a table showing the total deduction made from *(a)* invalidity benefit, *(b)* child benefit, *(c)* widows' benefit, *(d)* supplementary benefit, *(e)* unemployment benefit, *(f)* sickness and *(g)* retirement pension in each year 1979 to June 1988, inclusive, under the Payments for Debt (Emergency Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 1971.

Mr. Needham: I will write to the hon. Lady.

Anglo-Irish Parliamentary Committee

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he intends to propose the setting up of an Anglo-Irish parliamentary committee; and what consultations have been undertaken as to the number of hon. Members from each of the political parties who would sit on this committee.

Mr. Tom King: I will write to the hon. Member.

Recruitment and Promotion Policy

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what measures he has implemented to ensure that recruitment and promotion policy in his Department does not directly or indirectly discriminate against applicants who were mature students or women returning to work following a career break due to child care.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I will write to the hon. Lady.

Blackwater Arterial Drainage Scheme

Mr. Morley: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what is the current estimated total cost of the Blackwater arterial drainage scheme; if he will list the sources from which the cost will be met; and if he will list for each of the phases of the Blackwater arterial drainage scheme, the contract number, location and estimated cost, and, for those phases completed, the final cost;

(2) what steps are being taken to monitor the impact of the Blackwater arterial drainage scheme on the wildlife and landscape of the catchment; and if he will summarise the results of such monitoring.

Mr. Viggers: I will write to the hon. Member.

Finn-Lacky Catchment

Mr. Morley: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what steps have been taken to survey the wildlife of the Finn-Lacky catchment; if he will list the sites within the Finn-Lacky catchment that qualify for notification as areas of special scientific interest by virtue of their flora, fauna or physiological interest; and, in the event of an arterial drainage scheme for the catchment, if he will prepare an environmental statement under EC directive 85/337;

(2) if he will make a statement on the scheme for the drainage of the Finn-Lacky catchment; if he will estimate the number of hectares of agricultural land whose drainage will be improved as a result of such a scheme; if he will list

the sources from which he anticipates the cost of the scheme will be met; and if he will state the estimated cost of the scheme and the financial benefit he expects to accrue as a result of public investment in it.

Mr. Viggers: I will write to the hon. Member.

Strip Searches (Maghaberry)

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many strip searches were made of female prisoners in Her Majesty's prison, Maghaberry, in June, giving the number of persons involved and number of times each person was searched; if any prison contraband, smuggled item or illegal correspondence was discovered in any search, indicating which items; in how many cases prisoners refused to be searched and had to be restrained while the search was being conducted; and what were the reasons for the search under each of the following headings: *(a)* making a remand appearance at a trial, *(b)* attending trial, *(c)* inter-prison visit or *(d)* other reasons.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The information requested is as follows:

Number of searches	*June*
Total number of searches carried out	25
Total number of inmates searched	16
Number of prisoners searched once	8
Number of prisoners searched twice	7
Number of prisoners searched more than twice	1

Reason for search	*June*
First admission on remand/awaiting trial	5
First admission on sentence/final discharge	12
Attending remand court	—
Attending trial	—
Inter-prison visits	1
Pre-release home leave	7

No prohibited article was found during these searches and no prisoner refused to be searched.

Bed-and-breakfast Accommodation

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the number of people in bed-and-breakfast accommodation in Northern Ireland paid for by public funds at the latest date for which statistics are available.

Mr. Needham: I will write to the hon. Member.

MacBride Principles

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if, further to his reply to the question from the hon. Member for Brent, East of 22 July, column *873*, he will, whilst not identifying the individuals concerned, break down the total sum of £86,856 into the cost of support to each individual concerned along with any known political or trade union connections of each individual.

Mr. Viggers: I will write to the hon. Member.

Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference (Pub Bombings Cases)

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if the Birmingham, Guildford and Woolwich bombing cases were among the subjects discussed at the meeting of the Anglo-Irish Conference; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tom King: I will write to the hon. Member.

Royal Ulster Constabulary

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Belfast, South of 27 January, *Official Report*, column *292*, how many of the total days off sick or injured by members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary were attributed to *(a)* injury and *(b)* sickness; and if he will give this information for the last five years, stating average days off per capita.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I regret that there were some statistical errors in the reply that my predecessor gave to the hon. Member on 8 February at columns *85-6*.

The corrected information in respect of the regular RUC is as follows:

	Injury on Duty	*Average per Member*	*Sickness*	*Average per Member*
1983	14,233	1·78	91,388	11·42
1984	17,444	2·15	110,048	13·54
1985	21,351	2·58	111,318	13·48
1986	23,527	2·86	124,780	15·15
1987	23,676	2·87	131,462	15·97

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what information he has as to the number of days off work sick reported for members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary for each of the last five years; and if he will express this as an average figure.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I regret that there were some statistical errors in the reply that my predecessor gave to the hon. Member on 27 January at column *292*. The corrected information is as follows:

The following number of days were lost by members of the regular Royal Ulster Constabulary as a result of sickness and injury on duty for each of the last five years:

	Days lost
1983	105,621
1984	127,492
1985	132,669
1986	148,307
1987	155,138

In 1986, these figures represented an average loss of 18·01 days per member, and in 1987 18·84 days per member.

Marches

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what guidance or advice he has given to

the Royal Ulster Constabulary regarding the re-routing, banning, or imposition of conditions on marches or meetings in Northern Ireland; and what representations he has received from organisations and individuals about the operation of the Public Order (Northern Ireland) Order.

Mr. Ian Stewart *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* The control of marches and public meetings in Northern Ireland is an operational matter for the Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary. Since the Public Order (Northern Ireland) Order 1987 came into force in April 1987, records show that one letter has been received about possible changes to the legislation.

Belfast

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what is the total amount of expenditure on the building of houses and facilities in the Poleglass estate; what amount has been spent upon maintenance and repairs; what is the total number of dwelling units provided; and if he will express the expenditure as a figure per capita of residents;

(2) what is the amount spent on the erection of new houses by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive in the area defined in "Making Belfast Work" as Catholic West Belfast; what is the amount in maintenance and repairs on such property; what is the amount paid in repair and improvement grants to residents in the area defined as Catholic West Belfast, published by his Department; what is the amount paid to voluntary housing organisations in this area; and what is the amount paid to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive by those who accepted the right to buy their property in the defined area.

Mr. Ian Stewart *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* These are matters for the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, but I understand from the chairman that the information is not immediately available. I will write to the hon. Gentleman as soon as possible.

Departmental Programmes

Mr. George: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been spent by his Department in each of the past five years on the evaluation of departmental programmes; and what proportion this constitutes of *(a)* the amount allocated for evaluation and *(b)* the Department's total budget.

Mr. Stewart *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* The process of evaluation of my Department's programmes is part of the work itself. It is therefore not possible to identify separately the resources involved.

Nuclear Bunkers

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the three nuclear bunkers to be developed in Northern Ireland, indicating how far work has progressed on each bunker, the expected date of completion of each bunker and the most recent estimate of the total cost of each.

Mr. Ian Stewart *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* Work is progressing satisfactorily on the first of the three Northern Ireland emergency centres at Ballymena. Work on this centre was started in July last year and is due to be completed in November 1989 at an estimated cost of £3·2 million. No date has yet been scheduled for work to be commenced on either of the other two centres. The most recent estimate for the cost of the other two centres is £2·6 million and £2 million respectively.

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement indicating what areas are to be served by each of the proposed nuclear bunkers in Northern Ireland; what those services will be; what are the numbers designated to work in each bunker in the event of a nuclear attack; and when the list of those designated to staff these bunkers in the event of a nuclear attack was last updated.

Mr. Ian Stewart *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* All three emergency centres will function on an integrated basis to provide all essential services to the community of Northern Ireland as a whole. If necessary, each individual centre can provide a comprehensive Provincewide service. Provision has been made for approximately 235 personnel to be designated to the centre currently under construction. It is intended to allocate approximately 260 staff to cover the remaining two centres. The list of those designated to staff the centres is subject to continuous review.

Training Schemes (Belfast)

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on Belfast areas of training, detailing the areas involved, the financial commitment, the employment levels involved, its structure and the criteria used in planning the scheme; and what methods and criteria will be used to assess its progress.

Mr. Viggers *[holding answer 26 July 1988]:* Action teams represent an intitiative to focus additional resources to directly benefit areas of multiple deprivation. Areas are selected on the evidence of the Belfast areas of need survey. Each team has a budget of £500,000 per annum, services a population in the region of 15,000 and is charged with the broad objective of identifying the major needs of the area and co-ordinating means of resolution in co-operation with existing agencies and the local community groups. Four teams are presently in operation covering the separate areas of Lower Shankill/Lower Falls, Duncairn/New Lodge, Springfield and Riverside. A further four teams are planned to become operational soon. The Policy Research Institute has been appointed to evaluate the initiative.

Social Science Research

Mr. George: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been spent by his Department in each of the past five years on social science research; what percentage this constitutes of total departmental expenditure and of the Department's research budget; and how much of the research has been undertaken *(a)* within his Department, *(b)* by universities and polytechnics and *(c)* by independent research organisations.

Mr. Ian Stewart *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* The information is as follows:

Year	Departmental expenditure social science research	Percentage total departmental expenditure	Percentage expenditure of departmental research budget	Expenditure within department	Universities or polytechnics	Independent research organisations
	£ million	Per cent.	Per cent.	£ million	£ million	£ million
1982-83	0·7	0·020	7·36	0·6	0·03	—
1983-84	0·8	0·020	5·44	0·7	0·1	0·02
1984-85	0·7	0·017	5·83	0·6	0·1	0·02
1985-86	0·8	0·018	5·40	0·6	0·2	—
1986-87	0·9	0·019	4·86	0·7	0·2	—

Departmental Advertising

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary State for Northern Ireland (1) what was the total spending by his Department on press, public relations and advertising, respectively, in 1987-88;

(2) what is the latest figure for the estimated spending in 1988-89 by his Department on *(a)* TV advertising, *(b)* radio advertising, *(c)* newspaper advertising and *(d)* other promotional material.

Dr. Mawhinney: I will write to hon. Member.

Statistical Divisions

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list for 1979, 1984 and the most recent year the numbers of staff by grade in the statistical division in his Department; if he will differentiate between staff in the statistical posts and staff in administrative posts; and if he will give separate figures for the Central Register Office Northern Ireland.

Mr. Ian Stewart *[holding answer 21 July 1988]:* I will write to the hon. Member.

Public Relations

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what is the latest figure for the estimated expenditure by his Department on press and public relations during 1988-89;

(2) what is the latest figure for the number of staff presently employed in the press and public relations office of his Department.

Dr. Mawhinney *[holding answers 21 July 1988]:* I will write to the hon. Member.

Computer Work Stations

Mr. Warren: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many computer work stations there are in his Department; what is the ratio of work stations to civil servants; and how he expects this to change over the next five years.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I will write to my hon. Friend.

Information Technology

Mr. Warren: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) if he will list the composition of the senior information technology strategy committee in his Department; and how many times in the past year its meetings have been attended by Ministers;

(2) how many of the staff in his Department at grades 1, 2 and 3 have attended courses or training on information technology awareness or management in the last 12 months.

Mr. Ian Stewart *[holding answers 21 July 1988]:* I will write to my hon. Friend.

Abortion

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he has any plans to seek to legalise abortion in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 15 July 1988]:* I will write to my hon. Friend.

Air Travel (Expenditure)

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the expenditure on air travel in each month from 1 January to 30 June for the Northern Ireland Civil Service; and if he will provide figures for the Northern Ireland Office as a whole and broken down by Department; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* I will write to the hon. Gentleman.

SCOTLAND

Recruitment and Promotion Policy

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what measures he has implemented to ensure that recruitment and promotion policy in his Department does not directly or indirectly discriminate against applicants who were mature students or women returning to work following a career break due to child care.

Mr. Rifkind: My Department conducts training courses for members of recruitment and promotion boards which contain elements on the avoidance of discrimination and these are supplemented by written guidance.

Subject to certain conditions, my Department reinstates all applicants who resigned for domestic reasons. Previous service is taken into account for pay and seniority purposes and, in certain circumstances, previous performance assessments count towards eligibility for promotion boards.

My Department has no special measures relating to the recruitment or promotion of mature students.

Police (Special Branches)

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many police officers and civilians are serving in or responsible to the special branches of Scottish police forces, listed by police force.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Public Expenditure

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish in the *Official Report*, in the same format as his written reply of 7 July, *Official Report*, columns *672-74*, on receipts classified as charges in respect of his programme expenditure over the years 1982-83 to 1990-91, indicating the receipts in respect of running costs expenditure together with a supplementary analysis indicating, separately, the amounts of receipts in respect of programme expenditure and of running costs expenditure estimated to have been met from other public expenditure programmes.

Mr. Rifkind: Receipts in respect of programme expenditure met from other public expenditure programmes cannot be distinguished within the reply given on 7 July. For running costs expenditure, the information is as follows:

Public expenditure: receipts in respect of running costs expenditure 1982-83 to 1990-91—Scotland Programme[1]

£ million

	1982-83 Outturn	*1983-84 Outturn*	*1984-85 Outturn*	*1985-86 Outturn*	*1986-87 Outturn*	*1987-88 Estimated Outturn*	*1988-89 Plans*	*1989-90 Plans*	*1990-91 Plans*
Law, order and protective services									
Penal system	−0	−0	−0	−0	−0	−0	−1	−0	−0
Administration of Justice	−5	−5	−6	−6	−7	−7	−8	−8	−8
Total Law, order and protective services	−5	−5	−6	−7	−7	−7	−8	−8	−8
Other public services	−4	−3	−4	−14	−14	−15	−17	−16	−17
Total Scotland Programme	−10	−9	−10	−21	−21	−22	−25	−25	−25

[1] Due to rounding, individual figures do not necessarily sum to the totals.

Public expenditure: receipts in respect of running costs met from other public expenditure programmes 1982-83 to 1990-91—Scotland Programme

£ million

	1982-83 Outturn	*1983-84 Outturn*	*1984-85 Outturn*	*1985-86 Outturn*	*1986-87 Outturn*	*1987-88 Estimated Outturn*	*1988-89 Plans*	*1989-90 Plans*	*1990-91 Plans*
Other public services	−8	−11	−12	−4	−3	−3	−3	−3	−3
Total Scotland Programme	−8	−11	−12	−4	−3	−3	−3	−3	−3

Borders Region

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) whether consideration has been given to designating the Borders region as eligible for rural development status under heading 5B of the proposed reform of the European Community structural funds;

(2) what representations he has made to the European Community to establish the Borders region as being eligible to qualify for rural development status under heading 5B of the proposed reform of the European Community structural funds.

Mr. Lang: The European Commission has only just agreed its proposals for the detailed eligibility criteria under which rural areas would qualify for objective 5B. We shall need to study these proposals closely. It is therefore too early to say whether Borders region will qualify. The implications of any regional fund assistance for non-assisted rural areas such as Borders, which might divert money away from assisted areas, would need careful consideration.

Rates

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the average domestic rates bill per household in *(a)* 1979-80 and *(b)* 1988-89 for (i) Aberdeen, (ii) Dundee, (iii) Edinburgh, (iv) Glasgow, (v) Stirling and (vi) Scotland as a whole.

Mr. Ernie Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the average domestic rates bill for each household in *(a)* 1979-80 and *(b)* 1988-89 for (i) Scotland, (ii) Aberdeen, (iii) Dundee, (iv) Edinburgh, (v) Glasgow and (vi) Stirling.

Mr. Lang: The information requested is as follows:

	Average Domestic Rate Bill 1979-80 £	*Average Domestic Rate Bill 1988-89* £
Aberdeen City	161	432
Dundee City	134	486
Edinburgh City	188	603
Glasgow City	138	506
Stirling	158	585
Scotland	149	494

Note:
The 1988-89 average rate bills for Edinburgh and for Scotland have been calculated after taking into account Lothian Regional Council's voluntary rate reduction.

Rating Reform

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the latest estimated average poll tax bill per person for 1988-89 and 1989-90 for *(a)* Aberdeen, *(b)* Dundee, *(c)* Glasgow, *(d)* Edinburgh, *(e)* Stirling and *(f)* Scotland as a whole.

Mr. Lang: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Dundee, West (Mr. Ross) on 29 July 1988.

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when, pursuant to his answer of 7 July, *Official Report*, column 676, he expects to issue guidance on the procedures involved in determining which individuals are severely handicapped, and thus exempt from liability to pay the poll tax.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend expects to issue guidance to the medical profession on the issue of certificates in respect of the severely mentally impaired for community charge purposes as soon as possible after the relevant Scottish provisions of the Local Government Finance Act come into force in August.

Mr. Ernie Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the estimated average community charge per individual for *(a)* 1988-89 and *(b)* 1989-90 for (i) Scotland, (ii) Aberdeen, (iii) Dundee, (iv) Edinburgh, (v) Glasgow and (vi) Stirling.

Mr. Lang: My reply of 22 March to the hon. Member for Aberdeen, South (Mr. Doran) at column 72, gave estimates of the levels of personal community charge required to replace domestic rate income in each regional, islands and district council area in Scotland in 1988-89. The levels of personal community charge for 1989-90 are a matter for local authorities.

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what action he proposes to take to implement the amendments to the Abolition of Domestic Rates, etc. (Scotland) Act 1987 which are being made in the Local Government Finance Act.

Mr. Lang: The Bill has now received Royal Assent, and a commencement order will shortly be made in respect of the provisions relating to Scotland. The necessary regulations will be made thereafter, on a timetable which has regard to the existing timetable for the introduction of the community charge in Scotland, and in particular to the fact that community charges registers will come into force on 1 October. The regulations will be the subject of appropriate consultation.

School Leavers

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the total number of pupils leaving year (S4) in secondary schools in Scotland in each of the years 1979 to 1987, inclusive, and for each of the following destinations: employment, employment with training, non-advanced further education, Government training schemes, remaining at school (S5) and unemployment.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to him of Thursday 28 July for information on numbers of pupils leaving S4. The information requested on destinations is not readily available.

Training

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) if he will list the training programmes *(a)* administered by his Department using the Industry Acts and regional assistance provisions, *(b)* sponsored by the EEC social fund but administered by his Department, *(c)* sponsored by the Scottish Development Agency and *(d)* sponsored by the Manpower Services Commission;

(2) if he will give the total expenditure on all aspects of training programmes *(a)* administered by his Department, *(b)* sponsored by the EEC social fund, *(c)* provided by the Scottish Development Agency and *(d)* provided by the Manpower Services Commission;

(3) if he will give the total amount of expenditure on direct support for industrial training in the current year;

(4) if he will give the total number of *(a)* vacancies at job centres and *(b)* vacancies at careers offices in Scotland in each month between January 1987 and June 1988, inclusive;

(5) if he will give the total expenditure of the Manpower Services Commission in Scotland in each of the years 1979 to 1987, inclusive, and for each client group for each function of the commission.

Mr. Lang: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give *(a)* the total number of places being provided in the new adult training programme in Scotland and *(b)* an estimate of the number of people participating in the programme in each of the years 1988-89, 1989-90 and 1990-91.

Mr. Lang: We plan to provide some 41,000 employment training places in Scotland. With an average expected length of stay of 6 months this should mean provision for around 49,000 participants from September 1988 to March 1989, and around 84,000 participants in each of the two subsequent years.

Housing Allocations (Strathkelvin)

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will meet Strathkelvin district council to discuss the housing financial allocations for 1988-89; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland has no plans to meet the district council. On 31 May, in response to representations from the council, the Secretary of State offered a meeting with officials of the Scottish Development Department to discuss the issue in question; this offer has not been taken up.

Bed-and-breakfast Accommodation

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the number of people in bed-and-breakfast accommodation in Scotland paid for by public funds at the latest date for which statistics are available.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what are the latest figures for the number of people in bed-and-breakfast accommodation in Scotland.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: There are no overall figures for the number of persons in bed-and-breakfast accommodation paid out of public funds. However, it is estimated that the number of households placed in bed-and-breakfast accommodation under the provisions of the homeless persons legislation at 31 March 1988 for Scotland was approximately 230.

SHARPEN Report

Dr. Moonie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) when he will make the SHARPEN report available to the public;

(2) if he will make available forthwith the Scottish Health Service Planning Council's commentary to him on the SHARPEN report;

(3) when he will be in a position to give the Government's reaction to the recommendations of the Scottish Health Service Planning Council on the priorities to be adopted in the Scottish Health Service, as contained in the foreword to the SHARPEN report.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I have nothing to add to the statement I made on 16 June at column 208 in reply to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker).

Health Boards

Dr. Moonie: To ask the Secretay of State for Scotland with reference to Scottish Office circular NHS 1985 (GEN) 18, for the years 1985-86, 1986-87 and 1987-88, what were the indicative amounts for, and payments made by, each Scottish health board and in total for all boards in respect of support finance; and what are the indicative amounts for each board for 1988-89.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information is given in the following table:

£ millions

Board	*1985-86*		*1986-87*		*1987-88*		*1988-89*
	Indicative Level	*Payments*	*Indicative Level*	*Payments*	*Indicative Level*	*Payments*	*Indicative Level*
Argyll and Clyde	·273	·004	·284	·058	·295	·035	·308
Ayrshire and Arran	·227	·025	·237	·047	·246	·142	·257
Borders	·154	·273	·190	·097	·153	·103	·149
Dumfries and Galloway	·531	·469	·354	·283	·214	·112	·180
Fife	·540	·379	·331	·218	·301	·410	·285
Forth Valley	·404	·192	·473	·347	·421	·251	·221
Grampian	·507	·271	·522	·408	·621	·601	·511
Greater Glasgow	·795	·010	·832	·473	·873	·431	·897
Highland	1·094	·626	1·341	1·222	·626	·517	·510
Lanarkshire	·437	·126	·440	·117	·424	·145	·402
Lothian	·533	·108	·481	·539	·486	·707	·509
Orkney	·015	·025	·015	·015	·015	·011	·015
Shetland	·015	—	·016	·016	·017	·016	·017
Tayside	·313	·154	·396	·235	·368	·114	·361
Western Isles	·176	·192	·183	·150	·148	·140	·103
Total	6·015	2·854	6·095	4·225	5·208	3·735	4·725

Dr. Moonie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many memoranda of agreement between itself and other bodies has each health board submitted annually under paragraph 36 of Scottish Office circular NHS 1985 (GEN) 18; and what are the project titles.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information is as follows:

Memoranda of agreement

Year	*Health board*	*Body*	*Title*
1986	Greater Glasgow	Strathclyde Regional Council	East End mental health project—Easterhouse
1986	Greater Glasgow	Strathclyde Regional Council	Supported accommodation project
1986	Greater Glasgow	Strathclyde Regional Council	Joint care scheme
1986	Orkney	Orkney Islands Council	Day Centre/Hospital for the elderly—in Kirkwall
1986	Orkney	Orkney Islands Council	As above with link corridor to local authority residential home—in Stromness
Total = 5			
1987	Greater Glasgow	Strathclyde Regional Council	Fountainview Hostel (Quarrier's Homes)
1987	Lothian	WASP	Maintenance of existing service of 10 year duration for agoraphobics and others with severe anxiety problems
1987	Lothian	NUCLEUS	NUCLEUS—Counselling and support services for mentally handicapped children and their families
1987	Lothian	Scottish Council on Disability	Disability information dissemination in the Lothians
1987	Lothian	Edinburgh Association for Mental Health	Community Care
1987	Lothian	Granton Community Health Project	Granton Community Health Initiative
1987	Lothian	Garvald Training Centre	Garvald Community Enterprises
1987	Lothian	Lothian Play Forum	Special Needs Playscheme/Equipment
1987	Lothian	Disablement Income Group	Welfare Benefit Advisory Service in Hospitals
1987	Lothian	Craigshill Good Neighbour Network	Craigshill Daycentre for Confused Elderly, Livingston
1987	Lothian	St. Michael's Hospital Day Care Centre Committee	St. Michael's Hospital Day Care Centre
1987	Lothian	Southside Community Care Project	Pleasance Social Centre, Edinburgh
Total = 12			

Year	Health board	Body	Title
1988[1]	Ayrshire and Arran	Scottish Association for Mental Health (Supported Accommodation) Ltd.	Saltcoats Supported Accommodation
1988[1]	Ayrshire and Arran	Scottish Association for Mental Health (Supported Accommodation) Ltd.	Ayr Supported Accommodation
1988[1]	Lothian	Haddington and District Day Centre Committee	Haddington and District Day Centre
1988[1]	Lothian	Crossroads Care Attendant Scheme	Crossroads Care Attendant Scheme—Bathgate/Whitburn Area
1988[1]	Lothian	Midlothian Local Health Council	Midlothian Mental Health Project—Community Development Worker
Total = 5			

[1] To date.

Dr. Moonie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information is available in respect of jointly financed projects entered into under Scottish Office Circular NHS 1985 (GEN) 18, particularly the number, cost to the National Health Service and local authorities, types and distribution of projects.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: No information is available centrally from health boards. A study of local authority participation is in train but an analysis of the results has not yet been completed.

Licensing (Convictions)

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) how many convictions there have been in the last five years for which information is available for contraventions of section 2, section 7(3), section 19(1), section 29(2), section 33(4) and (5), section 34(3) and (6), section 36(3), section 38(4), section 41(1), section 41(3), section 50(6), and section 54(1)*(a)* and *(b)* of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 1976;

(2) how many convictions there have been in the last five years for which information is available for contraventions of section 57(7) and (8), section 58(7), section 58(8), section 59(7), section 64(6), section 68(1), (2), (3) and (5), section 69(1) and (2), section 70(1), section 72(1) and section 73(1) of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 1976;

(3) how many convictions there have been in the last five years for which information is available for contraventions of section 84, section 85, section 86, section 87(1)*(a)* and *(b)*, section 88, section 89, section 90*(a)*, *(b)* and *(c)*, section 91(1)*(a)* and *(b)*, section 91(2) and (3), section 92(1), section 92(2) and section 93 of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 1976;

(4) how many convictions there have been in the last five years for which information is available for contraventions of section 94(1), section 95, section 96*(a)*and *(b)*, section 97(1), (2), (3) and (4), section 98(1) and (2), section 99*(a)* and *(b)* of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 1976.

(5) how many convictions there have been in the last five years for which information is available for contraventions of section 100*(a)* and *(b)*, section 101(1) and (2), section 103, section 111, section 112(1) and (3), section 113, section 114(2), section 119 section 120(1) and (2), section 120(7), section 123(2) of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 1976.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The available information is given in the table. I regret that it is not possible to provide statistics in the precise format requested. Section 50(6) was repealed by the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Act 1981 and section 94(1) by the Finance Act 1981.

Number of persons with a charge proved under the Licensing (Scotland) Act 1976

Sections	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
54 and 83	57	35	39	24	29
57 and 95	1	4	3	8	—
68(1)	75	114	90	106	113
68(2)	136	103	77	116	130
68(3)	50	56	50	42	47
72 and 73	2	1	2	—	—
74	15	19	27	14	19
77	9	9	5	5	7
78(1) and 79	80	82	95	84	65
78(2)	2	—	2	2	2
81	—	—	1	—	1
82	—	5	—	2	—
87	1	1	1	1	—
90(a) and 90(b)	4	11	8	4	3
90(c)	4	2	2	1	3
92	15	6	9	4	1
97(2)	—	1	2	—	—
97(1), (3), (4) and 98 to 101	1	4	2	6	4
Other offences by licensees	37	27	20	10	15
Other offences (not licensee)	28	24	27	25	21

Notes:

1. Convictions under section 85 cannot be distinguished from other offences involving the obstruction of a constable in pursuance of his duty and are excluded from the table.
2. The category "other offences (not licensee)" may include convictions under the Licensed Premises (Exclusion of Certain Persons) Act 1980.

Health Services

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the figures in his reply of 12 July, *Official Report*, column *114*, as deflated by the health services pay and prices indices or the personal social services index as appropriate in the manner of his replies to the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) of 19 January 1987, *Official Report*, column *395-96*, and 14 November 1986, *Official Report*, column *397-98*.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: As I have already indicated to the hon. Member, most recently in a letter dated 30 March 1988, no separate index has been constructed which relates to the movement of pay and prices within the Health Service in Scotland. The Department of Health maintains indices for pay and price movements in England but the composition of expenditure on hospital and community

health services in Scotland—particularly the proportions accounted for by the various categories of staff costs—will differ from England; and on various items, such as rates and electricity, there tend to be marked variations in the changes in costs north and south of the border.

Rate Support Grant

Mr. Ron Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the rate support grant for Scotland *(a)* in 1978-79 and *(b)* in 1988-89, in 1988-89 money.

Mr. Lang: The total of rate support grant for Scotland was £2,232 million in 1978-79 and £2,038 million in 1988-89, both in 1988-89 prices.

Caledonian MacBrayne Ferries

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if his Department has been involved in any discussions with P and O Ltd. about the future of Caledonian Macbrayne ferries in connection with his plans to privatise the Scottish Transport Group.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I shall write to the hon. Member.

YTS and Community Programme

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the total number of places on the YTS and community programme in Scotland at the most recent date for which figures are available, broken down by local authority, nationalised industry, public sector, industry and commerce, voluntary sector and health boards.

Mr. Lang: The information is not available in the precise form requested. Figures for authorised places in Scotland at 30 June 1988 for YTS are given in table 1 and for community programme in table 2.

Table 1
YTS: Authorised Places at 30 June 1988

	Number
Local authorities and health boards	18,331
Other public sector (including nationalised industries and skillcentres)	1,399
Industry and commerce and other private sector	39,840
Voluntary sector	2,175
	61,745

Table 2
Community Programme: Authorised Places at 30 June 1988

	Number
Local authorities	20,650
Nationalised industries	130
Private sector	219
Voluntary sector	15,160
Health boards	204
	36,363

Scottish Homes (Chairman)

Sir Hector Monro: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he is able to announce his decision on the appointment of a chairman-designate of Scottish Homes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Rifkind: I am pleased to announce that, subject to parliamentary approval of the Housing (Scotland) Bill, I propose to appoint Sir James Mellon KCMG to be the first chairman of Scottish Homes. Sir James will serve as chairman-designate until the legislation is enacted and the provisions in part I of the Bill setting out the arrangements for the establishment of Scottish Homes are brought into force by commencement order. Thereafter, Sir James will be chairman for the period to 31 March 1993.

I am delighted that Sir James has accepted this appointment. I have no doubt that, as a Scot who has had a distinguished career in the diplomatic service, involving a special interest in commercial and industrial matters, he has the qualities necessary to ensure that Scottish Homes will make a major contribution to the provision of housing in Scotland and to the environmental and economic regeneration of Scotland.

South of Scotland Electricity Board

Mr. Bill Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what progress has been made by the South of Scotland electricity board in following up the report on the board by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission published in August 1986; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Rifkind: I have now received the second response of the SSEB to the MMC report published in August 1986. This describes progress and the steps taken by the board to meet the Commission's conclusions. I have placed copies in the Library. The board has responded in a constructive way to the MMC's recommendations and good progress has been made since my statement to the House on 7 April 1987 on the SSEB's initial response.

I am encouraged by the initiatives taken by the board to reduce its meter reading billing and collection costs and its level of outstanding debt by the introduction of power-card registers and special payment schemes. Tight cost reduction targets have been applied to the board's budgets, and at the same time the board has made significant progress with the quality assurance programme and in setting targets for quality of service in relation to electricity supplies. Good progress has also been made in drawing up an assessment system for allocating priorities and resources for distribution network refurbishment and in preparing an investment appraisal manual.

I am satisfied that the board has picked up and pursued the points that concerned me in its initial response particularly in relation to staffing surpluses and adjustments to the tariff structure. The board has, however, decided against setting separate targets for contracting and appliance retailing. I consider that in due course this will be a matter for the privatised company to determine in the light of its commercial judgment. Meantime, I am pleased to note the improved profitability of this part of the board's activities.

I am grateful to the MMC for a very helpful and constructive report. The action outlined in this response which has been taken by the board to implement the MMC's recommendations to improve performance and increase cost-effectiveness will stand the board in good stead as it prepares itself to operate successfully in the private sector.

Education (Expenditure)

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the total amount of expenditure on education by central Government and of education authorities in Scotland in cash and real terms in each of the years 1979 to 1987, inclusive.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* I shall write to the hon. Member.

SDA Investments

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list Scottish Development Agency investments in companies in *(a)* Scottish constituencies and *(b)* Scottish districts since November 1984.

Mr. Ian Lang *[holding answer 16 June 1988]:* Information on the number of companies in which the Scottish Development Agency has invested cannot be provided on a constituency and district basis without incurring disproportionate cost. However, the table sets out the total value of SDA investments by Scottish constituencies and districts over the four financial years 1984-85 to 1987-88.

Scottish Development Agency investments in companies by Scottish constituencies: 1984-1988

Constituency	*1984-85* £	*1985-86* £	*1986-87* £	*1987-88* £	*Total* £
Aberdeen North	246,000	51,000	30,000	30,000	357,000
Aberdeen South	144,000	320,000	15,000	43,000	522,000
Angus East	54,000	15,000	487,000	235,000	791,000
Argyll and Bute	57,000	—	55,000	75,000	187,000
Ayr	352,000	211,000	362,000	151,000	1,076,000
Banff and Buchan	322,000	151,000	15,000	305,000	793,000
Caithness and Sutherland	—	—	—	250,000	250,000
Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley	79,000	34,000	63,000	65,000	261,000
Clackmannan	30,000	—	—	20,000	50,000
Clydebank and Milngavie	64,000	117,000	65,000	59,000	305,000
Clydesdale	71,000	8,000	40,000	20,000	139,000
Cumbernauld and Kilsyth	256,000	247,000	25,000	120,000	648,000
Cunninghame North	371,000	35,000	30,000	113,000	549,000
Cunninghame South	12,000	50,000	10,000	1,055,000	1,127,000
Dumbarton	121,000	5,000	5,000	25,000	156,000
Dumfries	173,000	79,000	85,000	153,000	490,000
Dundee East	5,000	82,000	104,000	320,000	511,000
Dundee West	74,000	57,000	586,000	406,000	1,123,000
Dunfermline East	23,000	57,000	270,00	20,000	370,000
Dunfermline West	5,000	95,000	—	40,000	140,000
East Kilbride	88,000	67,000	330,000	971,000	1,456,000
East Lothian	48,000	150,000	344,000	213,000	755,000
Eastwood	—	—	250,000	24,000	274,000
Edinburgh Central	80,000	220,000	101,000	839,000	1,240,000
Edinburgh East	72,000	600,000	—	6,000	678,000
Edinburgh Leith	21,000	80,000	27,000	47,000	175,000
Edinburgh Pentlands	—	306,000	8,000	—	314,000
Edinburgh South	3,000	—	—	—	3,000
Edinburgh West	5,000	86,000	—	—	91,000
Falkirk East	6,000	—	162,000	76,000	244,000
Falkirk West	148,000	—	—	70,000	218,000
Fife Central	127,000	113,000	357,000	597,000	
Fife North East	—	5,000	41,000	261,000	307,000
Galloway and Upper Nithsdale	300,000	39,000	52,000	39,000	430,000
Glasgow Cathcart	—	30,000	—	—	30,000
Glasgow Central	442,000	373,000	191,000	295,000	1,301,000
Glasgow Garscadden	—	—	7,000	—	7,000
Glasgow Govan	1,000	35,000	110,000	32,000	178,000
Glasgow Hillhead	31,000	32,000	584,000	4,000	651,000
Glasgow Maryhill	9,000	—	—	10,000	19,000
Glasgow Pollok	—	—	47,000	30,000	77,000
Glasgow Provan	10,000	—	6,000	—	16,000
Glasgow Rutherglen	17,000	—	46,000	—	63,000
Glasgow Shettleston	—	15,000	38,000	72,000	125,000
Glasgow Springburn	502,000	—	—	—	502,000
Gordon	369,000	432,000	101,000	547,000	1,449,000
Greenock and Port Glasgow	10,000	134,000	10,000	—	154,000
Hamilton	39,000	193,000	10,000	70,000	312,000
Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber	—	—	—	395,000	395,000
Kilmarnock and Loudoun	273,000	32,000	200,000	27,000	532,000
Kincardine and Deeside	18,000	70,000	150,000	100,000	338,000
Kirkcaldy	57,000	6,000	48,000	51,000	162,000
Linlithgow	142,000	109,000	134,000	235,000	620,000
Livingston	18,000	800,000	1,101,000	586,000	2,505,000
Midlothian	371,000	72,000	134,000	37,000	614,000
Monklands East	49,000	4,000	125,000	151,000	329,000
Monklands West	—	—	10,000	50,000	60,000
Moray	—	20,000	—	25,000	45,000
Motherwell North	28,000	30,000	215,000	140,000	413,000

Constituency	1984-85 £	1985-86 £	1986-87 £	1987-88 £	Total £
Motherwell South	34,000	140,000	—	7,000	181,000
North Tayside	100,000	42,000	35,000	3,000	180,000
Orkney and Shetland	—	—	—	—	—
Paisley North	187,000	74,000	41,000	112,000	414,000
Paisley South	—	12,000	20,000	—	32,000
Perth and Kinross	74,000	221,000	124,000	97,000	516,000
Renfrew West and Inverclyde	72,000	72,000	13,000	8,000	165,000
Ross, Cromarty and Skye	—	—	—	—	—
Roxburgh and Berwickshire	30,000	90,000	82,000	148,000	350,000
Stirling	71,000	158,000	36,000	211,000	476,000
Strathkelvin and Bearsden	—	—	85,000	10,000	95,000
Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale	15,000	17,000	622,000	55,000	709,000
Western Isles	—	—	—	—	—

Scottish Development Agency investments in companies by Scottish Districts—1984-1988

District	1984-85 £	1985-86 £	1986-87 £	1987-88 £	Total £
Berwickshire	40,000	30,000	25,000	9,000	104,000
Ettrick and Lauderdale	5,000	—	608,000	55,000	668,000
Roxburgh	—	77,000	34,000	138,000	249,000
Tweeddale	—	—	—	—	—
Clackmannan	27,000	—	—	5,000	32,000
Falkirk	183,000	40,000	198,000	198,000	619,000
Stirling	45,000	108,000	—	159,000	312,000
Annandale and Eskdale	45,000	8,000	38,000	30,000	121,000
Nithsdale	348,000	57,000	48,000	83,000	536,000
Stewartry	43,000	—	10,000	53,000	106,000
Wigtown	40,000	54,000	40,000	26,000	160,000
Dunfermline	61,000	152,000	271,000	85,000	569,000
Kirkcaldy	191,000	6,000	161,000	389,000	747,000
North East Fife	—	8,000	41,000	255,000	304,000
Aberdeen City	390,000	366,000	30,000	530,000	1,316,000
Banff and Buchan	322,000	146,000	15,000	305,000	788,000
Gordon	369,000	433,000	100,000	47,000	949,000
Kincardine and Deeside	58,000	85,000	165,000	143,000	451,000
Moray	—	25,000	—	25,000	50,000
Badenoch and Strathspey	—	—	—	—	—
Caithness	—	—	—	250,000	250,000
Inverness	—	—	—	225,000	225,000
Lochaber	—	—	—	170,000	170,000
Nairn	—	—	—	—	—
Ross and Cromarty	—	—	—	—	—
Skye and Lochalsh	—	—	—	—	—
Sutherland	—	—	—	—	—
East Lothian	30,000	137,000	353,000	193,000	713,000
Edinburgh City	235,000	1,321,000	126,000	892,000	2,574,000
Midlothian	358,000	43,000	121,000	12,000	534,000
West Lothian	136,000	922,000	1,248,000	894,000	3,200,000
Argyll and Bute	53,000	—	—	75,000	128,000
Bearsden and Milngavie	—	—	—	10,000	10,000
Clydebank	68,000	117,000	65,000	59,000	309,000
Clydesdale	92,000	8,000	40,000	78,000	218,000
Cumbernauld and Kilsyth	256,000	237,000	25,000	120,000	638,000
Cumnock and Doon Valley	83,000	10,000	63,000	32,000	188,000
Cunninghame	718,000	85,000	42,000	1,160,000	2,005,000
Dumbarton	73,000	5,000	5,000	25,000	108,000
East Kilbride	88,000	67,000	330,000	971,000	1,456,000
Eastwood	4,000	—	297,000	24,000	325,000
Glasgow City	1,002,000	456,000	961,000	471,000	2,890,000
Hamilton	18,000	193,000	10,000	20,000	241,000
Inverclyde	25,000	134,000	10,000	—	169,000
Kilmarnock and Loudoun	268,000	16,000	200,000	27,000	511,000
Kyle and Carrick	8,000	271,000	350,000	184,000	813,000
Monklands	52,000	4,000	155,000	201,000	412,000
Motherwell	62,000	170,000	215,000	147,000	594,000
Renfrew	260,000	186,000	94,000	77,000	617,000
Strathkelvin	53,000	10,000	85,000	—	148,000
Angus	14,000	25,000	502,000	225,000	766,000
Dundee City	39,000	139,000	685,000	736,000	1,599,000
Perth and Kinross	174,000	285,000	148,000	100,000	707,000
Orkney	—	—	—	—	—
Shetland	—	—	—	—	—
Western Isles	—	—	—	—	—

Labour Statistics

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the total number of long-term unemployed leaving the register in Scotland and in each travel-to-work area for each month between January 1987 and June 1988 inclusive.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 21 July 1988]:* The number of claimants who had been unemployed for over 52 weeks and left the count in Scotland and in each travel-to-work area for each month between January 1987 and June 1988, excluding those whose departure was recorded manually, is shown in the following tables. Complete monthly totals on a Scotland and travel-to-work area basis could be obtained only at dispropoftionate cost.

This information is available in the Library.

Claimants unemployed for more than 52 weeks leaving the count (excluding manually recorded departures)

TTWA	1987 January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Aberdeen	123	184	176	172	320	256	321	338	338	333	405	244
Alloa	42	81	54	52	85	60	65	70	98	100	80	58
Annan	25	24	21	27	38	21	27	30	30	32	36	21
Arbroath	20	38	30	24	38	32	55	30	56	41	58	50
Ayr	78	151	133	120	197	127	149	205	151	149	194	100
Badenoch	12	17	13	14	18	16	13	14	6	11	23	6
Banff	12	14	16	15	24	11	18	23	31	25	22	22
Bathgate	88	204	201	169	253	179	225	314	321	275	303	159
Berwickshire	4	13	14	17	32	11	19	17	22	7	23	18
Blairgowrie and Pitlochry	15	39	26	34	39	36	39	36	33	20	35	24
Brechin and Montrose	16	23	23	29	34	22	30	48	38	45	44	23
Buckie	8	14	9	11	20	7	15	10	18	12	12	12
Campbeltown	9	17	17	10	23	14	14	20	21	20	12	17
Crieff	5	15	6	7	8	7	4	12	12	9	14	6
Cumnock and Sanquhar	46	106	89	77	122	75	80	99	100	91	96	56
Dumbarton	67	124	114	72	132	74	117	158	160	132	164	64
Dumfries	43	70	71	51	80	56	53	64	80	62	68	50
Dundee	180	336	298	256	368	347	370	308	410	376	469	244
Dunfermline	95	226	157	166	231	145	194	196	197	197	213	128
Dunoon and Bute	8	30	31	30	32	32	23	27	22	31	28	25
Edinburgh	469	825	650	524	842	658	712	919	818	944	962	547
Elgin	32	38	37	30	63	39	52	45	61	62	67	29
Falkirk	138	237	267	230	268	245	226	299	239	287	300	187
Forfar	8	19	22	17	29	44	34	40	41	28	35	24
Forres	11	14	13	12	21	18	12	17	16	19	22	13
Fraserburgh	12	15	14	13	23	13	19	20	27	20	26	15
Galashiels	16	31	16	25	41	26	21	25	36	29	38	23
Girvan	11	17	15	20	19	16	17	24	28	15	17	4
Glasgow	1,189	2,692	2,091	1,726	2,801	2,100	2,598	2,681	2,872	2,665	2,929	1,734
Greenock	101	231	186	163	260	212	179	271	256	217	294	147
Haddington	10	21	17	21	46	19	33	40	43	29	34	13
Hawick	8	22	17	26	24	10	22	12	27	23	24	7
Huntly	5	12	8	4	12	5	11	12	6	13	14	7
Invergordon and Dingwall	29	49	51	71	103	71	62	101	77	52	72	36
Inverness	38	109	109	95	123	114	101	126	129	110	127	84
Irvine	116	271	272	199	275	240	199	291	297	291	306	181
Islay/Mid Argyll	6	18	16	21	14	15	13	21	9	10	14	12
Keith	10	9	11	11	18	14	10	21	13	15	9	9
Kelso and Jedburgh	8	16	7	10	12	7	5	6	14	11	14	6
Kilmarnock	63	139	103	112	135	114	94	133	202	165	171	100
Kirkcaldy	157	255	212	186	303	223	252	253	347	254	337	198
Lanarkshire	346	781	566	527	927	737	725	836	925	770	894	560
Lochaber	27	29	22	32	57	32	32	35	23	28	22	23
Lockerbie	11	14	12	8	18	9	12	15	15	7	16	9
Newton Stewart	11	16	22	14	16	11	13	23	9	18	11	10
North East Fife	27	55	35	33	60	35	37	51	40	50	50	34
Oban	16	12	14	24	33	28	25	31	14	18	16	14
Orkney Islands	12	21	11	19	29	17	17	24	21	20	15	7
Peebles	9	18	12	12	6	8	11	12	11	11	6	12
Perth	56	71	64	58	92	71	87	89	94	75	90	51
Peterhead	17	40	32	36	41	41	57	51	43	49	38	35
Shetland Islands	12	17	16	21	25	13	16	18	12	15	22	15
Skye and Wester Ross	8	16	18	23	32	26	24	20	17	17	15	13
Stewartry	15	30	29	18	34	21	26	25	24	33	17	9
Stirling	53	106	88	76	124	93	93	135	125	128	127	77
Stranraer	18	38	25	31	29	29	22	38	47	20	47	28
Sutherland	9	10	15	10	21	17	22	20	22	13	12	6
Thurso	7	28	10	15	26	8	17	16	19	11	16	9
Western Isles	15	70	47	39	44	37	21	52	38	37	40	34
Wick	5	8	10	20	28	9	13	9	10	10	14	13
Scotland	4,007	8,146	6,681	5,885	9,168	6,973	7,773	8,876	9,211	8,557	9,579	5,662

Claimants unemployed for more than 52 weeks leaving the count (excluding manually recorded departures)

TTWA	1988 January	February	March	April	May	June
Aberdeen	252	271	295	331	242	202
Alloa	58	98	86	79	80	63
Annan	26	28	22	34	29	31
Arbroath	27	35	32	23	37	28
Ayr	104	111	135	175	142	144
Badenoch	12	10	7	19	11	13
Banff	12	24	21	28	22	30
Bathgate	163	181	222	192	149	163
Berwickshire	5	7	5	17	12	10
Blairgowrie and Pitlochry	24	26	19	27	12	29
Brechin and Montrose	23	41	35	32	27	33
Buckie	16	4	6	16	17	14

TTWA	1988					
	January	*February*	*March*	*April*	*May*	*June*
Campbeltown	12	26	14	15	14	26
Crieff	4	11	12	4	6	6
Cumnock and Sanquhar	72	81	75	127	108	95
Dumbarton	77	136	122	119	96	115
Dumfries	38	57	32	60	50	50
Dundee	283	343	347	292	242	295
Dunfermline	141	179	150	193	149	174
Dunoon and Bute	16	24	28	39	19	26
Edinburgh	630	744	803	869	694	653
Elgin	32	21	20	42	30	34
Falkirk	200	277	240	277	222	217
Forfar	14	23	26	41	21	28
Forres	14	9	8	23	13	12
Fraserburgh	22	11	19	16	15	16
Galashiels	20	18	20	23	17	16
Girvan	10	19	21	19	17	24
Glasgow	1,912	2,141	2,246	2,748	2,043	2,086
Greenock	162	173	181	187	166	173
Haddington	18	22	18	30	18	28
Hawick	11	15	13	25	21	25
Huntly	12	4	6	19	8	8
Invergordon and Dingwall	31	49	52	62	41	78
Inverness	78	95	88	111	139	110
Irvine	212	244	230	282	206	230
Islay-Mid Argyll	6	12	14	24	22	9
Keith	9	5	7	14	13	14
Kelso and Jedburgh	12	13	11	17	8	22
Kilmarnock	97	131	111	178	95	92
Kirkcaldy	187	276	190	224	175	221
Lanarkshire	565	630	690	739	736	739
Lochaber	22	30	11	36	28	43
Lockerbie	10	8	10	12	12	7
Newton Stewart	12	8	9	25	25	13
North East Fife	30	51	36	33	36	35
Oban	14	19	17	24	22	20
Orkney Islands	19	12	12	26	20	22
Peebles	9	11	5	13	20	12
Perth	45	50	53	89	55	73
Peterhead	39	33	40	34	26	36
Shetland Islands	14	19	18	15	17	22
Skye and Wester Ross	8	14	11	21	17	27
Stewarty	23	25	23	22	15	19
Stirling	81	97	82	100	107	113
Stranraer	25	26	27	61	31	30
Sutherland	10	7	5	16	14	15
Thurso	7	7	20	12	18	20
Western Isles	32	25	43	49	38	39
Wick	10	16	21	7	17	30
SCOTLAND	6,029	7,083	7,122	8,387	6,702	6,958

Departmental Staff

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list for 1979, 1984 and the most recent year the numbers of staff by grade in the statistical divisions in his Department; if he will differentiate between staff in the statistical posts and staff in administrative posts; and if he will give separate figures for the General Register Office of Scotland.

Mr. Rifkind *[holding answer 21 July 1988]*: The information is set out in the tables:

Scottish Office

	1979	*1984*	*1988*
Professional grades			
Grade 5	2	2	2
Grade 7	10	12	13
Asst./Senior Asst. Statistician	13	10	10
Administrative grades			
Senior Executive Officer	2	2	—
Higher Executive Officer	9	6	7
Executive Officer	25	27	24
Administrative Officer	57	49	49
Administrative Assistant	22	23	23
Personal Secretary	2	2	2
Total	142	133	130

General Register Office for Scotland

	1979	*1984*	*1988*
Professional grades			
Grade 5	1	—	—
Grade 7	3	2	3
Assistant Statistician	1	—	—
Administrative grades			
Grade 7	1	1	1
Senior Executive Officer	5	—	2
Higher Executive Officer	12	5	6
Executive Officer	17	7	9
Administrative Officer	60	26	26
Administrative Assistant	4	5	3
Total	104	46	50

National Health Service Expenditure

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish a table showing total Scottish Health Service costs for each year from 1974-75 to 1986-87, including revenue expenditure, capital expenditure and expenditure on primary care; and if he will give a breakdown of this figure by health board.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 26 July 1988]:* The information requested is set out in the tables. Table 1 gives a breakdown of expenditure in cash terms in the form requested. Table 2 shows the amounts spent by individual health boards over the same period.

Table 1
Gross expenditure in the National Health Service in Scotland

£ million cash

	Total National Health Service expenditure	*Total revenue expenditure*[1]	*Total capital expenditure*[1]	*Family practitioner services expenditure*
1974-75	453	340	33	80
1975-76	596	445	42	109
1976-77	676	505	42	129
1977-78	768	580	43	145
1978-79	882	659	56	167
1979-80	1,053	790	66	197
1980-81	1,330	1,017	67	246
1981-82	1,519	1,145	93	281
1982-83	1,648	1,224	102	322
1983-84	1,758	1,303	108	347
1984-85	1,885	1,387	118	380
1985-86	1,997	1,465	132	400
1986-87	2,126	1,572	116	438

[1] Expenditure on hospital and community health services and on centrally financed services.

Table 2
Total Health Board Expenditure (Income and Expenditure basis—per annual accounts)

£'000

Health Board	*1974-75*	*1975-76*	*1976-77*	*1977-78*	*1978-79*	*1979-80*	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*
Argyll and Clyde	32,889	44,010	49,042	55,215	66,257	79,934	96,138	113,284	122,350	132,917	136,727	141,365	154,606
Ayrshire and Arran	22,072	28,691	32,269	37,531	43,290	50,071	63,468	75,068	83,274	89,093	96,790	104,286	115,301
Borders	6,312	8,576	10,004	11,437	13,089	14,930	19,542	22,907	25,419	27,825	34,170	37,946	36,414
Dumfries and Galloway	11,516	14,640	16,507	17,878	20,398	24,641	31,566	35,444	39,092	41,950	45,980	49,026	53,709
Fife	20,200	26,901	30,340	34,267	39,836	47,860	60,041	70,870	79,172	83,578	90,364	95,601	104,118
Forth Valley	18,746	25,212	28,759	32,576	37,848	44,492	56,992	65,037	71,993	75,567	85,579	95,960	105,563
Grampian	36,385	48,467	54,166	60,917	70,733	83,185	110,133	120,031	130,279	140,170	150,652	163,292	177,216
Greater Glasgow	112,621	150,297	169,522	188,260	217,150	257,840	324,710	364,281	387,188	408,127	438,034	462,591	487,780
Highland	15,179	21,241	23,807	27,229	31,800	39,191	50,761	57,980	61,012	66,500	69,736	73,673	79,455
Lanarkshire	34,420	46,424	53,526	60,426	68,753	82,465	104,566	117,609	130,399	138,785	150,936	159,560	173,438
Lothian	66,268	89,268	101,618	117,454	134,069	156,298	194,946	229,279	248,934	260,773	276,097	293,671	318,402
Orkney	1,100	1,504	1,657	1,912	2,406	2,723	3,431	4,077	4,367	4,894	5,235	5,520	5,852
Shetland	1,168	1,703	1,962	2,141	2,581	3,488	4,464	4,989	6,790	6,358	6,461	6,837	7,432
Tayside	41,664	55,044	62,395	68,925	79,193	92,795	119,718	130,440	139,313	147,606	156,200	163,453	177,530
Western Isles	1,842	2,823	2,958	3,408	4,455	4,941	6,187	7,083	7,960	8,619	9,503	10,385	11,110
Total	422,382	564,801	638,532	719,576	831,858	984,854	1,246,662	1,417,479	1,537,542	1,632,762	1,752,464	1,863,166	2,007,926

Footnote: Figures represent total expenditure by health boards only (on hospital and community health and on family practitioner services) and do not therefore correspond to the totals given in Table 1.

Social Science Research

Mr. George: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much has been spent by his Department in each of the past five years on social science research; what percentage this constitutes of total departmental expenditure and of the Department's research budget; and how much of the research has been undertaken *(a)* within his Department, *(b)* by universities and polytechnics and *(c)* by independent research organisations.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* The information is as follows:

Gross expenditure on R and D: Scottish departments

£ million

	1982-83	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*
R and D on social science and humanities[1]	1·4	1·4	[2]5·3	4·9	5·1
Percentage of departments' total research budget	(3·3)	(3·0)	(9·9)	(9·1)	(9·5)
Percentage of total departmental expenditure	(0·02)	(0·02)	(0·07)	(0·07)	(0·07)
Performed by:					
a. Scottish departments	0·8	0·9	1·1	0·6	0·6
b. Higher education institutions	0·4	0·4	2·9	2·5	2·7
c. Industrial research associations and non-industrial research institutes	0·01	—	0·9	1·5	1·6

Notes:

[1] The available information including elements performed elsewhere in Central Government and embraces the humanities as well as social science.

[2] Figures from 1984-85 reflect inclusion of R and D funded mainly by the Scottish Education Department which was not recorded in earlier years as part of this survey.

DEFENCE

Self-loading Military Rifles

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has as to whether any rifle competitions were fired at Bisley in the current year in which self-loading military rifles were used by competitors.

Mr. Freeman: Bisley ranges are the property of the National Rifle Association. All service rifle meetings held at Bisley use self-loading rifles. The use by civilians of the ranges is a matter for the National Rifle Association.

Transport

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will consider the privatisation of the services' facilities for the transport of goods in the United Kingdom other than are required by fighting formations at divisional level and below; and if he will include in the *Official Report* a table showing the numbers of goods vehicles owned by each service which are not in the excluded category, the number of officers and other ranks in each grade in each service required to manage, operate and service them, the total cost including all administrative overheads, pension provision, and so on, the tonnage of goods moved and the all-in cost per ton-mile of the goods transported.

Mr. Freeman: Work is currently in hand to examine the cost effectiveness of the freight distribution systems which are operated and manned by the services in the United Kingdom to see what further improvements might be made. This includes a review of the costs of operating these systems which will take some time to complete. In the meantime, the financial and operating information is not available in the form requested. In due course we plan to examine the feasibility of seeking commercial bids for the operation of part or all of the systems.

City of London (Land Holdings)

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the area in square metres of the land owned and occupied by his Department in the City of London; how much of this is open space; and what is its estimated value for office development.

Mr. Freeman: The Ministry of Defence does not own any land in the City of London.

Salisbury Plain

Sir Charles Morrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will give details of any plans or proposals he has for increasing the size of the Salisbury plain training area.

Mr. Freeman: It is Ministry of Defence policy to purchase suitable additional land which becomes available to improve the Salisbury plain training area, and specific proposals would be discussed with the local planning authority at the time; no proposals are at present the subject of such consultation. We look carefully at opportunities, when presented, to add land to the training area to provide buffer zones to separate training and private land and these continue to be let for agriculture.

Greenham Common

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether any compensation is envisaged to the people of Newbury for the permanent loss of common land at Royal Air Force Greenham Common as a public recreational area in the event of compulsory extinction of commoners' rights.

Mr. Freeman: Compensation will be payable to those whose rights of common are being legally extinguished at RAF Greenham Common. The general public have no right of access to the land concerned, the freehold of which is held by the Secretary of State for Defence.

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what repair work to fences and structures on common land at Royal Air Force Greenham Common is currently being undertaken.

Mr. Freeman: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister of State for the Armed Forces on 13 July 1988 at column *238*. In accordance with normal procedures, maintenance and repair work to the fences and structures at Royal Air Force Greenham Common is undertaken as and when necessary.

Service Personnel (NHS)

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will make it his policy to use National Health Service facilities for the medical examination and treatment of service personnel in the United Kingdom; and if he will include in the *Official Report* a table showing for each hospital or other medical establishment in each service the number of officers and other ranks by grade needed to manage, operate and service them, the total cost including all administrative overheads, pension provision and so on, the throughput in terms of the number of hospital bed-nights and out-patients treated, and any other measure of productivity used in the National Health Service.

Mr. Freeman: No. Service men will continue to be treated in service hospitals as part of the hospitals staff training for their war role. I refer the hon. Member to the information given in the "Statement on the Defence Estimate 1988 (2)" sections 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3.

Defence Act 1854

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he will answer the question tabled for ordinary written answer on 10 June by the hon. Member for Leyton on the subject of use of the Defence Act 1854 by his Department since 1979.

Mr. Freeman: I apologise to the hon. Member for the delay in answering his question which was due to an administrative oversight. The question has now been answered.

Trident

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the consequences for the British Trident programme of the latest failure of a United States Trident missile.

Mr. Sainsbury: There are no consequences for the British Trident programme as a result of the most recent Trident D5 missile flight failure in the United States. This was only the second failure in 13 launches. This continues to represent a very high success rate for such a development programme. The cause of the failure is under investigation by the United States authorities and their initial view is that there will be little effect on the United States Trident II missile test programme.

Fylingdales

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will give *(a)* the date of commencement of works on the phased array radar to be built at Fylingdales, *(b)* the expected date of completion of these works and *(c)* the expected date of start of operations of the phased array radar at Fylingdales.

Mr. Freeman: On present plans work on the modernisation of the ballistic missile early warning system at RAF Fylingdales should start on site in mid 1989 and finish in mid 1991. The modernised radar should be operational by autumn 1992.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what unit of United States Space Command is responsible for collating the information obtained by the Fylingdales ballistic missile early warning station in its role as part of the space surveillance network.

Mr. Hamilton: Collation of this information is carried out in the space surveillance centre at Cheyenne Mountain air force station, Colorado Springs, a unit of United States Space Command.

Space Tracking and Communications Systems

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what are the connections between the deep space tracking station proposed for construction at RAF Feltwell and the United States Milstar communications system.

Mr. Freeman: I understand there is no connection between the United States Milstar communications system and the deep space tracking station to be built at RAF Feltwell.

AE Services Ltd.

Mrs. Golding: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the rôle played by AE Services Ltd. on the promotion of the sale of Westland W30 helicopters with the assistance of his Department.

Mr. Sainsbury: My Department has had no dealings with AE Services Ltd. in relation to the sale of Westland W30 helicopters.

F111 Aircraft (Noise)

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the total number of representations received since 1985 on the noise levels of F111 United States air force planes at bases in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Freeman: Records are not maintained in a way which would enable us to provide a list of the total number of representations which have been received concerning the noise specifically of F111 aircraft since 1985.

Non-British Service Men (Training)

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the total number of non-British service men undergoing training at Her Majesty's defence establishment per country each year since 1979.

Mr. Freeman: This information is confidential between Her Majesty's Government and the Governments of the countries concerned.

Saudi Arabia

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what conditions of use have been put on the planes to be supplied to Saudi Arabia under the recently approved sales deal.

Mr. Sainsbury: I will write to the hon. Member.

Chile (Royal Navy Visits)

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many visits to Chilean ports have been made by Royal Navy vessels in each year since 1979.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Royal Navy vessels have made the following number of visits to Chilean ports in each year since 1979:

Year	*Visits*
1979-1981	Nil
1982	1
1983	4
1984	1
1985	3
1986	4
1987	3
1988 (to date)	4

Nuclear Submarines (Purchase)

Mr. Terry Fields: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has on the progress of negotiations with the Canadian Government on the purchase from VSEL Nuclear Submarines of Trafalgar class vessels; when he expects any deal to be concluded; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: I understand that the Canadian Government are still considering the options for purchasing nuclear-powered submarines. We continue to believe that the Trafalgar class vessels meet the Canadian operational requirement in all key respects.

KMS

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what part his Department has played in procuring or assisting in the publication of advertisements for KMS.

Mr. Sainsbury: I will write to the hon. Member.

Search and Rescue (RAF Brawdy)

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will give details of *(a)* the number of

callouts, *(b)* the number of military personnel rescued and *(c)* the number of civilian personnel rescued, in 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987 and in 1988 to date by the search and rescue detachment based at RAF Brawdy, Pembrokeshire.

Mr. Freeman: I will write to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

United States Forces (Exercises)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many members of United States forces will be involved in the home defence exercises to be held in September and October; and for what purposes.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I will write to the hon. Member.

Nuclear Weapons (Definition)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will give his Department's general definition of *(a)* tactical, *(b)* sub-strategic and *(c)* strategic with reference to nuclear weapons; and if he will indicate how those definitions apply to (i) tactical air-to-surface missiles, (ii) short range attack missiles, (iii) stand-off missiles, (iv) air-launched cruise missiles and (v) strategic air launched cruise missiles.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I will write to the hon. Member.

West Queensway

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence why his Department did not arrange for a Treasury minute to be laid before Parliament before the transfer took place of West Queensway to the Government of Gibraltar.

Mr. Freeman: As part of the 1983 agreement on the transfer of the dockyard to the Government of Gibraltar, which the then Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement announced in the House on 27 July 1983, it was agreed that to aid economic development and diversification, an area of West Queensway (comprising some 4¼ acres including the NAAFI HQ, Imperial Court, the PSA exchange stores, the Army Watermanship training centre and the Queensway Club) would be transferred once the MOD facilities had been reprovided. Difficulties arose over the proposal to release the area and protracted negotiations with the Government of Gibraltar then followed before agreement upon mutually acceptable terms were reached earlier this year. The MOD facilities have been reprovided, the area was transferred on 1 June 1988 in line with the 1983 agreement.

The area is of no realisable value to the Ministry of Defence as, under the terms of the 1983 Lands Memorandum, surplus Crown land and property (with the exception of property which is less than 60 years old) is to be transferred to the Government of Gibraltar free of charge. Nevertheless, this case is of an unusual nature and my Department should have followed the normal practice for notifying Parliament of proposals to make such gifts. The practice in such cases is for the Department proposing to make the gift to arrange with the Treasury for a Minute to be presented to the House of Commons giving particulars of the gift and explaining the circumstances; and for assent to the gift to be withheld until 14 days (exclusive of Saturdays and Sundays) after the issue of the Minute, except in cases of special urgency.

I very much regret that the Ministry of Defence did not follow the correct procedure in this case, but nevertheless went ahead with the gift. A Minute covering the remaining areas of the gun and ordnance wharves, the transfer of which will complete the purchase, will be laid before the House immediately after the summer recess.

COBRA Project

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will make a statement on his most recent discussions with Dr. Scholz, the Defence Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany, about the COBRA project; and whether he is now in a position to announce the initiation of the development phase of this programme.

Mr. Sainsbury: I will write to my hon. Friend.

Gibraltar Inquest

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement about the attendance of security forces witnesses at the forthcoming inquest in Gibraltar.

Mr. Younger: All concerned wish to co-operate as fully as possible with the coroner. At the same time the Government have a responsibility to ensure that the personal security of witnesses is not put at risk. A final decision whether or not the witnesses should be advised to attend the inquest will be taken immediately before the inquest opens in the light of an up-to-date assessment of the security risk. At present, however, the intention of Her Majesty's Government and of witnesses is that they will go.

Sea Cadet Missiles

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will make a request for information or clarification as to the sale of Sea Cadet missiles overseas; and whether he will seek undertakings from the shippers of Sea Cadet missiles that such missiles have not arrived in the hands of Soviet interests.

Mr. Alan Clark: I have been asked to reply.

I have no knowledge of Sea Cadet missiles. It is not the practice to obtain undertakings in respect of goods which have already been shipped. Any diversion of strategically controlled exports from the United Kingdom to an embargoed destination which comes to the attention of Her Majesty's Government would be investigated.

Low Flying

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many hours of low-flying operations were carried out over the United Kingdom, West Germany and other countries in each of the last five years; how many hours have been carried out over the Falklands during the same period; how many accidents have occurred during those exercises, leading to how many fatalities; and what plans there are to increase flights over the United Kingdom and the Falklands as a means of reducing flights over Germany.

Mr. Freeman *[holding answer 24 May 1988]:* Low flying activity is mainly recorded by sorties (which on average last 42 minutes) rather than by hours. The numbers of low-level training sorties flown by British

military aircraft (both fixed wing and helicopter) over the United Kingdom in each of the last five years were as follows:

Year	Sorties
1983	118,920
1984	109,244
1985	115,063
1986	123,488
1987	123,293

Figures for low-flying training sorties carried out in the Federal Republic of Germany are not available prior to 1984. Those for 1984 onwards are as follows, but are not directly comparable with the above because they do not include helicopter sorties which, in Germany, are not centrally recorded.

Year	Sorties
1984	18,752
1985	18,124
1986	16,853
1987	15,900

Central records of low-flying sortie numbers in other countries are not kept.

During the five years in question there have been 51 major accidents involving Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force aircraft operating at low level in which 53 military personnel have been killed

Most low-flying activity by United Kingdom military aircraft takes place in the United Kingdom, although RAF aircraft based in the Federal Republic of Germany do a significant amount of training there. Low-flying training also takes place in the USA and Canada, where the majority of ultra low flying is carried out, and in other NATO countries. The distribution of low-flying training is carefully balanced according to training needs, costs and other practical considerations. There are no current plans to alter this balance.

Commoners' Rights

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the occasions since 1979 that his Department has used, or has sought to use, the powers contained within the Defence Act 1854 to bring about the legal extinction of commoners' rights.

Mr. Freeman *[holding answer 16 June 1988]:* The need to extinguish commoners' rights under the Defence Act 1854 has arisen at various times but only on one occasion since 1979, at RAF Greenham Common.

Departmental Advertising

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what was the total spending by his Department on press, public relations and advertising, respectively, in 1987-88;

(2) what was the total spending by the armed forces on press, public relations and advertising, respectively, in 1987-88;

(3) what is the latest figure for the estimated expenditure by his Department on press and public relations during 1988-89;

(4) what is the estimated expenditure by each of the armed forces on press and public relations during 1988-89.

Mr. Archie Hamilton *[holding answer 21 July 1988]:* The Ministry of Defence spent £6,980,000 on press and public relations in 1987-88 and our estimated expenditure in 1988-89 is £7,316,000. These figures include staffing costs and expenditure on films, exhibitions, publications and equipment, and cover expenditure on single-service activities as well as on central defence work. The information requested on advertising expenditure is not held centrally, and I shall write to the hon. Member.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Provisional IRA (Document)

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) of 23 June, *Official Report*, columns *658-59*, any inaccuracies in the background brief entitled "The Provisional IRA—International Contacts Outside the United States" have been acknowledged by Her Majesty's Government; whether any apologies have been made in this respect; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: We have accepted certain assurances from two individuals named in the background brief and undertook that any further copies of the brief which may be issued in future will be amended to take account of the objections raised.

Departmental Activity

Mr. George: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many memoranda by his Department have been submitted to *(a)* the Foreign Affairs Committee and *(b)* other Select Committees so far this Session; and if he will itemise which other Committees have been in receipt of such memoranda.

Mrs. Chalker: Memoranda have been submitted as follows:

	Memo's
(a) Foreign Affairs Committee	26
(b) Other Select Committees:-	5
(i) Defence Committee	3
(ii) Treasury and Civil Service Committees	2

Mr George: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many Bills were sponsored by his Department in the Session 1986-87 and so far in the present Session; and if he will state which Bills and on what date they received Royal Assent.

Mrs. Chalker: The FCO sponsored the following Bills in the last two Sessions:

1986-87

Territorial Sea Bill
Diplomatic and Consular Premises Bill
Irish Sailors and Soldiers Land Trust Bill

All of these became Acts; they received the Royal Assent on 15 May 1987.

1987-1988

Arms Control and Disarmament (Privileges and Immunities) Bill
Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency Bill

These received the Royal Assent on 9 February 1988 and 24 March respectively.

Mr. George: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many *(a)* oral

statements, *(b)* answers to private notice questions and *(c)* statutory instruments have emanated from his Department in the present Session.

Mrs. Chalker: Figures are as follows:

		Number
(a)	Oral statements	3
(b)	Private notice questions	6
(c)	Statutory instruments (including SIs made in the last session and laid before Parliament in the current session)	66

Mr. George: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many parliamentary questions have been answered by Ministers in his Department in the Session 1987-88 so far.

Mrs. Chalker: Records indicate that 3,285 parliamentary questions have been answered in the Session 1987-88 so far.

Mr. George: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many times witnesses from his Department, other than Ministers, have appeared before Select Committees for this Session: and if he will identify the Committees, date, subject and the grade of witnesses.

Mrs. Chalker: The information is as follows:

Committee	*Date*	*Subject*	*Grade*
Public Accounts	16 December 1987	Manpower Element of Technical Cooperation	HCS 1A HCS 3 × 2 HCS 5
Foreign Affairs	27 January 1988	Arms Control and Disarmament	DS 4 HCS 3 HCS 5 × 2
Foreign Affairs	3 February 1988	Famine in the Horn of Africa	HCS 6
Foreign Affairs	10 February 1988	The Iran/Iraq Conflict	DS 4
Public Accounts	15 February 1988	BAOR	DS Senior Grade
Defence	17 February 1988	Belize	DS Senior Grade HCS 5
Foreign Affairs	30 March 1988	Famine in the Horn of Africa	HCS 6 DS Senior Grade × 3
Foreign Affairs	13 April 1988	FCO Estimates	DS 4 DS 5 HCS 1A
Foreign Affairs	20 April 1988	Supply Estimates 1988-89	HCS 3 × 2 HCS 5 × 2
Foreign Affairs	4 May 1988	Famine in the Horn of Africa	HCS 3 HCS 5 × 3

Mr. George: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many times he and Ministers from his Department have appeard before Select Committees so far this Session; and if he will identify the Committees, the date, the ministerial witness and the subject.

Mrs. Chalker:

Committee	*Date*	*Witness*	*Subject*
Foreign Affairs	27 January 1988	Secretary of State Sir Geoffrey Howe	Arms Control the Iran-Iraq Conflict
Foreign Affairs	10 February 1988	Mr. D. Mellor	The Iran-Iraq Conflict
Foreign Affairs	30 March	Mr. C. Patten	Famine in the Horn of Africa
Foreign Affairs	20 April	Mr. D. Mellor	The Iran-Iraq Conflict
Foreign Affairs	15 June	Mr. D. Mellor	Famine in the Horn of Africa

Mr. George: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many full and part-time staff are engaged in parliamentary liaison for his Department.

Mrs. Chalker: Twelve persons are engaged in parliamentary liaison work.

Mr. George: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many delegations he and his ministerial colleagues received from *(a)* hon. Members and *(b)* groups which contained hon. Members in the last parliamentary Session.

Mr. Waldegrave: The details requested are as follows:
(a) 169
(b) 84

Mr. George: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many letters he and his ministerial colleagues wrote to right hon. and hon. Members in the parliamentary Session 1987-88.

Mr. Waldegrave: Letters to Members of Parliament during this Session number 13,713.

Recruitment and Promotion Policy

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what measures he has implemented to ensure that recruitment and promotion policy in his Department does not directly or indirectly discriminate against applicants who were mature students or women returning to work following a career break due to child care.

Mrs. Chalker: Within both the mainstream diplomatic and aid wings, upper age limits on recruitment have been raised wherever possible. In the Home Civil Service cadre, the upper age limit for entry into most grades is now 55 years.

Entry competitions to both wings are open to any eligible applicants with the required qualifications, including those gained as mature students.

Promotion in the diplomatic service is determined by assessment of performance in a variety of jobs both at home and overseas. Seniority is not affected by career breaks. In the aid wing, staff attend a promotion board whose members are given guidance on equal opportunities policy.

Arrangements exist in both wings to allow for the reinstatement of officers who resign but later wish to resume their careers. A flexible approach is adopted to requests for special unpaid leave for domestic reasons.

Western European Union

Mr. Hill: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what specific mandate has now been granted to the Western European Union agency formed from the merger of the three agencies responsible for studying security questions.

Mrs. Chalker: We support the merger of the three WEU agencies in Paris into one: this should enable their resources to be more effectively deployed in support of revitalisation of the WEU. But the merger has not yet formally taken place, and the question of a mandate for a new agency does not yet arise.

Mr. Hill: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will support the proposal of the Luxembourg Government to instruct the new Western European Union agency to define the tasks and methods of work of a European defence research institute which would be required to improve knowledge in the member countries of the European dimensions of defence questions;

(2) what is Her Majesty's Government's position on the Western European Union assembly's recommendation for the creation of a European Agency, financed by all the Western European countries, to promote research in all areas of conventional armaments and to prepare for the formulation of a European armaments policy.

Mrs. Chalker: We take the view that we should use the existing structures of the WEU as well as other available means in order to strengthen the habit of co-operation among the Europeans in security and to improve knowledge in member countries of the European dimension of defence questions.

Mr. Hill: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what stage has now been reached in the exchange of views leading to the accession of Portugal and Spain to the Western European Union.

Mrs. Chalker: The discussions with both Spain and Portugal which were initiated on 26 May are continuing, and good progress is being made.

Mr. Hill: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government support the accession to the Western European Union of all the European countries of the Atlantic Alliance which wish to join and which commit themselves to the same conditions as governed the Portuguese and Spanish cases.

Mrs. Chalker: Discussions with Spain and Portugal are continuing, but have not yet been concluded. It is therefore too early to say what would be the implications for other countries wishing to apply to join the WEU.

Mr. Hill: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what specific measures Her Majesty's Government will propose in the Western European Union council for the provision of adequate information on a regular basis to the North American media and public regarding the nature, scope and aims of the reactivation of the Western European Union and the specific constraints of Western European Union countries in security matters and European co-operation in that area;

(2) if Her Majesty's Government support the proposal made for the Western European Union council to establish an information bureau in the United States of America.

Mrs. Chalker: Embassies of member countries of the WEU are already working to develop awareness in north America of the WEU's contribution and objectives. The operations of Western navies in the Gulf, in which WEU has played a coordinating role, have received widespread and favourable publicity. The platform of European security principles has also been welcomed.

Mr. Hill: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what stage has now been reached in consultations on burden-sharing in the framework of NATO and in the Western European Union council.

Mrs. Chalker: The issue of burden-sharing is under close examination in both NATO and WEU. At their meeting in May, NATO Defence Ministers commissioned a report on burden-sharing to be presented to their next meeting in December. In the WEU, burden-sharing is being examined in the context of the work of following up the platform on European security interests agreed in November 1987 in The Hague.

Mr. Hill: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what criteria Her Majesty's Government are proposing for assessing the share of the burden that each member of the Western European Union should assume in order to ensure their joint security.

Mrs. Chalker: As part of the work of following-up the platform on European security interests, the members of the WEU are examining together the share they each carry of the burden of the Alliance's common defence and ways of enhancing their contributions.

Mr. Hill: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government will take steps to make use of the experience gained by the Western European Union agency for the control of armaments to ascertain the methods of verification that would enable Western Europe to make a firm contribution to any agreements on the limitation of conventional armaments.

Mrs. Chalker: The western European countries are working with determination towards the establishment of

a forum in which conventional arms reductions can be negotiated, but the circumstances and scale of the verification requirements for any conventional arms control agreement are likely to be very different from those under which the WEU agency for the control of armaments has operated in the past.

Bophuthatswana

Mr. Woodcock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if a Minister in his Department will undertake a fact-finding visit to Bophuthatswana.

Mrs. Chalker: No. Staff at Her Majesty's embassy in South Africa pay regular visits to Bophuthatswana.

Panama

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what visits have been made by Ministers from his Department to Panama since 1979; and if any further visits are scheduled.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and noble Friend the Baroness Young when she was Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs visited Panama from 12 to 15 November 1983. No further visits are scheduled at the present time.

Chemical and Biological Weapons

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what further steps he is taking to enforce the banning of all chemical and biological weapons and the ending of their use.

Mrs. Chalker: The United Kingdom is a party to both the 1925 Geneva protocol prohibiting the use of poisonous gas and bacteriological methods of warfare, and the 1972 biological weapons convention which prohibits the development, production and stockpiling of biological and toxin weapons.

A comprehensive global chemical weapons convention is under negotiation at the conference on disarmament in Geneva. Good progress has been made but much work remains, particularly on verification. We are continuing to play an active role in resolving the remaining problems.

In his speech to the United Nations special session on disarmament on 7 June, my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs called for wider accession to the 1925 Geneva protocol; automatic United Nations investigation of allegations of chemical weapons use; and international action in the event of confirmed use of chemical weapons.

Kurdish People

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Governments of Turkey, Iran and Iraq concerning their treatment of Kurdish people; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: As my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Putney (Mr. Mellor) made clear in his answer on 27 June, we regret the denial of basic human rights wherever they occur. We are aware of reports of such abuses in Iraq, Iran and Turkey, and continue to take every suitable opportunity to voice our concern. My hon. and learned Friend raised this when he visited Iraq in February. When my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs met the Iraqi Foreign Minister in March, he reiterated our concern about such violations, and the plight of Iraqi Kurds in particular. We have also protested vigorously about the use of chemical weapons on the civilian town of Halabja in Iraqi Kurdistan.

No recent representations have been made to the Turks about the Kurds, but my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, did raise the issue of human rights in general when he met the Foreign Minister on 13 July during President Evren's visit.

Although no specific representations about the Kurds have been made to Iran, we have made known our views on human rights abuses in Iran on a number of occasions, and have co-sponsored resolutions on this issue at both the United Nations General Assembly and the United Nations Commission for Human Rights.

Iran and Iraq

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has any plans to seek to visit Iran or Iraq in the wake of the ceasefire; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: We welcome the Iranian decision to accept SCR 598, and fully support the efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General to achieve an early ceasefire leading to a comprehensive settlement. This would open the way for the early restoration of security, prosperity and development for both countries and for the whole region.

My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs has no current plans to visit either Iran or Iraq.

Hong Kong (Rhino Horn)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Newham, North-West of 19 July, *Official Report*, column 560, if the Hong Kong authorities are in contact with the university of Mainz which is currently exploring a technique for identifying rhino horn in medical preparations; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: No, but they would expect the CITES secretariat to publicise the techniques should they prove successful. Since the intention of the Hong Kong Government is to introduce legislation to ban the sale of all medicinal products claiming to contain rhino ingredients, positive identification of the ingredients is not necessary.

Amnesty International (Exhibition)

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if his Department has considered an application for an exhibition relating to Amnesty International to be displayed in the Upper Waiting Hall.

Mrs. Chalker: Yes: we are happy that the exhibition should be displayed in the Upper Waiting Hall.

Chile

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what further representations have been made to the Government of Chile concerning *(a)* violations of human rights and *(b)* the safety of people returning from exile.

Mrs. Chalker: We continue to make frequent representations, both at ministerial and official level, to the Chilean Government to improve their poor human rights record. As my hon. Friend the Member for Enfield North (Mr. Eggar) made clear in his reply of 7 June to the hon. Member, we do not believe that returning exiles are in any greater physical danger than others in Chile.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if Her Majesty's Government's representatives in Chile have had meetings with Claudimoro Almeida; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: No member of our embassy in Santiago has had meetings with Mr. Almeyda. I refer the hon. Member to my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State's replies of 8 June to the hon. Members for Warrington, North (Mr. Hoyle), for Liverpool, West Derby (Mr. Wareing) and for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd).

Hong Kong (Otter Skins)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Newham, North-West of 25 July, if he will give an estimate of the number of otters represented by the 1,020 pieces of otter skin seized by the Hong Kong authorities in the first six months of 1988.

Mrs. Chalker: It is believed that the 1,020 pieces of otter skin seized correspond to an equivalent number of otters.

Hong Kong (Birds)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Newham, North-West of 25 July, if he will identify the species of birds of prey and owls seized by the Hong Kong authorities in the first six months of 1988.

Mrs. Chalker: Comprehensive information is not available. The following species are, however, known to have been seized in the period in question:

Birds of prey
- Falco Tinnuncules
- Accipiter Nisus
- Milvus Migrans
- Haliaeetus Leucogaster

Owls
- Otus Bakkamoena
- Glaucidium Cuculoides
- Otus Sunia
- Tyto Capensis

Overseas Prisoners

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many British people are in prison abroad; in which countries they are being held; and what were the equivalent figures for each of the last five years.

Mrs. Chalker: According to the most recent survey, there were, in early June 1988, to the best of our knowledge, 1,221 British citizens detained overseas. A breakdown by country is given in the table. Equivalent figures for the last five years are not readily available, and could only be produced at disproportionate cost.

British Citizens Detained Overseas: June 1988
(Total 1,221)

Country	*Number*
Algeria	1
Argentina	1
Australia	8
Austria	3
Bahrain	1
Bangladesh	3
Belgium	30
Botswana	1
Brazil	3
Bulgaria	1
Canada	5
Cyprus	5
Denmark	14
Ecuador	1
Egypt	2
Finland	3
France	153
Germany, West	134
Greece	29
Guyana	1
Iceland	2
India	24
Indonesia	3
Iran	2
Iraq	1
Ireland	7
Israel	5
Italy	34
Jamaica	24
Japan	8
Jerusalem	3
Kenya	4
Korea, South	2
Kuwait	3
Luxembourg	4
Malaysia	2
Malta	4
Mexico	5
Morocco	4
Mozambique	1
Nepal	8
Netherlands	15
New Zealand	3
Nigeria	1
Norway	31
Oman	8
Pakistan	2
Papua New Guinea	1
Peru	3
Philippines	1
Portugal	37
Qatar	3
Saudi Arabia	8
South Africa	20
Spain	270
Sri Lanka	2
Swaziland	1
Sweden	39
Switzerland	50
Taiwan	2
Thailand	17
Trinidad and Tobago	1
Tunisia	2
Turkey	2
Turks and Caicos Islands	2
United Arab Emirates	12
United States of America	122
USSR	2

Country	Number
Yugoslavia	1
Zimbabwe	14
Total	1,221

Turkey (British Prisoners)

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the total number of British subjects believed to be in prison in Turkey; what visiting arrangements they have from British officials; and what steps have been taken concerning repatriation.

Mrs. Chalker: There is at present only one British citizen imprisoned in Turkey. British consular officials visit him about once a month.

Both the United Kingdom and Turkey are parties to the Council of Europe convention on the transfer of sentenced persons. The convention came into force for Turkey on 1 January 1988. The Home Office are already in direct contact with the Turkish Ministry of Justice about the possibility of transferring this British prisoner to the United Kingdom.

John McCarthy

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the latest information he has concerning the whereabouts of John McCarthy last seen in Beirut in 1986; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: Despite considerable efforts in Lebanon and elsewhere, we have no hard information on the whereabouts and well being of John McCarthy and the other British hostages.

Hong Kong (Endangered Species)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Newham, North-West of 25 July, if he will identify by country of origin the endangered species seized by the Hong Kong authorities in the first six months of 1988.

Mrs. Chalker: The Hong Kong authorities can only identify seizures by country of export rather than origin. The 143 seizures during the first six months of 1988 were exported from:

	Number
Belgium	1
Bahrain	1
Canada	2
China	67
West Germany	3
United Kingdom	2
Guyana	1
Indonesia	13
Italy	7
Japan	3
Korea	3
Macau	2
Malaysia	4
New Zealand	1
Philippines	4
Republic of South Africa	2
Singapore	5
Thailand	6
Taiwan	5
United Arab Emirates	5
United States of America	6
Total	143

Major David Walker

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will now suspend all contact between his Department and Major David Walker and KMS in the light of evidence of his involvement in sabotage missions abroad.

Mrs. Chalker: There are no plans to engage Major David Walker or KMS on work for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if Her Majesty's consul in Managua was contacted by Major David Walker or his employees in Nicaragua in March 1985, or subsequently.

Mrs. Chalker: We have no record of any contacts.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what contacts have been maintained between officers of his Department and Major David Walker between 1979 and the present day.

Mrs. Chalker: Between 1979 and 1982, KMS Ltd. was employed by the FCO to provide close protection to a number of Her Majesty's ambassadors and high commissioners abroad. The FCO has not employed KMS since then.

Mr. Nelson Mandela

Mr. Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he now expects Her Majesty's ambassador in South Africa to visit Mr. Nelson Mandela.

Mrs. Chalker: Our efforts are directed not to visiting Mr. Mandela but to securing his unconditional release. We continue to urge the South African Government to release Mr. Mandela and other political detainees immediately and unconditionally.

Tigré and Eritrea (Atrocities)

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will investigate the increasing number of reports of atrocities being perpetrated by the Ethiopian armed forces in Tigré and Eritrea provinces and modify Her Majesty's Government's trade and political relations with Ethiopia accordingly.

Mrs. Chalker: I regret that it is not practicable to make a thorough investigation of reports of atrocities emanating from no-go areas of Eritrea and Tigré.

If reports of atrocities proved correct, we should of course condemn such acts by any of the parties to the civil war in Ethiopia. We have consistently urged a peaceful settlement of the conflicts on all concerned.

European Holiday Resorts (Arrests)

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many British nationals were arrested in European holiday resorts during 1987, and during 1988 to date.

Mrs. Chalker: Many places in Europe are considered by British citizens as holiday resorts. Following are figures for some of the more popular tourist destinations:

British citizens arrested

Country	*1987*	*Up to 28 July 1988*
Cyprus	6	6
France	114	55
Greece	101	59
Italy	24	46
Malta	5	3
Portugal	27	25
Spain	562	359
Switzerland	46	41

NATIONAL FINANCE

Company Taxation

Mr. Grocott: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much tax was paid by businesses in the latest year for which figures are available as a proportion of all tax revenue and as a proportion of national income, respectively; and what were the corresponding figures for France, West Germany, Japan and the United States of America.

Mr. Brooke: Data on total taxes paid by all types of business are not available. OECD has published figures for 1985 showing taxes on corporate income as percentages of total tax and GDP. They are as follows:

	Total Tax Per cent.	*GDP Per cent.*
United Kingdom	12·9	4·9
France	4·3	1·9
West Germany	6·1	2·3
Japan	21·0	5·9
USA	7·1	2·1

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the basic rate of corporation, and so on, taxes in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries and the amount collected in company taxation per head of the population in the most recent year for which figures are available.

Mr. Brooke: The information is given in the table, which is supplemented by explanatory notes.

	Company tax rate per cent.	*Tax per head of population £*
Australia	39	194
Austria	55	87
Belgium	43	187
Canada	28	241
Denmark	50	164
Finland	33	97
France	42	126
Germany	56	170
Greece	49	32
Iceland	51	not available
Ireland	50	48
Italy	36	197
Japan	42	398
Luxembourg	36	675
Netherlands	42	200
New Zealand	28	162
Norway	50·8	640
Portugal	45	not available
Spain	35	68
Sweden	52	126
Switzerland	9·8	156
Turkey	47·8	38
United Kingdom	35	305
USA	34	190

Notes:

1. The rates of company tax shown are the latest enacted.
2. Lower rates apply to distributed profits in Austria, Germany, Japan, Norway and Portugal. No tax is charged on distributed profits in Greece.
3. There are lower rates for smaller companies in Austria, Belgium, Canada, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Luxembourg, United Kingdom and USA. There are also lower rates for manufacturing companies in Canada and Ireland and for public companies in Greece.
4. There are in addition local income taxes on companies in Austria, Canada, Finland, Germany, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland and USA.
5. The figures for company tax per head are for 1985, the most recent year for which information is available. They have been converted to sterling using purchasing power parities.

Income

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the change in the number of higher rate taxpayers in the current financial year; and if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing his estimate of their distribution by range of total income and tax category together with the aggregate tax liability in each case.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The number of married couples and single people liable to higher rates of income tax is estimated to be 1,190,000 in 1987-88, and 1,250,000 in 1988-89. The tables show the distribution of those liable to higher rate tax in 1988-89 and their income tax liability by income and tax category.

Estimates are based on a projection of the 1985-86 survey of personal incomes and are provisional.

Higher Rate Tax Units[1] 1988-89

Thousands

Range of income	*Single*	*Married couple (wife not working)*	*Married couple (both working)*	*All*
£ per year				
Under 20,000	0	0	0	0
20,000-25,000	50	10	10	70
25,000-30,000	70	90	150	320
30,000-50,000	90	190	360	630
Over 50,000	30	80	120	230
Total	240	370	640	1,250

[1] Counting a married couple as one and combining the partners' incomes.

Total tax liability of Higher Rate Tax Units[1] 1988-89

£ million

Range of income	*Single*	*Married couple (wife not working)*	*Married couple (both working)*	*All*[2]
£ per year				
Under 20,000	—	—	—	—
20,000-25,000	260	50	20	330
25,000-30,000	470	540	820	1,830
30,000-50,000	860	1,710	2,750	5,320
Over 50,000	1,230	2,060	2,650	5,940
Total[2]	2,820	4,350	6,230	13,410

[1] Counting a married couple as one and combining the partners' incomes.
[2] Figures may not sum exactly due to rounding.

Mr. Grocott: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the effects which the changes in taxation introduced in his latest Budget will have upon the proportion of gross income which will be paid in taxes by each quintile of income groups and upon disposable income as a proportion of gross income in each case.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Provisional estimates based on a projection of the 1985-86 survey of personal incomes are as follows:

Income tax liability in 1988-89 as a percentage of gross income

	Before Budget changes[2] *per cent.*	*After Budget changes*[2] *per cent.*
Quintile group of taxpayers[1]		
Top 20 per cent.	24·4	20·7
20-40 per cent.	16·9	15·1
40-60 per cent.	15·4	13·6
60-80 per cent.	12·9	11·1
Bottom 20 per cent.	7·5	5·8

[1] Based on 20,900,000 tax units liable to pay tax in 1988-89. Married couples are counted as one unit and the partners' incomes combined.
[2] Budget changes to main income tax allowances, thresholds, and rates only.

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give figures on distribution of total incomes before tax in 1985-86, giving numbers of incomes in the following ranges: less than £2,000, £2,000 to £2,500, £2,500 to £3,000, £3,000 to £3,500, £3,500 to £4,000, £4,000 to £4,500, £4,500 to £5,000, £5,000 to £6,000, £6,000 to £7,000, £7,000 to £8,000, £8,000 to £10,000, £10,000 to £12,000, £12,000 to £15,000, £15,000 to £20,000, £20,000 to £30,000, £30,000 to £50,000, £50,000 to £100,000, £100,000 and over, as set out in table 1 of the "Survey of Personal Incomes".

Mr. Norman Lamont: Table 1 of the survey of personal incomes excluded those with incomes below £2,000, which was, in 1984-85, the threshold for operation of pay-as-you-earn. Below this threshold, the tax records on which the survey is based are incomplete. Correspondingly, the 1985-86 table excludes those with incomes under £2,200. Neither table allows for the incomplete coverage in the tax records of investment income upon which basic rate tax liability has been satisfied at source.

Range of total income before tax (lower limit)

£	*Numbers (thousands)*
2,200	672
2,500	1,070
3,000	969
3,500	1,020
4,000	1,100
4,500	1,040
5,000	2,090
6,000	1,840
7,000	1,710
8,000	3,010
10,000	2,100
12,000	2,130
15,000	1,770
20,000	975
30,000	307
50,000	87
100,000	17
TOTAL	21,900

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give the change in average personal income as defined in the survey of personal incomes *(a)* before tax and *(b)* after tax at 1980 prices using the gross domestic product deflator between 1978-79 and 1988-89 of (i) the bottom 20 per cent., (ii) the next 20 per cent., (iii) the next 20 per cent., (iv) the next 20 per cent., and (v) the top 20 per cent. of incomes, including those not paying tax, giving the percentage change between 1978-79 and 1988-89.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I regret that figures for 1988-89 to include those who do not pay tax are not available.

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give the average weekly earnings of *(a)* the lowest decile and *(b)* the highest decile of all employees, including within all employees male and female, full and part-time, whose pay was not affected by absence, in April 1979 and April 1987 at 1980 prices calculated using the gross domestic product deflator, giving the percentage change between the two dates.

Mr. Major: No figures are available for the upper and lower deciles of average weekly earnings of all employees, both male and female, full and part time. However, figures for full-time employees (males and females separately) are to be found in the new earnings survey report. The GDP deflator is published on page 6 of *Economic Trends*.

Mr. John Greenway: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the increase in real personal disposable income over the latest period for which official figures are available.

Mr. Norman Lamont: In the first quarter of 1988 real personal disposable income was 5½ per cent. higher than a year earlier. Further growth is expected this year.

Overseas Assets

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the value of United Kingdom assets held overseas and the amount of United Kingdom tax payable thereon after double taxation relief; and if he will publish in the *Official Report* his estimate of the amount of tax which would accrue to the Exchequer if the money were invested in a similar portfolio in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Brooke: The value of United Kingdom assets held overseas is published in table 1.2 of the "United Kingdom Balance of Payments" (the Pink Book). Estimates of tax arising from these, or corresponding United Kingdom, assets are not available for the corporate sector and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Manufacturing and Commercial Companies

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for manufacturing, other industrial and commercial companies, and the financial sector the information given for the years 1984 to 1986 in table 14.3 of the "Annual Abstract of Statistics 1988"; and if he will add a forecast for 1987.

Mr. Major: Separate figures for manufacturing companies are not available. A subdivision of the corporate sector between financial and industrial and commercial (including manufacturing) for the years 1984 to 1986 is given in the tables. Definitive figures for 1987 are in the course of preparation and will be available in September 1988.

Table 1: Corporate sector appropriation account[1]: financial

£ million

	1984	*1985*	*1986*
Income			
Income arising in the United Kingdom Gross trading profits of companies and trading surplus of public corporations			
After deducting stock appreciation[2]	−5,708	−6,452	−6,847
Stock appreciation	288	317	342
Total[2,3]	−5,420	−6,135	−6,505
Rent and non-trading income[4]	28,369	37,921	38,867
Total	22,949	31,786	32,362
Income from abroad[5]	5,385	6,287	7,746
Total income	28,334	38,073	40,108
Allocation of income			
Dividends and interest payments[4]	18,893	26,262	26,182
Current transfers to charities from companies	19	21	24
Profits due abroad, net of United Kingdom tax	728	1,030	702
United Kingdom taxes on income	1,076	1,383	1,634
Royalties and licence fees on oil and gas production	—	—	—
Balance: undistributed income after taxation[6]	7,618	9,377	11,566
Total	28,334	38,073	40,108

Table 2: Corporate sector appropriation account[1]: industrial and commercial

£ million

	1984	*1985*	*1986*
Income			
Income arising in the United Kingdom Gross trading profits of companies and trading surplus of public corporations			
After deducting stock appreciation	55,745	64,114	63,767
Stock appreciation	4,969	2,847	1,991
Total[3]	60,714	66,961	65,758
Rent and non-trading income[4]	6,604	8,033	8,436
Total	67,318	74,994	74,194
Income from abroad[5]	8,724	9,057	7,868
Total income	76,042	84,051	82,062
Allocation of income			
Dividends and interest payments[4]	16,940	21,206	23,117
Current transfers to charities from companies	83	93	110
Profits due abroad, net of UK tax	5,536	6,354	4,825
UK taxes on income	13,096	15,212	12,792
Royalties and licence fees on oil and gas production	2,459	2,366	941
Balance: undistributed income after taxation[6]	37,928	38,820	40,277
Total	76,042	84,051	82,062

[1] Includes flows between the companies' sector and public corporations but excludes flows within the companies' sector.
[2] This represents the contribution of financial enterprises in the corporate sector to the gross domestic product. It is the difference between bank charges, commissions, etc, on the one hand and management expenses on the other.
[3] Before providing for depreciation and stock appreciation.
[4] Financial sector figures include payments to and receipts from industrial and commercial sector. Industrial and commercial sector figures include payments to and receipts from financial sector.
[5] After deducting depreciation allowances but before providing for stock appreciation.
[6] Before providing for depreciation, stock appreciation and additions to tax and dividend reserves.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will bring up to date the information provided in his written reply of 16 March 1983, *Official Report*, columns *164-65*, concerning the amount of tax collected on income earning and other assets held overseas; and if he will include in the table an estimate for each year of the total value of such assets whether or not they have been assessed to tax.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Income tax payable on foreign and public revenue dividends paid by or through United Kingdom paying and collecting agents in the past six years was as follows:

	£ million
1982-83	120·3
1983-84	154·9
1984-85	182·7
1985-86	193·7
1986-87	212·1
1987-88	194·7

In the answer given in March 1983 information was also provided on income tax payable on income from overseas charged to tax under cases IV and V of schedule D, and on the number of requests for information by the Inland Revenue under our network of double taxation agreements. Further years' estimates cannot be made except at disproportionate expense.

Information on the value of United Kingdom assets held overseas is published in table 1.2 of the "United Kingdom Balance of Payments" (the Pink Book).

Mortgage Interest Relief

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing his estimate of the number of cases in which higher rate relief will be given on mortgage

interest payments in the current financial year together with *(a)* the gross amount of interest qualifying for relief, *(b)* the amount of higher rate relief, and *(c)* the number of recipients of working age and their distribution by personal tax category and by range of total income together with the average amount of relief given by the standard and higher rate of tax;

(2) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing by range of income and tax status an estimate of the saving to the Exchequer in a full year from abolishing, respectively, the upper earnings limit for national insurance contributions and higher rate relief on mortgage interest.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Provisional estimates of excess over basic rate relief on mortgage interest in 1988-89, based on a projection of the 1985-86 survey of personal incomes, are given in the table. These figures take no account of any behavioural changes which might result from the removal of higher rate relief on mortgage interest.

It is estimated that the full year yield, at 1988-89 levels, of the abolition of the upper earnings limit for national insurance contributions would be £1·7 billion. A breakdown of this figure by status and by income will be given after the summer recess.

Beneficiaries[1] of higher rate relief on mortgage interest by range of total income: 1988-89

Range of total income	*Number of tax units*	*Gross amount of interest qualifying for relief*	*Cost of excess over basic rate relief*	*Average basic rate relief*	*Average excess over basic rate relief*	*Number of non-aged tax units*
£	*thousand*	*£ million*	*£ million*	*£*	*£*	*thousand*
Singles						
20,001 to 25,000	30	70	5	640	160	30
25,001 to 30,000	35	85	10	620	340	35
30,001 to 40,000	25	65	10	630	370	25
40,001 to 50,000	10	25	5	620	370	10
Over 50,000	10	35	5	730	440	10
TOTAL	110	280	35	640	310	110
One-earner couples						
20,001 to 25,000	20	45	. .	530	80	20
25,001 to 30,000	90	220	25	600	280	90
30,001 to 40,000	95	235	35	630	370	90
40,001 to 50,000	40	95	15	630	380	35
Over 50,000	50	150	20	730	440	50
TOTAL	295	745	100	630	340	290
Two-earner couples						
20,001 to 25,000	. .	5	. .	580	50	. .
25,001 to 30,000	195	405	35	520	170	195
30,001 to 40,000	250	620	75	610	310	250
40,001 to 50,000	65	180	25	680	380	65
Over 50,000	80	230	35	710	420	80
TOTAL	595	1,435	170	600	280	595
All						
20,001 to 25,000	50	120	5	590	120	50
25,001 to 30,000	320	710	70	550	220	320
30,001 to 40,000	370	920	120	620	330	365
40,001 to 50,000	115	300	45	660	380	110
Over 50,000	145	415	60	720	430	140
TOTAL	1,000	2,460	300	620	300	985

. . = less than £2,500 or £2·5 million as appropriate.
Figures may not add due to rounding.
[1] Includes about 190,000 tax units who are kept out of higher rate tax by this relief.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the cost to the Exchequer of tax relief on interest payable on mortgages which have been taken out to raise cash for other purposes.

Mr. Norman Lamont: It is estimated that tax relief amounting to around £100 million was falsely claimed in respect of alleged home improvement loans in 1986/87 (the last year for which figures are available). In addition, a relatively small but unquatiified proportion of claims to relief on other loans has been claimed falsely.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether a solicitor's letter stating the purchaser's intention to buy a particular house at a particular price and dated on or before 31 July will satisfy the requirements of the Inland Revenue with respect to qualification for double MIRAS.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The new residence basis for mortgage interest relief, being introduced in the Finance Bill, restricts tax relief to the interest on £30,000 per residence, rather than £30,000 per borrower, and takes effect on 1 August. It will apply to all loans for home purchase made on or after date.

A loan made on or after 1 August will however be treated as made before that date provided:

(a) the offer of the loan was made before 1 August and was evidenced in writing by the lender before that date, and
(b) the borrower had entered into a binding contract before 1 August to acquire the property.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* his estimate of the number of cases in which tax relief will be claimed through MIRAS or otherwise on mortgage interest payments on residential property in the current financial year together with *(a)* the estimated cost to the Exchequer and *(b)* the number of recipients of working age and their distribution by range of total income together with the average amount of relief given; and if he will break figures down as far as possible between single persons and one and two-earner married couples.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* Provisional estimates for the United Kingdom are given in the table. Following the introduction of MIRAS in April 1983, Inland Revenue administrative records cannot be used to provide comprehensive figures on the distribution of mortgage interest relief by range of income. The estimates in the reply are therefore based on projections of data in the 1983 family expenditure survey (FES) and 1985-86 survey of personal incomes, but the sample sizes do not permit reliable estimates to be made in all the detail requested.

The estimate of the cost of mortgage interest relief in 1988-89 takes account of the recently announced increases in the mortgage interest rate.

Tax units[1] receiving mortgage interest relief by range of total income 1988-89

Range of total income	*Number of tax units with mortgage interest relief*	*Average value of relief per mortgagor*	*Cost of relief*
	Thousands	*£*	*£ million*
Up to £5,000	690	340	240
£5,001 to £10,000	1,300	430	560
£10,001 to £15,000	2,440	520	1,270
£15,001 to £20,000	1,890	550	1,050
£20,001 to £25,000	1,110	570	630
£25,001 to £30,000	470	710	340
Over £30,000	700	950	660
Total	8,600	550	4,750

[1] Single persons and married couples.

Agricultural Production Licences

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his forecast for receipts of capital gains tax on the sale of agricultural production licences for the current financial year; if he will include in the *Official Report* an estimate of the amount by which prices would have to fall to eliminate the premium on the transfer of entitlement to the production quota; and whether he will make it his policy to press for a reduction in the price of milk to whatever level is required to eliminate the surplus without the need to rely on quotas.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Information on capital gains tax is not available. The other parts of the question are for my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and I shall ask him to write to the hon. Member.

Productivity

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish a table showing annual increases in productivity in the United States of America and the United Kingdom for manufacturing and the whole economy, since 1976-77, including figures for the latest period of 12 months.

Mr. Major: Data on United Kingdom productivity can be found in table 34 of *Economic Trends*, and in the annual supplement to *Economic Trends* (1988). The OECD "Historical Statistics 1960-86", tables 3.7 and 3.10, provide data on United States productivity.

Output

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing his estimate of the implied difference between growth of potential output per person-hour and the growth of actual output per person-hour between the two most recent cyclical United Kingdom peaks; and if he will include *(a)* a figure for the United Kingdom and *(b)* the rate of growth in manufacturing assumed by the International Monetary Fund and the Treasury, respectively.

Mr. Major: Information on potential output per person-hour is not available in the form requested by the hon. Member. The Financial Statement and Budget Report contains a forecast for manufacturing output growth.

Pensions (Underpayment)

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on his plans for compensation of public service pensioners for the underpayment of the state retirement pension.

Mr. Brooke: State retirement pensioners were compensated in respect of the underestimate of the RPI. On the decision not to compensate public service pensioners, I have nothing to add to my written answer of 18 December, at columns 845-46, to my hon. Friend the Member for Croydon, South (Sir W. Clark).

Balance of Payments

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his latest estimate of the outturn of the balance of payments position at the end of the current financial year.

Ms. Quin: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his latest estimate of the deficit on current account for the year 1988.

Mr. Battle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his latest estimate of the current account deficit for the year 1988.

Mr. Major: As my right hon. Friend the Chancellor has already made clear, the current account deficit in 1988 will be larger than the £4 billion forecast at Budget time. A new forecast of the current account will be published, in the usual way, at the time of the Autumn Statement.

Taxation

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for a married man with two children, one earner and no other allowances, the percentage in gross income taken in *(a)* direct taxes, including national insurance contributions less child benefit and *(b)* indirect taxation, including the retail prices index or other representative figure for rates, in the current financial year where the earnings of the married man are (i) three times average earnings, (ii) average earnings and (iii) 60 per cent. of average earnings and 45 per cent. of average earnings, in all cases with no other income; and if he will include the earnings figure in each case.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Figures for 1988-89 are given in the table.

Taxes as a percentage of gross earnings for a married man with two children, one earner and no other allowances

Earnings: Proportion of average	£ per week	Income tax and NICs less child benefit	Indirect taxes
(i) 3 times	734·10	29·9	n/a
(ii) Average	244·70	20·9	13·1
(iii) 60 per cent.	146·80	10·7	n/a
(iv) 45 per cent.	110·10	3·0	n/a

Notes:
The estimate of indirect taxes is derived from the 1985 family expenditure survey and is based on the illustrative assumption that 10 per cent. of disposable income is saved. Local authority rates are not included. Estimates cannot reliably be made for income levels either (i) three times or (iii) 60 per cent. or (iv) 45 per cent. of average earnings.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for the current financial year the amount of tax and national insurance contributions payable in the circumstances described in the question from the hon. Member for Great Grimsby on 5 April 1984, *Official Report*, column *630*; and if he will include any credit for child benefit.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Information for households with two children is in the table.

Percentage of average earnings[1] 1988-89	Gross earnings (£ per week)	National insurance contributions[2]	Income tax[3] less child benefit: Single female parent	Married female (sole earner)	Married man (sole earner)
100 per cent.	[4]161·80	14·56	6·26	−6·26	6·26
75 per cent.	[4]121·35	10·92	−3·85	−14·50	−3·85

[1] For full-time adult females (all occupations).
[2] Not contracted out.
[3] Deducting child benefit of £7·25 per week per child and assuming no reliefs or allowances other than personal allowances.
[4] This figure assumes that earnings increase by 7½ per cent. between 1986-87 and 1987-88 and by 6½ per cent. between 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give the reduction in annual liability to *(a)* capital gains tax and *(b)* capital transfer tax and inheritance tax in (i) 1988-89 and (ii) the 1978-79 indexed regime, specifying in each case the total and average reduction per taxpayer as well as the number of taxpayers in each year.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The figures for capital transfer and inheritance tax are:

Reduction compared with the indexed 1978-79 regime: Total liability	Average liability[1]	Taxpayer numbers (thousands): 1978-79 indexed regime	1988-89 regime
£ million	£		
600	7,000	80	20

[1] Calculated for the number of taxpayers under the 1978-79 indexed regime.

The 1988-89 tax base is taken as given. It is not possible to determine to what extent changes in the tax regime between 1978-79 and 1988-89 may have affected the levels of transfers. I regret that it has not been possible to provide the figures for capital gains tax before the summer recess. I shall write to the hon. Member and place a copy of the letter in the Library.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each financial year since 1978-79 the amount of tax raised by *(a)* personal income taxes, *(b)* national insurance contributions, *(c)* capital taxes, *(d)* corporate taxes, *(e)* indirect taxes and *(f)* rates; and if he will give his latest forecast for the current financial year on a full-year basis.

Mr. Brooke *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* The information is as follows:

£ billion

	Personal income taxes	National insurance contributions	Capital taxes	Corporate taxes[1]	Local authority rates	Central government expenditure taxes
1978-79	19·1	10·2	0·8	4·4	5·8	18·2
1979-80	21·1	12·0	1·0	6·7	6·9	25·2
1980-81	24·8	14·4	1·2	8·1	8·7	28·8
1981-82	29·2	16·5	1·6	10·6	11·0	33·6
1982-83	30·5	18·7	1·4	13·0	12·2	35·0

	Personal income taxes	National insurance contributions	Capital taxes	Corporate taxes[1]	Local authority rates	Central government expenditure taxes
1983-84	31·7	21·3	1·6	13·9	12·3	37·8
1984-85	33·3	22·7	1·7	18·0	12·9	40·6
1985-86	35·9	24·6	2·3	18·4	13·8	44·0
1986-87	38·5	26·6	2·8	14·8	15·6	48·5
1987-88	41·5	29·1	3·7	17·9	16·9	52·4
1988-89[2]	42·1	31·6	4·7	19·9	19·0	55·4

[1] Corporation tax (including advance corporation tax but excluding corporation tax on capital gains), petroleum revenue tax, oil royalties, IBA levy and supplementary petroleum duty.
[2] Forecast.

The forecasts are from the 1988 Financial Statement and Budget Report. All figures are on an accruals basis as in the national income and expenditure accounts.

Export Unit Values

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each of the EEC Six, the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Japan the percentage increase in *(a)* export unit values and *(b)* producer-wholesale prices between 1976 and 1987.

Mr. Lilley: Figures for export unit values are given in "IMF International Financial Statistics" and for producer and wholesale prices in "OECD Main Economic Indicators".

Debt

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* the amount of *(a)* floating debt and *(b)* national debt outstanding at the end of the year 1987-88, the interest paid in 1987-88 in each case and the money supply in banking March.

Mr. Lilley: The national debt is provisionally estimated at 31 March 1988 as £197,295 million, of which £11,725 million is the provisional figure for floating debt. Interest paid on the national debt in 1987-88 was £16,233 million; including £924 million on floating debt. Full details will be given in the Consolidated Fund and national loans fund accounts and supplementary statements 1987-88, which will be published in December.

Money supply statistics have been reported on a calendar rather than banking month basis since October 1986. They are published in *Financial Statistics* table 11.1.

Bank Lending

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the increase in bank lending since May 1979; where the additional funds have come from; what effect he expects the increase in interest rates since the beginning of the year to have on banking profits; and what is his forecast of the increase in revenue to the Exchequer therefrom.

Mr. Lilley: Recent figures for bank lending are published in table 11.6 of *Financial Statistics*. Figures for earlier years are available from the Bank of England on request. Figures for banks' balance sheets are published in the Bank of England *Quarterly Bulletin* and earlier figures are likewise available from the Bank of England on request. Banks' profits are a matter for the institutions concerned. But the Autumn Statement will update the projections given for tax revenues in the Financial Statement and Budget Report.

Manufacturing Industry

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the elasticity of demand for imports and exports of manufactures relative to price; and whether he has any evidence that the elasticity in either case is different in the case of trade with the European Economic Community.

Mr. Major: Estimates of elasticities for exports and imports are published in the Her Majesty's Treasury "Macroeconomic Model Documentation, October 1987", a copy of which has been placed in the Library of the House. No estimates of these figures have been made for trade with the European Community.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimates he has of the proportion of the investment in plant and machinery in manufacturing industry in each of the past five years which has been due to *(a)* the change in the real exchange rate since 1976 and *(b)* lack of capacity.

Mr. Major: No such estimates are available.

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the growth of manufacturing productivity in the economy since 1980.

Mr. Major: In the three months to May 1988 output per head in manufacturing was 50 per cent. higher than its average level in 1980.

Imports

Mr. Ian Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will issue new guidelines to the Customs Commissioners regarding the suppression of information as to imports, in the light of the provisions contained in the Finance (No. 2) Bill; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lilley: Customs and Excise is fully aware of the need to operate the suppression arrangements with particular care in the light of the new provisions for disclosure of importers names and addresses introduced in the Finance (No. 2) Bill. Special methods will need to be adopted in order to mask information that might indirectly reveal details of the extent of business in a particular commodity. Customs is already discussing details with interested parties and will provide an adequate opportunity for comment on the new arrangements before they are implemented.

Money Supply

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each year since 1958 the estimated velocity of monetary circulation in terms of sterling M0 and sterling M3.

Mr. Lilley: The available figures are as follows:

Velocity of circulation
Ratio of money stock to Gross Domestic Product (Average) at current market price. Annual averages

	M0	*M3*
1963	—	2·94
1964	—	3·01
1965	—	3·04
1966	—	3·06
1967	—	3·02
1968	—	3·00
1969	—	3·13
1970	13·11	3·23
1971	13·50	3·21
1972	14·24	2·89
1973	14·43	2·64
1974	14·55	2·55
1975	16·02	2·97
1976	17·09	3·30
1977	18·02	3·57
1978	18·07	3·56
1979	18·78	3·71
1980	20·21	3·75
1981	21·31	3·48
1982	23·08	3·20
1983	23·73	3·15
1984	24·04	3·08
1985	25·19	3·02
1986	25·92	2·74
1987	27·05	2·47

The velocity of circulation is compiled on a quarterly basis. It is based on average end quarter estimates of M3 before June 1982, and on monthly M3 data thereafter. M0 is a monthly series throughout. M3 is not available before 1963 and M0 not available before 1970.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing (i) the increase in cash terms in sterling MO and sterling M3 *(a)* from May 1979 to the latest available date and *(b)* between January 1974 and May 1979, (ii) the annual rate of inflation on these three dates, (iii) the increase in the amount lent by the banks to, respectively, the public sector and the private sector, (iv) the increase in outstanding mortgages on residential property, (v) the increase in producer and retail prices and (vi) the average annual rate of increase in each of the foregoing cases.

Mr. Lilley: The hon. Member refers in his question to sterling MO. That as such has never existed. I assume he means MO. Sterling M3 is now called M3.

Some of the data requested are not available monthly. In these cases, sources of calendar quarterly data are given.

Recent figures for MO are available in *Financial Statistics* table 11.4; earlier figures are available on the Central Statistical Office public database or from the Bank of England on request. M3 figures are available in *Financial Statistics* table 11.2 and 11.3 from June 1982; quarterly figures are available for earlier periods in the annual supplement of *Economic Trends* 1988, page 151. Figures for the general index of retail prices and index numbers of producer prices are available in the *Monthly Digest of Statistics* tables 18.1 and 18.6. Figures for bank lending to the public sector and private sector are available in *Financial Statistics* table 6.1 for recent monthly periods and quarterly for earlier periods. Recent quarterly figures for loans to the personal sector for house purchase are available in *Financial Statistics* tables 9.2 and 14.4; earlier figures are available on the Central Statistical Office public database, or on request from the Bank of England.

Banks (Assets)

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of the assets held by United Kingdom banks are held in the form of *(a)* floating debt and *(b)* other Government securities; what was the comparable position in 1958; and what sums would now be required to enable the banks to re-establish the 1958 ratio.

Mr. Lilley: Recent figures for the assets of United Kingdom banks are published in tables 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 of the Bank of England *Quarterly Bulletin*. Figures for 1958 are published in tables 9 and 10(2) of the Bank of England "Statistical Abstract", No. 1, 1970.

Duty-free Shops

Sir Dudley Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will state the current position with regard to EEC proposals on the future of duty-free shops; and what stance is being taken by Her Majesty's Government on this issue.

Mr. Lilley: This is presented by the Commission as a proposal consequential to its main proposals for tax approximation which are still under discussion in the Economic and Financial Affairs Council in Brussels. The United Kingdom has fundamental difficulties with the European Commission's central proposal, which we believe to be unnecessary for the completion of the single market.

There are no EC proposals which would affect the sales of duty-free goods to passengers travelling to and from destinations outside the EC.

Recruitment and Promotion Policy

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what measures he has implemented to ensure that recruitment and promotion policy in his Department does not directly or indirectly discriminate against applicants who were mature students or women returning to work following a career break due to child care.

Mr. Brooke: As an equal opportunities employer, the Treasury issues guidance on codes of practice to be followed by those who sit on selection and promotion boards. Under internal promotions procedure, every effort is made to include at least one female board member.

Home Improvements

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the impact upon disabled owner-occupiers obtaining advances for adaptations to their homes of the abolition of tax relief for home improvements; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The removal of relief for home improvements is part of the overall strategy of limiting,

where possible, the number of special reliefs within the tax system. Most home improvement loans have been found to be for items such as double glazing, generally unconnected with any disability of the borrower. Grants remain available to help disabled people meet the cost of home adaptations.

Exchange Rate

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the real exchange rate against the deutschmark in February 1987; and if he will publish in the *Official Report* the amount by which United Kingdom export prices for manufactures have increased relative to German export prices since then.

Mr. Lilley: Nominal exchange rates are published daily in the national press. Figures for export prices for the United Kingdom and Germany are given in the IMF's "International Financial Statistics", monthly. Alternative price indices for constructing real exchange rate indices are also available in several international publications, including "International Financial Statistics".

Land and Buildings (Sales)

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish in the *Official Report*, in the format of table 1 of Cm. 441, a table showing the *(a)* local authority, *(b)* central Government and *(c)* public corporation components of the sales of public sector land and buildings, consistent with the totals provided in his answer of 10 June, *Official Report* columns 705-9.

Mr. Major: The figures in table 1 of Cm. 441, though corresponding broadly to figures included in "The Government's Expenditure Plans 1988-89 to 1990-91" (Cm. 283), the Supply Estimates for 1988-89 and earlier years, and *Financial Statistics*, are illustrative and were provided only in order to give a guide to orders of magnitude. They are not underpinned and have not been analysed by economic category. As indicated in paragraphs 22 and 45 of Cm. 441, detailed baselines on the new basis will be established for the 1989 public expenditure survey and figures for the outcome will be published in the 1990 public expenditure White Paper.

EC (Economic and Monetary Union)

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer at which meeting Her Majesty's Government have assented to the principle of economic and monetary union with the European Economic Community; in what manner any such agreement has been expressed; and by what means it has been communicated to Parliament.

Mr. Lilley: The first of the many meetings at which Community Heads of Government, with United Kingdom participation, reaffirmed the objective of economic and monetary union took place on 19-20 October 1972, and was reported in the subsequent communiqué. The outcome of that meeting was reported to Parliament on 23 October 1972, at columns 791-94.

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the advantages and disadvantages to the United Kingdom of *(a)* an EEC central bank and *(b)* a common currency in the EEC; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lilley: I refer the hon. Member to the Prime Minister's statement in the House on 23 June, at columns 1254-55.

Capital Gains Tax

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give the projected reduction in capital gains tax liability of *(a)* the top 1 per cent., *(b)* the top 5 per cent., *(c)* the top 10 per cent., *(d)* the bottom 70 per cent., *(e)* the bottom 60 per cent., *(f)* the bottom 50 per cent., and *(g)* the bottom 25 per cent. of those liable for capital gains tax in 1988-89, together with the total number of tax units estimated to be liable.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The estimated number of individuals and trusts liable to capital gains tax on disposals made in 1988-89 is 155,000. Available information is not sufficient to permit estimates of the reductions in gains tax liability at the levels of detail requested.

Arts

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his current estimate of the contribution made by the arts to the balance of payments figures.

Mr. Major: No comprehensive official estimate is available. Overseas income and expenditure relating to cultural activities enter directly or indirectly into many components of the balance of payments, especially travel and film and television services.

Value Added Tax

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the total amount received in value added tax payments from arts institutions and bodies.

Mr. Lilley: I regret that an estimate is not available. Arts institutions and bodies do not constitute a separate VAT trader classification.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received concerning the imposition of value added tax on new church buildings; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lilley: So far there have been only a few, but there is still plenty of time for representations to be made in response to the Customs and Excise consultation document issued on 21 June 1988.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent representations he has received regarding those items at present zero-rated for value added tax.

Mr. Lilley: I have received a number of representations in favour of retaining zero-rates of value added tax.

Bofors (Payments)

Mrs. Golding: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received from the authorities in India on the tax status and ultimate destination of payments made by Bofors of Sweden to the account of AE Services at Nordfinanz Bank, Zurich.

Mr. Norman Lamont: None.

Alcohol and Tobacco

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what response has been made by Her Majesty's Government to the proposals of the Commission of the European Economic Community to harmonise the rates of excise duty on alcohol and tobacco products.

Mr. Lilley: My right hon. Friend the Chancellor has made it perfectly clear to the Economic and Finance Council that the United Kingdom considers fiscal harmonisation unnecessary for the completion of the single market.

Public Expenditure

Mr. Wray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will indicate the areas of expenditure to which he attaches priority in making decisions on public expenditure for the forthcoming year.

Mr. Major: The Government's main objective for the current public expenditure survey is that public spending should be held as close as possible to the existing planning totals so that its share in national income continues to decline steadily over the three survey years. With this objective in mind, the Government will review their priorities and take decisions on individual programmes and the planning totals. These decisions will be announced as usual in the Autumn Statement in November.

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish in the *Official Report* an analysis of receipts to the programmes (19) Chancellor's Departments and (20) Other Departments for the years 1982-83 to 1990-91, consistent with the Chief Secretary's reply of 25 May, *Official Report*, columns *375-76*, analysing by function or nature of item (i) the receipts classified as charges with respect to programme expenditure, (ii) the receipts classified as charges with respect to running costs expenditure and (iii) the amounts of receipts in respect of programme expenditure and of running costs expenditure estimated to have been met from other public expenditure programmes.

Mr. Major *[holding answer 28 July 1988]*: The readily available information on a consistent basis with that given in the earlier answer is given in the tables. Figures for receipts in respect of programme expenditure from other public expenditure programmes could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Receipts which offset programme expenditure[1]

£ million

	1982-83 outturn	*1983-84 outturn*	*1984-85 outturn*	*1985-86 outturn*	*1986-87 outturn*	*1987-88 estimated outturn*	*1988-89 plans*	*1989-90 plans*	*1990-91 plans*
Chancellor's departments									
Central Office of Information	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Government Actuary	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Department of National Savings	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Her Majesty's Treasury	31	34	31	26	31	31	30	30	30
Total	31	35	31	26	31	31	30	30	30
Other departments									
Cabinet Office	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
Land Registry	79	110	100	112	139	137	148	160	165
Ordnance Survey	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Privy Council Office	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Public Record Office	1	—	—	1	1	—	1	1	1
Office of Population, Censuses and Surveys	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Treasury Solicitors Office	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Property Services Agency	74	639	664	679	659	636	610	663	690
House of Commons and House of Lords	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
National Audit Office	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3
Total	157	754	767	794	803	777	762	828	860

[1] The figures in this table are consistent with figures given in "The Government's Expenditure Plans 1988-89 to 1990-91" (Cm. 288).

Receipts which offset running costs other than those paid from other departments running costs[1]

£ million

	1982-83 outturn	*1983-84 outturn*	*1984-85 outturn*	*1985-86 outturn*	*1986-87 outturn*	*1987-88 estimated outturn*	*1988-89 plans*	*1989-90 plans*	*1990-99 plans*
Chancellor's departments									
Central Office of Information	—	—	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Customs and Excise	6	6	7	7	8	8	8	9	9
Registry of Friendly Societies	—	—	—	—	1	2	3	2	2
Government Actuary	—	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Inland Revenue	34	39	41	42	43	53	53	55	56
National Investment and Loans Office	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	1
Department of National Savings	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
HM Treasury	1	1	1	6	6	6	7	7	7
Total	44	49	56	64	65	76	77	79	81

	1982-83 outturn	1983-84 outturn	1984-85 outturn	1985-86 outturn	1986-87 outturn	1987-88 estimated outturn	1988-89 plans	1989-90 plans	1990-99 plans
Other departments									
Cabinet Office	4	4	5	5	5	6	5	5	5
Charity Commission	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ordnance Survey	16	16	18	20	20	22	23	23	24
Paymaster General's Office	1	1	—	1	1	1	1	1	1
Office of Gas Supply	—	—	—	—	1	2	2	2	2
Office of Telecommunications	—	—	3	4	4	4	5	4	4
Office of Population, Censuses and Surveys	6	7	7	6	7	7	18	18	19
Treasury Solicitors Office	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Property Service Agency	41	46	36	26	21	23	58	59	61
Total	68	76	71	63	60	65	113	114	117

[1] The figures in this table are consistent with figures given in "The Government's Expenditure Plans 1988-90 to 1990-91" (Cm. 288).

Receipts which offset running costs paid from other departments running costs[1]

£ million

	1982-83 outturn	1983-84 outturn	1984-85 outturn	1985-86 outturn	1986-87 outturn	1987-88 estimated outturn	1988-89 plans	1989-90 plans	1990-91 plans
Chancellor's departments									
Central Office of Information	—	—	15	15	14	15	16	17	17
Inland Revenue	—	1	1	1	—	—	—	—	—
National Investment and Loans Office	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Department of National Savings	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Her Majesty's Treasury	8	8	8	12	13	13	14	14	15
Total	8	9	24	28	28	29	30	32	33
Other departments									
Cabinet Office	—	6	7	7	8	11	12	12	13
Charity Commission	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ordnance Survey	5	5	10	11	13	13	15	15	15
Paymaster General's Office	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Office of Population, Censuses and Surveys	—	—	1	3	2	2	—	—	—
Property Service Agency	9	37	19	15	39	51	58	62	63
Total	14	48	37	36	62	78	85	90	91

[1] The figures in this table are consistent with figures given in "The Government's Expenditure Plans 1988-89 to 1990-91" (Cm. 288).

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table for the years 1982-83 to 1990-91, parallel to, and consistent with, the earlier answer, *Official Report*, columns *375-76*, 25 May, showing income by departmental programme classified as receipts against running costs expenditure.

Mr. Major *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* The information requested is given in the table. The figures in the table are consistent with my earlier answer and with information published in "The Government's Expenditure Plans 1988-89 to 1990-91" (Cm. 288); some of the figures differ slightly from those given to the hon. Member in response to a related question, which was asked of a number of different Departments, because no account has been taken, for the purposes of this table, of subsequent updates to these figures.

Public expenditure: Receipts which offset running costs expenditure [1]

Department	1982-83 outturn	1983-84 outturn	1984-85 outturn	1985-86 outturn	1986-87 outturn	1987-88 estimated outturn	1988-89 plans	1989-90 plans	1990-91 plans
	£ million	£ million	£ million	£ million	£ million	£ million	£ million	£ million	£ million
Defence	516	610	645	670	704	818	777	810	830
Foreign and Commonwealth Office[2]	12	16	15	20	31	38	41	40	40
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food[3]	8	9	9	9	11	24	23	30	30
Trade and Industry	36	39	65	85	98	104	104	110	110
Energy	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	—	—
Employment	223	291	338	413	435	469	473	470	470
Transport	11	12	13	15	18	19	21	20	20
DOE—Other environmental services	30	31	32	33	36	38	38	40	40
Home Office and legal departments[4]	113	133	142	153	177	176	192	200	200
Education and Science	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	—	—
Arts and Libraries	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
DHSS—Health and personal social services	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	—	—

Department	1982-83 outturn £ million	1983-84 outturn £ million	1984-85 outturn £ million	1985-86 outturn £ million	1986-87 outturn £ million	1987-88 estimated outturn £ million	1988-89 plans £ million	1989-90 plans £ million	1990-91 plans £ million
DHSS—Social security	616	643	733	715	663	701	800	800	900
Scotland	18	20	22	24	24	25	29	30	30
Wales	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	—	—
Northern Ireland	61	65	70	81	77	76	83	80	90
Chancellor's departments	53	59	79	91	94	104	108	110	110
Other departments[3]	83	124	108	99	122	143	198	200	200
Total of departments	1,786	2,059	2,280	2,416	2,497	2,744	2,894	2,980	3,050

[1] The figures for 1989-90 and 1990-91 for DHSS-Social Security have been rounded to the nearest £100 million; other 1989-90 and 1990-91 figures are rounded to the nearest £10 million.
[2] Including Overseas Development Administration.
[3] Including Intervention Board for Agricultural Produce.
[4] This group comprises the Home Office, Lord Chancellor's Department, Northern Ireland Court Service, the Crown Prosecution Service, the Serious Fraud Office and the Crown Office, Procurator Fiscal Service and Lord Advocate's Department.
[5] Including Property Services Agency and Civil Superannuation.

Pound Sterling

Mr. Wray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what specific weight is given, when deciding policy, regarding the value of the pound sterling, to the following factors: *(a)* internal production of goods and services, *(b)* the creation or loss of jobs, *(c)* inflationary trends resulting from monetary and other economic pressures, *(d)* the state of the balance of payments, *(e)* productivity and *(f)* other economic considerations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lilley: The Government's monetary policy is designed to exert continued downward pressure on inflation. Exchange rate policy is part of that overall policy. Decisions are taken within a continuous and comprehensive assessment of monetary conditions so as to maintain the required downward pressure on inflation.

Medium-term Financial Strategy

Sir Ian Gilmour: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make available the medium-term financial strategy assumptions for the medium-term growth of personal consumption, total fixed investments, the current balance of payments and unemployment which underlay each "Financial Statement and Budget Report" since 1980.

Mr. Major: I have nothing to add to the answer I gave to my right hon. Friend on 4 July, at column *480*.

Inland Revenue (Keith Report)

Mr. Chapman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what are the Government's intentions on implementing the remainder of the Keith committee's recommendations on the Inland Revenue's powers.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The Keith committee made wide-ranging recommendations for the modernisation of the Inland Revenue's administrative powers. Proposals in response to the recommendations were published in 1986 in the form of a consultative document, on which comments were invited. In the last two Budgets, and in the light of comments received, we have brought forward measures which give effect to some of these proposals.

The Revenue is today, with my approval, issuing a further consultative paper which contains new and revised proposals on the remaining issues, again taking account of representations received.

EC (Budget)

Mr. Chapman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if, following the adoption of the supplementary and amending budget for 1988, the European Commission has asked member states to make available their contributions under the 1988 intergovernmental agreement; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: The Commission has requested that member states in a position to do so should make available on 1 August eight-twelfths of their agreed contributions under the 1988 intergovernmental agreement (IGA). In the United Kingdom's case, this would amount to 619 mecu (some £410 million). The Commission recognises that member states may have to defer payment until their domestic legislative procedures are complete. In this event, the Commission will continue to require overdraft facilities under article 12(2) of regulation 2891/77. The Government intend to provide such facilities to the Commission during August and will keep their position on the timing of IGA payments under review.

The outstanding amount of the overdraft for the United Kindom by the end of August is expected to be around £118 million. Repayment of any drawing under this facility will be made by deduction from future own resources payments. The article 12(2) facility does not affect the total amount which the Community is authorised to spend during the year. The Commission's request does not, therefore, involve any net addition to public expenditure.

Corporate Savings

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will bring up to date the information on corporate savings given in his written reply dated 7 July 1980, *Official Report*, column *71*.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* The latest available information on the savings (after deducting depreciation and stock appreciation) of industrial and commercial companies and of financial companies and institutions for the years 1976 to 1986 is given in tables 5.6 and 5.8 of the 1987 edition of "United Kingdom National Accounts". Data for earlier years are on the CSO databank, which is available in the House of Commons Library.

National Savings

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has for changes in the system of national savings; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lilley: I regret that it has not been possible to provide an answer before the summer recess, and therefore I shall write to my hon. Friend and place a copy of the letter in the Library.

District Health Authorities (VAT)

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much rebate has been paid annually since 1983-84 to district health authorities in respect of value added tax paid on work and services contracted out.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* The amounts of value added tax reclaimed annually by regional health authorities since 1983-84 in respect of works and services contracted out are as follows:

Year	*Reclaimed £*
1983-84	5,511,073
1984-85	61,758,437
1985-86	115,444,090
1986-87	140,624,795
1987-88	147,782,353

Strip Searches (Gatwick Airport)

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many men and how many women have been strip-searched by customs officials at Gatwick airport in the last year; and what guidelines have been issued to customs officials on strip-searches.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* Customs set up central records on search of the person in July 1987, but these records do not identify separately searches of men and women. Such information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. For the period 1 July 1987 to 31 March 1988, 1,834 persons were strip-searched at Gatwick.

Section 164 of the Customs and Excise Act 1979 provides that officers may search persons where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that dutiable, prohibited or restricted goods are being carried. Customs officers are also obliged under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 to have regard to the relevant provisions of the codes of practice, including those concerning questioning of suspects and personal search in custody. In addition, officers are given guidance on search procedures in internal instructions and training courses.

National Insurance

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* his latest estimate of the yield from an increase of 1p in the standard rate of tax and in the employees' and employers' national insurance contribution, respectively, in 1988-89; and if he will divide the tax figure to show the yield from earned and unearned income.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* An increase of 1p in the basic rate of income tax is estimated to yield about £1·4 billion in full year at 1988-89 income levels; 90 per cent. of the yield is estimated to be from tax on earned income.

An increase of 1 per cent. in class 1 national insurance standard contribution rates is estimated to yield employee contributions of £1·75 billion and employer contributions of £2·0 billion in a full year at 1988-89 income levels.

Endangered Species

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will provide a breakdown by species and number of the 209 live birds in the endangered species category seized by the Customs and Excise in the year to 31 March 1987;

(2) if he will provide a breakdown of the 1,395 live animals in the endangered species category seized by the Customs and Excise in the year to 31 March 1987.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* The following information relates to live creatures imported in contravention of the restrictions imposed by the Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act 1976 or Council Regulation (EEC) No. 3626-82.

	Number
Birds	
African Grey Parrots	4
Indian Rosefinches	2
Kestrel	1
Musschen Broeks Lorikeets	51
Emerald Lorikeet	1
Wrinkled Hornbills	10
Citron Throated Toucans	20
Swainsons Toucans	16
Hyacinth Macaws	4
Goldfinches	100
Creatures other than birds	
Giant Tortoises	7
Vipcrine Snakes	147
Caspian Turtles	10
European Pond Turtle	1
Carpet Pythons	2
Ibiza Wall Lizards	500
Leopard Tortoises	2
Moorish Geckos	2
Tree Frogs	145
Pond Turtles	18
Edible Frogs	96
Tortoise	1
Bosc Monitors	22
Ocellated Skinks	24
Ground Lizards	264
Spiny-Tailed Lizards	80
Chilean Spotted Lizards	30
Leopard Geckos	15
Sand Boas	25
Chameleons	4

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give details of seizures of live animals, live birds and articles derived from endangered species made by the Customs and Excise in the period since 31 March 1987.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* The details sought are as follows. They relate to live creatures and articles derived from endangered species imported or exported in contravention of the restrictions imposed by the Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act 1976 or

Council regulation (EEC) No. 3626/82. The figures are provisional, having been compiled on the basis of seizures reported to date.

	Number
Birds	287
Creatures other than birds	2,285
Articles derived from endangered species	3,535

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the total estimated value of the seizures of endangered species of animals, birds and articles made by the Customs and Excise in each year since 1979.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* Values or estimated values of many such seizures are not recorded centrally, if at all. The information sought could therefore be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give details of the seizures of endangered species of animals and birds made by Her Majesty's Customs and Excise in each year from 1979 to 1987 and the information he has concerning related criminal proceedings taken, with penalties and costs imposed.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* The details sought are shown in the following table. The figures for seizures relate to live creatures imported or exported in contravention of the restrictions imposed by the Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act 1976 or Council Regulation (EEC) No. 3626/82. Those for proceedings indicate the number of persons successfully prosecuted under the Customs and Excise Management Act 1979 for attempted evasion of the restrictions.

Year to 31 March	*Seizures*	*No. of persons convicted*	*Penalties/costs*
1979	28	1	£200
1980	Nil	1	6 months (reduced on appeal to 3 months)—£200
1981	173	2	£100
1982	643	2	£700
1983	447	4	£800
1984	1,125	6	£2,250
1985	655	1	£650
1986	264	4	13 months (suspended for 2 years); £1,045
1987	1,604	9	£5,545
1988	2,284	5	£3,325

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will provide a breakdown of the 6,000 articles derived from endangered species by *(a)* type, *(b)* animal and *(c)* country of origin seized by the Customs and Excise in the year to 31 March 1987.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* As the information requested is very long I shall write to the hon. Member and place a copy in the Library.

EC Budget Council

Mr. Summerson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the outcome of the recent meeting of the European Community's Budget Council.

Mr. Peter Brooke *[pursuant to his reply, 28 July 1988]:* I regret that the own resources call up rate implied by the draft budget was incorrectly stated to be 1·15 per cent. of Community GNP; it is 1·11 per cent. of Community GNP.

Private Medical Insurance

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to his reply of 13 July, *Official Report*, column *199*, to the hon. Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden (Mr. Galbraith), how many people benefit from the income tax relief scheme for private medical insurance; which figures were used to estimate the cost of giving relief on all premiums to arrive at the sum of £240 million; and in which year those figures were compiled.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* It is estimated that in 1988-89 between 100,000 and 150,000 employees will not be taxed on the benefit of private medical insurance provided by their employers because their employment income and benefits come to less than £8,500 per year, the level at which the special rules for taxing benefits-in-kind begin to apply. Estimates of the cost of granting tax relief on all private medical insurance are derived from analyses of various surveys including the 1985-86 survey of expenses and benefits, the family expenditure survey, the general household survey and aggregate figures on private medical insurance premiums. The estimate given on 13 July related to 1988-89.

National Accounts

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will publish in the *Official Report* an analysis for the years 1976 to 1986 by functional category of *(a)* the income from fees and charges shown as lines GTCQ, footnote 1 of table 7.2, and line CTNC of footnote 6 of table 8.2 and *(b)* the capital receipts shown as line GTDL, footnote 2 of table 7.3 and line CTCS, footnote 2 of table 8.3 of the United Kingdom National Accounts (1987 edition).

(2) if he will publish in the *Official Report* an analysis for the years 1977 to 1986 in the same COFOG classification as table 9.4 of United Kingdom National Accounts (1987 edition) of *(a)* the income from fees and charges and *(b)* the capital receipts, which have been netted against each line entry.

Mr. Major *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* The information requested could be compiled only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish in the *Official Report* an analysis, comparable to table 8.5 (housing operating account), for the years 1976 to 1986 of the derivation of the line entries under subsidies to water supply, passenger transport, and other economic affairs and services, in table 8.2 of the United Kingdom National Accounts (1987 edition).

Mr. Major *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* It is not possible without disproportionate expense to give the analysis requested in the question. In table 8.2 subsidies comprise payments by local authority rate funds to their own trading services and to public corporations. Some information on payments to their own trading services for individual financial years may be found in the trading

services revenue account tables in "Local Government Financial Statistics", published separately for England, Scotland, Wales.

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish in the *Official Report* a functional analysis, using the COFOG classification, for the years 1976 to 1986 of the line entries for *(a)* gross trading surplus, *(b)* rent and *(c)* imputed charge for consumption of non-trading capital, in tables 7.2 and 8.2 of the United Kingdom National Accounts (1987 edition) indicating, where appropriate, the corresponding charges for depreciation.

Mr. Major *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* The functional analysis using the COFOG classification is produced only for government expenditure, and is not wholly appropriate for revenue items, as requested.

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish in the *Official Report* a detailed analysis for the years 1976 to 1986 of the composition of miscellaneous current transfers in table 7.2 of the United Kingdom National Accounts (1987 edition).

Mr. Major *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* The information is as follows:

Analysis of miscellaneous transfers (£ millions)

	Total	*Passport fees*	*Court fines and fees*	*Driving licences*	*Public service vehicle licence fees*	*Other*[1]
1976	118	12	55	36	9	6
1977	136	19	62	37	12	6
1978	151	26	71	37	11	6
1979	136	28	79	11	11	7
1980	164	34	97	11	16	6
1981	164	27	102	11	19	5
1982	184	37	111	15	13	8
1983	214	35	124	30	16	9
1984	226	48	135	17	14	12
1985	209	42	130	15	14	8
1986	241	51	150	16	15	9

[1] Other comprises penalties for vehicle licence offences, Road Traffic Act and sheriff court fines in Scotland, driving licence fees, public service vehicle licence fees, OFTEL fees and dog and gun licences.

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish in the *Official Report* table 9.4 of the United Kingdom National Accounts (1987 edition), expressed in 1980 prices.

Mr. Major *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* The available information at constant prices is given in table 9.3. It would be conceptually difficult and involve disproportionate cost to calculate table 9.4 at constant prices.

West Yorkshire

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received from the West Yorkshire valuation office over the increased burden on the office because of the revaluation of non-domestic properties in West Yorkshire due to take effect in 1990; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* I regret that it has not been possible to provide an answer before the summer recess; therefore, I shall write to the hon. Member and place a copy of the letter in the Library.

Invisible Earnings (Arts)

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what have been the invisible earnings of the arts for each of the past 10 years.

Mr. Major *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* No comprehensive official estimates are available. A number of components in the invisibles account will be affected directly or indirectly by expenditure relating to cultural activities, especially travel and film and television services.

Dewe Rogerson Limited

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the fee paid to Dewe Rogerson Limited marketing consultants, for each of their appointments as advisers on privatisation issues since 1979.

Mr. Brooke *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* For reasons of commercial confidentiality the Government do not give details of payments made to individual companies for privatisation advice.

Interest Rates

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list real and actual interest rates in each European Community country on 25 July.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* The table gives nominal interest rates on 25 July for the 12 member countries of the European Community. There is no unique measure of "real" interest rates. Indices of consumer and producer prices, which are sometimes used to deflate nominal interest rates, are given in "OECD Main Economic Indicators", monthly.

Interest rates in EC countries[1]

Country	*Rate*
Germany	4·9
France	7·4
Italy	11·5
Netherlands	5·1
Belgium	7·1
Luxembourg	7·1
United Kingdom	10·8
Republic of Ireland	7·9
Denmark[2]	7·0
Spain	10·2
Portugal[2]	13·5
Greece[2]	19·0

Source: Bank of England.

[1] Rates are usually for instruments of three-months maturity, but the type of instrument differs from country to country. Rates are for 25 July.

[2] Discount rate.

Social Science Research

Mr. George: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much has been spent by his Department in each of the past five years on social science research; what percentage this constitutes of total departmental expenditure and of

the Department's research budget; and how much of the research has been undertaken *(a)* within his Department, *(b)* by universities and polytechnics and *(c)* by independent research organisations.

Mr. Brooke *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* The information requested for social science research undertaken outside the Department is as follows:

£ million

	1983-84	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*1987-88*
Total social science research	0·3	0·3	0·3	0·3	0·3
of which:					
Universities and polytechnics[1]	0·2	0·2	0·2	0·2	0·2
Independent research organisations	0·1	0·1	0·1	0·1	0·1
Percentage of total departmental expenditure[2]	0·18	0·22	0·17	0·15	0·14

[1] Includes contribution to joint ESRC-Treasury Macroeconomic Modelling Consortium.
[2] Departmental expenditure covers class XIX, votes 11, 12 and 15 of the Appropriation Accounts.

Expenditure on social science research accounts for the total of central Treasury departmental expenditure on research. Separate figures for social science research conducted within the Treasury are not available.

Company Borrowing

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the proportions of total borrowing by companies during the past six months, represented by *(a)* funds required to finance mergers and takeovers, *(b)* funds for investment in new plant, machinery, research and development and training and *(c)* funds for other purposes.

Mr. Major: This is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Mortgages

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each year since 1981 the increase in mortgage funds for housing together with the increase in the value of the houses sold by reference to stamp duty or otherwise.

Mr. Trippier: I have been asked to reply.

Information on numbers of houses purchased with mortgages and on the prices paid is available only from building societies, insurance companies and, from 1983, banks.

Following are the available estimates:

Purchases of dwellings with mortgage advances United Kingdom

£ billion

	Gross advances		*Aggregate purchase price*	
	Amount	*Increase over previous year*	*Amount*	*Increase over previous year*
Excluding banks				
1981	13·0	2·2	19·0	2·3
1982	16·8	3·8	21·9	2·9
1983	20·4	3·6	26·3	4·4
Including banks				
1983	25·0	not available	31·8	not available
1984	29·0	4·0	37·3	5·5
1985	33·6	4·6	41·7	4·4
1986	47·5	13·9	56·8	15·1
1987	50·2	2·8	56·9	0·1

Note:
Information on the gross amount of advances by other financial institutions, including some of the specialised mortgage lenders, and on the number and price of the dwellings purchased is not available.

Corporation Tax

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* his forecast of the yield in revenue from corporation tax and advance corporation tax in the current financial year and in 1989-90 net of double taxation relief; and if he will include figures showing the amount of tax collected as a percentage of gross trading profit and as a percentage of the amount paid out in dividends.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* The latest estimate of the yield in revenue from corporation tax and advance corporation tax for the current financial year is £19·8 billion. The forecast for 1989-90 will be published in the next Financial Statement and Budget Report.

Mainstream corporation tax collected in 1987-88 was 21 per cent. of the gross trading profit in 1986. Advance corporation tax collected in 1987-88 was 36 per cent. of the amount of dividends paid out in 1987.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Mr. Jonas Savimbi

Mr. Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what passport was used by Mr. Jonas Savimbi to enter the United Kingdom; and whether a visa was required.

Mr. Renton: On arrival in the United Kingdom on 6 July Mr. Jonas Savimbi used a passport issued by the Government of the Ivory Coast; a visa was not required. He was admitted as a visitor in accordance with the immigration rules.

Recruitment and Promotion Policy

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures he has implemented to ensure that recruitment and promotion policy in his Department does not directly or indirectly discriminate against applicants who were mature students or women returning to work following a career break due to child care.

Mr. Hurd: Home Office recruitment advertisements emphasise that applications will be welcomed regardless of the sex or marital status of candidates, and there are no barriers to mature candidates and those returning to work.

Recruitment interviewers receive specific training which focuses on the risks of conscious and unconscious discrimination, and how to avoid them.

Subject to the application of seniority fields for a few grades, promotion in the Home Office is strictly on merit. All promotion board members receive training and are required to follow departmental guidance on fair and non-discriminatory procedures. There are specific arrangements to ensure that members of staff on maternity leave are considered by promotion boards.

Police (Special Branches)

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers and civilians are serving in, or responsible to, the special branches of the police forces in England and Wales listed by the police force.

Mr. Hurd: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Brent, East (Mr. Livingstone) on February 29, at column *390*, which gives the information that is readily available.

Detective Inspector Lee Marvin

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his Department was consulted by former Detective Inspector Lee Marvin about his intention to publish his recollections of the cases in which he was involved.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: No.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action he proposes to take against Detective Inspector Lee Marvin for publication of information in the Sun newspaper.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: My right hon. Friend has no power to take action against former police officers who reveal information which was obtained in the course of their police duties. In cases where there appears to have been an offence under the Official Secrets Act, it is for my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General to consider what action should be taken. A retired police officer may also be liable to face an action under the civil law for breach of confidence if he reveals information which was imparted to him in confidence in the course of his police duties.

Seat Belts

Mr. Neil Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions have ensued as a result of the failure to wear seat belts in motor vehicles, since it was made compulsory to do so; and how many fines for this offence are currently outstanding in England and Wales.

Mr. John Patten: Information on proceedings, findings of guilt and types of sentence imposed at magistrates' courts for offences of driving or riding in a motor vehicle not wearing a seat belt and of driving a motor vehicle with a child in the front not wearing a seat belt is published annually in "Offences Relating to Motor Vehicles England and Wales, Supplementary Tables" (table 5 of the issue for 1986), copies of which are in the Library. Figures for 1987 will be published later this year. Information on the number or amount of fines outstanding for these specific offences is not collected centrally.

Official Secrets

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will take steps to extend to police officers the restrictions presently imposed on security officers in respect of confidentiality and official secrets.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Police officers are already subject to the Official Secrets Act. It is an offence under the Police (Discipline) Regulations 1985 to communicate to any other person without proper authority any information which a police officer has obtained in the course of his police duties.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what restraints exist on publication by former police officers of their memoirs and on reminiscences of details of recent work in which they were involved.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Official Secrets Act continues to apply to retired police officers and, like any other person to whom matters may have been imparted in confidence, a retired police officer may be liable to face an action under the civil law for the consequences of a breach of that confidence.

Mohammad Anwar

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will now answer letters from the hon. Member for Islington, North dated 15 December 1987, 10 February 1988 and 12 July 1988 concerning Mohammad Anwar (A352040); and when Mr. Anwar can expect to hear the outcome of his 1983 and 1985 applications for asylum and residence in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Renton: I shall write to the hon. Member shortly.

Javier Antonio Farje Moscoso

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will now reply to the letter of 7 July from the hon. Member for Islington, North concerning Javier Antonio Farje Moscoso.

Mr. Hurd: I have asked the chief constable of Greater Manchester police for a report on the contents of the letter of 7 July from the hon. Member. The hon. Member will receive a reply as soon as possible.

Risley Detention Centre (Strip Searches)

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many category A prisoners are at present held on remand at Risley detention centre; to how many strip searches they have been subjected in June, giving the number of persons involved, the number of times each person was searched and if any prison contraband, smuggled item or illgal correspondence was discovered in any search, indicating which items; in how many cases prisoners refused to be searched and had to be restrained while a search was being conducted; and what were the reasons for the search under each of the following headings: *(a)* making a remand appearance at court, *(b)* attending a trial, *(c)* inter-prison visit and *(d)* other reasons.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: On 28 July there were seven inmates on remand at Risley remand centre who had been placed

in category A. Comprehensive records of strip searches are available only in respect of category A women prisoners, of whom there was one in Risley on the date in question. The records show that this prisoner was strip-searched on three occasions in June—twice in connection with her temporary transfer to another prison, and one at the time of a cell change.

No unauthorised article was discoverd on any of these occasions. On no occasion did the prisoner refuse to be strip-searched.

Durham Prison (Strip Searches)

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many category A women prisoners there were in Her Majesty's prison, Durham, in June; and how many strip searches were made on these prisoners in that month, indicating strip searches before and after consultation with legal advisers, after visits and after cell changes, wing searches and cell searches, and listing reasons for searches and illegal contraband or smuggled items found.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: During June, there were three category A women prisoners in Durham prison. The number of occasions on which each was strip-searched during the month is shown in the table:

	Inmate A	*Inmate B*	*Inmate C*
After legal visits	—	—	—
After other visits	2	1	1
At the time of cell changes, and wing and cell searches	2	1	1
Others	—	—	2

No unauthorised article was found on any of the three women. I set out the reasons for such searches in my reply to a question from the hon. Member on 15 January at column *446*.

Departmental Advisers (Guidelines)

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when guidelines to his advisers appointed under section 7 of the Prevenion of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984 came into force; what status they have; and if he will place a copy of those guidelines in the Library.

Mr. Hurd: No guidelines have been given to the advisers appointed by the Secretary of State under section 7 of the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984.

Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he intends to publish a Bill to replace the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984.

Mr. Hurd: The Government intend to publish proposals for legislation to replace the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984 later in the life of this Parliament.

Mrs. Ann Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the number of British citizens against whom a new exclusion order was made under section 3(5) of the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984 in each year from 1984 to 1988, who were not served with their new order within two weeks of it being made; and how many remain so to be served.

Mr. Hurd: I am informed that all exclusion orders made under the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984 between the coming into force of the Act on 22 March 1984 and 31 March 1988, against British citizens not previously excluded, were served within two weeks of being made.

Mrs. Ann Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will describe the procedure currently followed when conducting reviews prior to the expiry date of an exclusion order made under sections 4, 5 and 6 of the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984 to determine whether a new exclusion order should be made under the Act; and what opportunity is offered to the individual concerned to make representations against the new order.

Mr. Hurd: One month after an exclusion order is made a letter is sent to the subject of the order explaining that before the order expires, three years from the date it was made, the Secretary of State will consider whether or not to make a further order. The excluded person is invited to inform the Home Office of any change of address during the next three years so that contact can be made when the review is due. Enclosed with the letter is a form which the excluded person may use at any time to give details relevant to the reconsideration of the order; the person is asked whether he is prepared to be interviewed by a police officer as part of the review process. The person is asked to return the form after about two and a half years. If it is not returned, a further form will be sent at that time, and the authorities in Northern Ireland will be asked for help in tracing the person's current address, if necessary.

If the Secretary of State decides to make a further order, the excluded person, when he is sent the order, is told of his rights under section 7 of the 1984 Act to make representations against the order.

Leeds Prison (Suicides)

Mr. Lofthouse: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will order an inquiry into the incidence of suicides at Leeds prison since June 1987.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The prison department undertakes inquiries into all inmate suicides in order to try to prevent future deaths, and coroners' inquests are held on all deaths of prisoners. We do not think that there are any grounds for setting up a formal inquiry into suicides at Her Majesty's prison, Leeds.

Chief Inspector Brian Woollard

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received concerning the case of chief inspector Brian Woollard; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Chief Inspector Woollard has recently reiterated his request for an independent inquiry into the influences of freemasonry in the Metropolitan police. Several hon. Members have written in support of

this request, or enclosing letters from constituents expressing concern about Mr. Woollard's treatment. No representations have been received directly from members of the public.

The Secretary of State has carefully considered Mr. Woollard's request but remains of the opinion that it would be inappropriate to exercise his power under section 32 of the Police Act 1964 to appoint a local inquiry into Mr. Woollard's allegations.

Mr. Woollard appeared before a disciplinary board on 25 May charged with being absent from duty. He was dismissed from the force. He has appealed against this decision to the Commissioner.

Vehicles (Metropolitan Police Area)

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many vehicles in the Metropolitan police area have been *(a)* removed and *(b)* wheel-clamped for each year since 1985.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that the figures are as follows:

Year	*Vehicles removed*	*Vehicles wheel-clamped*
1985	41,531	34,810
1986	44,590	33,270
1987	45,292	111,032
1988 (to 15 July)	48,657	62,831

General Evren

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to reply to the hon. Member for Islington, North following his holding answer of 18 July concerning the visit to Britain of General Evren.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I replied to the hon. Member yesterday.

Emergency Planning (Local Authority Budgets)

Mr. Gerald Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the effects on the efficiency of emergency planning of the reductions proposed in local authority budgets for 1988-89.

Mr. John Patten: Local authority bids for civil defence grant aid this year were substantially in excess of the planned provision which had been increased to £21·8 million from £19·4 million in 1987-88. Provisional approvals for expenditure have now been allocated taking account of the 1988-89 provision. These matters are the subject of current discussions with local authorities.

Motorways (Parked Vehicles)

Mr. Hill: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what future steps he will take to ensure that the police exercise their duty to clear parked vehicles from motorway hard shoulders.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: We have no reason to doubt that police forces generally are making every effort to secure the prompt clearance of vehicles from the hard shoulders of motorways, but if my hon. Friend has any particular case or circumstances in mind, I would be grateful if he would bring this to the attention of the chief officer of the force concerned.

Neighbourhood Watch Schemes

Mr. Hill: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he will take to ensure that more neighbourhood watch schemes are instituted; and if he will issue guidelines to chief officers of police on how best to co-operate with the scheme.

Mr. John Patten: There are now almost 56,000 neighbourhood watch schemes in England and Wales involving some 3 million households. Nevertheless, there is certainly scope for the further development of the neighbourhood watch concept and for the establishment of new schemes. We believe that schemes are likely to be most effective when they are the product of action by concerned local people. I am pleased therefore that one of the first tasks of Crime Concern, the new independent national crime prevention organisation which was launched on 23 May, will be to promote and support local effort of this kind. We are also currently considering the issue of a guidance note intended to facilitate the establishment of neighbourhood watch schemes.

Police Officers (Service)

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for City of Durham of 6 July, *Official Report*, column 591-2, how many of the 2,831 vacancies caused in 1987 by constables leaving the police before completing 30 years' service have been filled; and if he will break down the information by constabulary;

(2) pursuant to the answer of 6 July, *Official Report*, column 591-2, how many of the 584 vacancies caused in 1987 by the premature departure of officers at sergeant rank and above have been filled by promotion; and how many of the gaps left in the ranks from which these promotions were made have been filled.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The information is not available centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Police Manpower

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his recently announced increases in police manpower are in every case additional to the new recruits needed to fill the vacancies created by the premature departure of police officers at all ranks.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Yes.

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing, for each constabulary in England and Wales *(a)* the numbers of black and Asian officers, *(b)* this figure as a percentage of total force strength and *(c)* the numbers of black and Asian officers who have left before completing 30 years.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: There is no central record of the numbers of black and Asian officers who have left police forces before completing 30 years' service. The other information requested is as follows:

Police force	Number of black-Asian officers in post 30 June 1988	Percentage of force strength at 30 June 1988
Avon and Somerset	15	0·50
Bedfordshire	27	2·70
Cambridgeshire	19	1·63
Cheshire	1	0·05
Cleveland	4	0·27
Cumbria	1	0·09
Derbyshire	19	1·06
Devon and Cornwall	2	0·07
Dorset	3	0·24
Durham	2	0·15
Dyfed-Powys	0	0·00
Essex	14	0·51
Gloucestershire	8	0·70
Greater Manchester	78	1·13
Gwent	2	0·20
Hampshire	7	0·23
Hertfordshire	17	1·06
Humberside	3	0·15
Kent	15	0·51
Lancashire	7	0·22
Leicestershire	40	2·29
Lincolnshire	1	0·08
Merseyside	31	0·66
Norfolk	0	0·00
Northamptonshire	14	1·28
Northumbria	0	0·00
North Wales	1	0·08
North Yorkshire	1	0·07
Nottinghamshire	38	1·68
South Wales	16	0·51
South Yorkshire	19	0·65
Staffordshire	11	0·51
Suffolk	0	0·00
Surrey	5	0·30
Sussex	7	0·24
Thames Valley	46	1·30
Warwickshire	0	0·00
West Mercia	14	0·72
West Midlands	141	2·13
West Yorkshire	70	1·35
Wiltshire	8	0·73
City of London	1	0·13
Metropolitan	417	1·51

Police Officers (Dismissals)

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will state, by constabulary, how many police officers of all ranks were dismissed in 1987.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The information is as follows:

	Number
Avon and Somerset	1
Derbyshire	3
Essex	2
Greater Manchester	2
Hampshire	1
Lancashire	2
Merseyside	1
Metropolitan	15
Northamptonshire	1
North Wales	1
South Wales	3
Surrey	1
Warwickshire	1
West Mercia	1
West Yorkshire	1

Foreign Nationals

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many foreign nationals were arrested in the United Kingdom during 1987, and during 1988 to date.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The information requested is not available.

Domestic Disputes (Bolton)

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many custodial sentences were made by courts in Bolton for crimes relating to domestic disputes *(a)* in 1977, *(b)* in 1987 and *(c)* during 1988 to date.

Mr. John Patten: Information available to the Department on the outcome of criminal court cases does not separately identify crimes relating to domestic disputes.

Remand Prisoners

Mr. John Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the total number of prisoners currently held on remand, including those prisoners held in police cells; and what proportion this represents of the total prison population.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: On 30 June 1988 there were about 10,800 untried and convicted unsentenced prisoners in prison department establishments in England and Wales. A further 724 prisoners, most of whom would have been on remand, were held in police cells. Including those in police cells, the remand population was about 23 per cent. of the prison population.

Mr. John Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the total number of prisoners held on remand during the latest available year who were subsequently at trial *(a)* found innocent and *(b)* found guilty but not sentenced to a term of imprisonment; and what proportion these figures represent of the total number of prisoners held on remand that year.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The latest available information is given in the following table, updating the information published in table 2.2 of "Prison Statistics, England and Wales 1986" (Cm. 210), copies of which are in the Library.

Receptions of untried prisoners and convicted unsentenced prisoners during 1986: by outcome of court proceedings

Outcome	Number of persons[2]
Found not guilty or not proceeded against	2,800
Given a non-custodial sentence or freed on rising[1]	19,200
Received under sentence	33,100
Ultimate disposal not recorded	8,400
Total received	63,500

[1] Includes hospital orders, guardianship orders and care orders, under some of which the offender is not released into the community but is committed to a non-penal establishment. Persons freed on rising are those who were sentenced to immediate custody of such length that it had already been served on remand.

[2] Rounded estimates.

Mr. John Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the total number of prisoners currently held on remand who have their privileges withheld by the prison officers or authorities.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The information requested is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Prison Population

Mr. John Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was *(a)* the certified normal prison population and *(b)* the actual population on the latest available date for Her Majesty's prisons in England and Wales.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: On Friday 22 July, the most recent date for which figures are available, the total certified normal accommodation of Her Majesty's prison establishments in England and Wales was 44,179 and the total population was 49,915. There were additionally 649 prisoners held in police cells.

Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Act 1987

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many notices of liability to pay a charge have been issued under the Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Act 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: The Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Act 1987 has proved to be an effective deterrent to persons travelling to the United Kingdom with inadequate documentation. Between 5 March 1987, when the Act came into effect, and 30 June 1988 a total of 6,791 notices of liability to pay the £1,000 charge were issued. The decrease in recent months is thought to be due to more effective document checks being made by carriers at ports and airports of embarkation, and to an extensive training programme, which is continuing, arranged by the immigration service.

Number of notices of liability to pay a charge issued under the Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Act 1987

Period	*Number*
1987	
5 March to 30 June	1,594
July	898
August	658
September	587
October	425
November	324
December	367
1988	
January	384
February	266
March	344
April	329
May	284
June	331

Parliamentary Boundary Commission for England

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to receive the report of the Parliamentary Boundary Commission for England on its next general review.

Mr. Hurd: The commission is obliged to report on the whole of England between 1 February 1993 and 31 January 1998. The exact timing and conduct of any review is a matter for the commission.

However, I understand that, at present, the commission hopes to submit a report to me as early as it can within the statutory period, providing there are no unforeseen delays.

Complaints

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the practice of public bodies for which he is responsible, other than the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, with regard to issuing to complainants, with an acknowledgement of their complaint, a printed card telling them not to write or phone to check on the progress of their complaint since this will slow its progress; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd *[holding answer 22 July 1988]:* The Criminal Injuries Compensation Board is the only public body for which I am responsible to adopt this practice.

TRANSPORT

Departmental Recruitment and Promotion Policy

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what measures he has implemented to ensure that recruitment and promotion policy in his Department does not directly or indirectly discriminate against applicants who were mature students or women returning to work following a career break due to child care.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Women are encouraged to return to work by arrangements for reinstatement and by the availability of part-time working, job sharing and special leave for domestic reasons.

The Department has a policy of fair and open competition in recruitment and promotion. The only upper age limit for new entrants recruited directly by the Department is that they need to be able to give five years' service before retirement. Staff are not normally selected for promotion within two years of retirement.

Motorways (Repair)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many miles of motorway have been repaired for each of the last five years; at what cost; and if he will list the number of miles by motorway and express the figures as a percentage of the total number of miles for each motorway.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The table shows the miles of motorway planned for renewal in each of the years from 1984-85 to 1987-88, and the percentages which these are of the length maintained. Costs for major maintenance are also given (outturn for 1984-85 and 1985-86 and allocated total figures for 1986-87 and 1987-88). Information for 1983-84 is not readily available.

Renewal is generally associated with major maintenance schemes. Other maintenance work is also carried out on motorways. For 1987-88 £34 million was allocated to such work.

	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	Total	Renewal as percentage of road length
M1	19·7	14·6	22·4	19·9	76·6	41
M2	3·4	2·1	4·9	1·8	12·2	49
M3	3·5	—	1·0	1·5	6·0	12
M4	7·9	4·8	4·5	4·9	22·1	19
M5	6·6	11·5	6·9	7·9	32·9	18
M6	17·7	10·2	11·3	12·7	51·9	22
M10	—	—	—	0·3	0·3	10
M11	—	—	—	0·3	0·3	0·5
M18	—	4·2	4·9	4·2	13·3	51
M20	—	0·7	1·8	3·4	5·9	16
M25	—	2·7	3·6	—	6·3	5
M27	—	—	—	2·3	2·3	7
M40	3·5	—	—	3·2	6·7	22
M50	3·1	—	2·2	1·8	7·1	32
M56	—	—	2·2	4·4	6·6	20
M62	12·1	14·3	12·0	9·9	48·3	46
M66	—	—	—	2·4	2·4	27
A1(M)	2·5	4·9	2·3	3·1	12·8	7
Total	80	70	80	84	314	
Cost (£m)	[1]92	72	83	94		

[1] Includes an element for repairs to highway structures where these were carried out in conjunction with carriageway maintenance.

Midland Metro (Exhibition)

Mr. Grylls: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if his Department has considered an application for an exhibition relating to Midland Metro to be displayed in the Upper Waiting Hall.

Mr. Portillo: I understand that arrangements have been made with the authorities of the House for the exhibition to be held in the Upper Waiting Hall from 19 December to 23 December.

Road Accident Statistics

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what number and what percentage of all accidents on motorways for each of the last five years involved coaches; and how many were caused by coaches exceeding the speed limit.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The table shows the number and percentage of all accidents involving coaches on motorways for each of the last five years. The 1987 data are provisional but are unlikely to change. The accident report form used by the police does not record whether any of these coaches were exceeding the speed limit.

Accidents involving coaches on motorways: Great Britain: 1983-87

Year	Number of accidents involving coaches	As percentage of all accidents
		Per cent
1983	82	2·1
1984	94	2·1
1985	102	2·2
1986	83	1·6
1987	114	2·1

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many fatalities have occured on motorways in each of the last five years in accidents involving coaches; and if he will list the figures by motorway.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The information requested is given in the table. The motorways listed are those with at least one fatality in any of the five years. The 1987 data are provisional but are unlikely to change.

Fatalities on Motorways in accidents involving coaches: Great Britain—1983-87

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
M1	5	1	—	4	4
M2	1	1	—	—	—
M4	4	—	2	—	4
M5	6	2	—	—	—
M6	1	3	19	1	3
M11	—	1	—	—	3
M27	—	—	1	—	—
M61	—	—	—	1	—
M62	—	—	1	—	—
M74	—	2	—	—	—
M621	—	—	—	1	—
A1M	1	—	2	—	—
Total	18	10	25	7	14

Heavy Lorries

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement about the current level of heavy goods vehicles on roads in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The overall stock of heavy goods vehicles in the United Kingdom rose by 2 per cent. to stand at 459,000 at the end of 1987. The proportion of 38-tonne articulated vehicles—first introduced in 1983—within this stock is now about 10 per cent., these numbers having risen 20 per cent. in 1987. These vehicles, however, account for 40 per cent. of goods moved by HGVs and for over 20 per cent. of goods lifted.

It is estimated that the introduction of 38-tonne vehicles since 1983 has led to a saving of nearly 8,000 other HGVs that would have been required to cope with the current level of haulage activity.

Her Majesty's Coastguard

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the auxiliary coastguards hours allocation for *(a)* training and *(b)* patrol and other duties for each sector in the Swansea region of the coastguard service in 1985-86, 1986-87, 1987-88 and 1988-89, together with the reasons for any variations in the hours allocated; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: It has not been possible to analyse figures satisfactorily before 1987-88 as requested but totals are provided.

Refinements in projecting the requirement for auxiliary hours, various reorganisations and changes in numbers borne, prevent absolute comparisons being made between the years specified.

The allocations for 1988-89 have been based on the actual outturn for 1987-88, allowing for anticipated changes. It will be seen that the latter figures differ, in some cases markedly, from the allocations originally made for that year for the reasons given.

It will be seen that the total planned usage of auxiliaries in the Swansea region for 1988-89 is almost identical to the outturn for the previous year.

Most sectors are expected to maintain or increase the hours devoted to training, which are closely related to the number of individuals in the companies. However, there is also an element of training in patrol duties which it has not been possible to identify separately.

It should also be noted that the figures do not show operational deployments, which are additional and demand led.

Auxiliary hours allocation—Swansea region

Sector	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*1987-88*		*Hours used 1987-88*		*1988-89*
Solway	4,300	2,970	3,300	a	940	a	960
				b	2,400	b	2,400
South Cumbria	2,800	1,900	2,300	a	1,115	a	1,100
				b	2,784	b	2,784
Fylde	3,200	2,300	2,600	a	850	a	800
				b	2,400	b	2,400
Merseyside	1,500	1,050	1,240	a	672	a	600
				b	1,344	b	1,344
Clwyd	2,990	2,786	2,707	a	460	a	840
				b	1,550	b	1,200
Anglesey	3,470	4,453	3,671	a	1,015	a	1,200
				b	2,250	b	1,340
Menai	3,380	5,120	3,584	a	1,050	a	1,272
				b	2,250	b	1,320
Dwyfor	3,558	3,464	4,258	a	830	a	1,200
				b	2,245	b	2,400
South Gwynedd	3,080	3,020	1,975	a	278	a	672
				b	740	b	600
North Dyfed	3,080	3,020	1,975	a	502	a	798
				b	964	b	600
Preseli	3,080	3,020	1,975	a	690	a	966
				b	972	b	600
Milford Haven	3,080	3,020	1,975	a	850	a	903
				b	877	b	600
South Pembrokeshire	3,080	3,020	1,975	a	612	a	861
				b	982	b	600
Gower	2,692	2,624	1,590	a	1,004	a	1,004
				b	630	b	630
Ogmore	2,010	1,968	1,286	a	763	a	763
				b	566	b	566
Gwent	2,692	2,624	1,590	a	1,004	a	1,004
				b	630	b	630
Avon	2,692	2,624	1,590	a	1,004	a	1,004
				b	630	b	630
Somerset	1,689	1,789	1,672	a	911	a	720
				b	591	b	700
North Devon	5,578	4,284	3,960	a	1,051	a	760
				b	1,969	b	2,100
Hartland	3,965	3,587	3,405	a	1,184	a	1,120
				b	1,806	b	2,260

London Underground (Escalator)

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many of the 37 London Underground escalators reported as out of service on 4 January are now working; and how many escalators were, at the latest available date, out of service and undergoing repairs.

Mr. Portillo: The performance of escalators is a matter for the board of London Underground Limited.

Driving Licences

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people have had their applications to renew their driving licences refused on medical grounds relating to *(a)* depression and *(b)* other reasons; and how many appeals against such refusals were successful for each of the last 10 years.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The only analysis of medical conditions in connection with ordinary driving licences was obtained from a survey undertaken in May 1987. The analysis found that 4 per cent. of medical cases were due to psychiatric conditions; 4 per cent. of the 211,151 medical cases received in 1987-88 is about 8,400. There are no figures specifically for depression.

No details are available about successful appeals by condition. The figures show the number of successful appeals for all conditions in each of the last 10 years.

Year	*Number*
1978	5
1979	3
1980	2
1981	2
1982	2
1983	0
1984	0
1985	4
1986	3
1987	6

London City Airport

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Devlin), 9 November 1987, *Official Report*, column *82*, on what grounds tests were allowed at London City airport of a BAe 146 aircraft on 24 July; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: This is a matter for the planning authority.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Devlin), of 9 November, *Official Report*, column *82*, if he will make available details of the permitted noise levels which rule out the use of BAe 146 aircraft at London City airport; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: In summary, maximum permitted aircraft noise levels at London City airport are:

	EPNdB)
Take-off (sideline)	84
Fly-over (6500m, from start of take-off run)	81
Approach	92

The planning conditions allow limited trade-off among these levels.

Full details are given in the planning decision letter of 23 May 1985, a copy of which is in the Library.

Commuters

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is his estimate, for each year since 1979, of the numbers of London commuters travelling by *(a)* rail, *(b)* underground and *(c)* bus per day in and out of central London.

Mr. Portillo: Information on central London commuter traffic is published by the Department in "Transport Statistics Great Britain 1976-1986." A copy is in the Library. Estimates of the number of passengers entering London by rail, underground and bus during the morning peak period are given in table 1.4

Greater Manchester

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what correspondence he has received from the chairman of the Greater Manchester passenger transport authority in connection with the statement concerning planned expenditure made by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, the noble Lord Brabazon of Tara, in the House of Lords on 30 June, *Official Report*, columns 1809-1813; what reply he intends to give; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State received a letter from Councillor Harkin on this subject dated 5 July. My noble Friend replied on 12 July.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will give details of the *(a)* existing and *(b)* proposed procedures for the transportation of nuclear waste in Greater Manchester; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: Movements of all radioactive materials, in Greater Manchester as elsewhere, must comply with stringent international safety regulations. These ensure that the design of the containers prevents any radiation risk even in the event of a severe accident.

HMS Invincible (Antiquities)

Mr. Onslow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received concerning the disposal of antiquities recovered from the wreck of the warship Invincible, what steps he has taken to ensure that such disposals conform to his policy as outlined on 8 March, *Official Report*, column *155*, together with the conditions under which the excavation of this wreck was licensed by his Department; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State met a delegation on 11 July led by my right hon. Friend the Member for Woking (Mr. Onslow) and representations have also been made by the British Archaeological Trust.

The licence granted by my Department under the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973 provides:

(a) that diving operations within the designated area are to be carried out in accordance with plans agreed by the Advisory Committee on Historic Wreck Sites and under the overall direction of the project's archaeological director;

(b) and that all artefacts recovered are to be given immediate preservative treatment in accordance with the advice of a named expert.

Disposal of artefacts recovered is subject to the provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act 1894 and cannot be the subject of conditions attached to a licence issued under the 1973 Act.

M6 (Traffic Delays)

Mr. Waller: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what were the causes of the severe congestion and delays to traffic on the northbound carriageway of the M6 motorway between junctions 6 and 23 on the afternoon of 8 July.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I refer to my reply to the hon. Member for Newport, East (Mr. Hughes) yesterday.

Chapel-en-le-Frith/Whaley Bridge Bypass

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if, with respect to the A6 Chapel-en-le-Frith/Whaley Bridge bypass, he will give details of *(a)* the contract price, *(b)* the amount already paid to Tarmac, *(c)* the final and latest claim submitted by Tarmac, *(d)* the intitial report of the consultants concerning potential special geological conditions and *(e)* the name of the consultants; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: *(a)* The tender sum was £17·03 million. The contract was subject to remeasurement and included a contract price fluctuation (CPF) clause to allow for inflation. About £3 million has been paid in accordance with CPF.

(b) The amount certified to date for payment to Tarmac Construction Ltd. is £33·66 million.

(c) The outstanding claims for additional payments are commercial matters between the Department and the contractor until they have been settled.

(d) Various consultants' reports were prepared in the period leading to construction. Together with the borehole records from the ground investigation surveys, these reports can be inspected, by arrangement, at the Department's east midlands regional office in Nottingham.

(e) Consulting engineers Scott Wilson Kirkpatrick and Partners took over the preparation of the scheme in 1981 following the disbandment of the Derbyshire county council sub unit of the midland road construction unit.

Pre-construction ground investigations and consultants reports did identify the complex nature of the geology along the line of the bypass. Particularly localised areas of unexpected ground conditions were encountered during construction. These resulted in extra works or a change of design.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will establish an inquiry into the cost escalation on the contract for the A6 Chapel-en-le-Frith/Whaley Bridge bypass.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Procedures before and after the submission of the final account and the Government's normal accounting controls will ensure that the reasons for the overspend are examined and that any defects or deficiencies are identified.

Traffic Speed (London)

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will give his estimate of average traffic speed in central London for each year since 1979.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Surveys of average traffic speed in central London are conducted at three-yearly intervals. Available results since 1979 are as follows:

	Average traffic speed in central London kilometres per hour[1]	
Morning peak period		
1980	19·4	(12·1)
1983	18·9	(11·8)
1986	18·4	(11·5)
Daytime off-peak period		
1980	18·6	(11·6)
1983	19·0	(11·9)
1986	17·6	(11·0)
Evening peak period		
1980	19·5	(12·2)
1983	18·4	(11·5)
1986	17·6	(11·0)

[1] Figures in brackets refer to speed in miles per hour.

Detailed results of the most recent survey are published in Department of Transport statistics bulletin (87)41. A copy is in the Library.

Road Studies (London)

Mr. Squire: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he is proposing to make generally available to the public the consultants' reports on the four London road studies.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: As I said on 27 June, at column *122*, copies of the consultants' working papers can be purchased from them. Free leaflets summarising the options are also available from the consultants.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the total cost of London road assessment studies from 1984 to date; and what is the projected further spending.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The total cost of stage 1 of the studies was about £3 million. It is estimated that stage 2, which began last December, will cost approximately £4 million to complete.

Additionally there is the cost of answering the hon. Member's 31 questions.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will publish all representations made to his Department in respect of the London assessment studies; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: No.

It would not be practical to publish all representations made to the Department on the London assessment studies. Since the studies commenced in November 1984 we have received representations about various aspects of the studies from local authority associations, London planning advisory committee, individual boroughs, national and local groups and members of the public.

I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 21 July, at columns *792-93*, about the most recent representations I have received from the Association of London Authorities.

Lorry Ban (London)

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many prosecutions have been made for violation of the London lorry ban in the last year; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The London lorry ban is the responsibility of the London boroughs. The Department is not informed of prosecutions against violators of the ban.

Gillespie and Isleton Road Sidings

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has been approached by British Rail for assent to dispose of Gillespie sidings and Isleton road sidings at Finsbury Park station; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: No. Our policy is for BR to dispose of all surplus land as rapidly as possible. These are commercial matters for BR, and no specific approvals are required from us.

Toll Roads (London)

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans to approve schemes for toll roads in London; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: No.

Some of the preliminary options developed by the consultants for the London assessment studies include ideas for toll roads. We will consider all their suggestions when the consultants have completed their work.

We have also received a suggestion which we are considering from Costain for a tolled road tunnel under the Thames.

British Rail

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he last met the chairman of British Rail; and what issues were discussed.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he last met the chairman of British Rail; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Portillo: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State last met the chairman of British Rail on 27 July. A variety of railway matters were discussed.

Head Restraints

Mr. Hill: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will consider introducing legislation for the compulsory fitment of head restraints in all motor vehicles; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We will review whether head restraints should be a compulsory fitment in the light of current discussions on improvements in the present EC standard for restraints.

It is important to secure these improvements first, because we are bound to permit restraints approved to EC or UN ECE standards.

The main improvement we are seeking is to increase the height requirement of restraints. This would apply the benefits to a greater number of occupants. Under the present standard the benefits apply mainly only to shorter people.

Singificant progress was made in June when our proposal to increase the height requirement was well supported by other European Governments. In the meantime I would urge manufacturers to provide restraints meeting our proposed new height requirement as soon as possible in order to maximise the benefits to road safety.

Vehicle Clamping

Mr. Hill: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what further areas of London will be included in the clamping and towing away policy; what percentage of clamping is carried out on diplomatic cars; and whether any other cities are applying to use these restrictions.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Applications for further clamping areas have been received from a number of London boroughs and my right hon. Friend is considering them. No formal applications have been received from local authorities outside London.

Police have powers to remove illegally parked vehicles from any road in Great Britain.

Clamping of vehicles used by persons entitled to full diplomatic immunity would be in breach of the Vienna convention on diplomatic relations. Statistics on the clamping of diplomatic vehicles not protected by this convention are not readily available.

Motorways (Direction Signs)

Mr. Hill: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will consider a programme of replacement of roadside motorway direction signs, with overhead gantry signs, at selected accident black spots; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We are adding a number of gantry signs.

The Department has published standard criteria for signs on gantries (Departmental standard TD 18/85). They include situations where such mounting is likely to improve safety. The circumstances at each site need to be carefully assessed, taking economic and environmental as well as safety considerations into account, to devise the best solution.

The Department has commissioned further research into the question of sign obscuration and the current standard will be revised if the results so justify.

Motorway Driving Tests

Mr. Hill: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he is considering the introduction of motorway driving tests in the light of the suggestion by the Institute of Advanced Motorists; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I share with the institute the view that all motorists are well-advised to take lessons on motorway driving before venturing on to a motorway for the first time.

Road Improvement Schemes

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make it his policy to ensure that the continuation of the Government's programme of schemes to improve the motorway and trunk road network will be complemented by provision to catch up the maintenance backlog by 1992.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We regularly review our programme. We shall consider the implications of the rephasing of capital maintenance announced in my answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Hornchurch (Mr. Squire) on 20 June.

Departmental Programmes

Mr. George: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much has been spent by his Department in each of the past five years on the evaluation of departmental programmes; and what proportion this constitutes of *(a)* the amount allocated for evaluation and *(b)* the Department's total budget.

Mr. Peter Bottomley *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* Responsibility for the evaluation of programmes is delegated to 70 programme managers, within central guidelines, and forms part of the work itself. It is not possible to identify separately the resources involved.

HEALTH

Trent Regional Health Authority

Mr. Allen To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the difference in cash terms between Trent regional health authority's current percentage of resource allocation working party allocations and the full resource working party allocation.

Mrs. Currie In 1988-89, Trent regional health authority's total revenue allocation (before additional funds were allocated for the review body pay awards) was

£1,061 million. This included a revenue RAWP allocation of £1,010 million, which was 2·7 per cent. of £28 million below the region's current RAWP target share of the available resources.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects the Trent regional health authority to receive 100 per cent. of its resource allocation working party allocation.

Mrs. Currie The long term (10-year) resource assumptions issued to regions in 1983 were aimed at bringing all regions to around 100 per cent. of their RAWP targets by 1993-94. Considerable progress has already been made. Ministers will continue to give careful thought to the pace of change in deciding on Regions' annual allocation.

The Government will also consider, within the context of the wider review of the National Health Service, the recent report from the National Health Service Management Board on the review of the RAWP formula, which recommends a number of changes in the calculation of regional targets.

NHS Finance

Mr. Allen To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if his Department collects from regional health authorities information on any National Health Service reductions due to financial restraint on district health authorities.

Mrs. Currie: The Department is informed of all substantial proposed changes to services which require formal public consultation and via the new Körner information systems receives quarterly data on key items such as activity and available bed days.

Cholesterol

Mr. Bell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) whether his Department has at any time in the last 12 months investigated the likely number of people with blood cholesterol levels in excess of the 5·2 mmol/l European consensus recommended guidelines; and what plans he has for further similar investigations;

(2) what measures his Department has taken to encourage screening for cholesterol both in hospitals and by general medical practitioners.

Mrs. Currie: A number of independent academic studies have been carried out, including a major blood cholesterol study of more than 12,000 men and women aged 25 to 59 in four British cities. This showed mean cholesterol concentrations of 5·9 and 5·8 mmol/l in men and women respectively. The Department has recently concluded a dietary and nutritional survey of adults, in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, which included examination of blood cholesterol levels, and the data collected are now being examined; the Departments will be considering the need for further such surveys. It is now widely accepted that a high blood cholesterol level is an important risk factor in relation to heart disease. In my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Swindon (Mr. Coombs) on 26 July, I announced that the Standing Medical Advisory Committee has been invited to advise on the cost-effectiveness of cholesterol testing.

Promotion Monitoring

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services by whom promotion board monitoring studies are being carried out; when such studies are expected to be completed; and whether he will then place a copy of such results in the Library.

Mrs. Currie: Two studies have been commissioned from the office of the Minister for the Civil Service into aspects of promotion procedures and monitoring.

The reports are due shortly and will be considered then.

Equal Opportunities

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how, where and when specific developmental training for women from HEO grade and above is provided.

Mrs. Currie: Training is provided in the social security regional organisation through the course "Women in management", held at various locations which is run regularly. Women working in other parts of the Department may attend the Civil Service college course "Management development for women" at Sunningdale.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services by whom review of the development of equal opportunity training is being carried out by his Department; when he expects that review to be completed; and whether he will then place a copy of the results of that review in the Library.

Mrs. Currie: I shall write to the hon. and learned Member.

Physiotherapists

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many physiotherapists are currently employed by the National Health Service; and how many of these are members of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy.

Mrs. Currie: At 30 September 1986, 11,260 physiotherapists were employed either full or part-time in the NHS in England. Information about membership of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists is not collected centrally by the Department and I would suggest that the hon. Member contact the society direct.

Mortality Rates

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make it his policy to publish as a matter of routine figures for mortality rates *(a)* generally, and *(b)* in hospitals by regional health authority.

Mrs. Currie: The Office of Population Censuses and Surveys publishes routinely, through Her Majesty's Stationery Office, many tables giving mortality rates, for example (a) by cause, sex and age group for England and for Wales separately in "Mortality Statistics series DH1" table 13, and for England and Wales in "Mortality Statistics, cause series DH2" table 4., (b) by sex for all regional and district health authorities in "Key population and vital statistics: local and health authority areas" table 4.2, (c) by selected cause for infant deaths by regional

health authority in "Mortality Statistics childhood series DH3" table 17, (d) by social class, age of mother and parity for regional health authorities for stillbirths, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, post-neonatal deaths and infant deaths in "Mortality statistics perinatal and infant: social and biological factors series DH3" tables 7a, 7b and 7c. Copies of all of these publications are available in the Library.

The content of published material is reviewed from time to time, and the OPCS makes available to customers data from unpublished tables. The OPCS can also provide, cost and resources permitting, special computer tabulations from its mortality data.

The OPCS makes available to all regional health authorities extracts of mortality data on magnetic tape for their own region.

There are currently no plans in the OPCS to publish mortality rates derived from the registration of deaths for deaths occurring in hospitals by regional health authority.

Health Authorities

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what plans his Department has for changes in the present structure of health authorities.

Mrs. Currie: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Erith and Crayford (Mr. Evennett) on 12 July at column *160*.

Crown Immunity

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he has any plans to remove Crown immunity from hospital incinerators and boiler plants.

Mrs. Currie: The National Health Service no longer has Crown immunity from the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 which includes provisions bearing on the operation of incinerators and boiler houses. New controls on incinerator emissions were proposed in the consultation paper "Air Pollution Control in Great Britain", issued in December 1986. A best practical means standard for the application of the controls to NHS incinerators is currently in preparation for inclusion in regulations which are expected to be made in 1989. We are not proposing that the National Health Service should have Crown immunity from these regulations.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what proportion of parliamentary questions to him tabled in the last complete parliamentary Session were not answered on the grounds of disproportionate cost.

Mr. Scott: Less than 2 per cent.

Infant Mortality

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on infant mortality following the publication of the report by the working party established by the chief medical officer into the increase in infant mortality in 1986.

Mrs. Currie: Provisional figures for 1987 show a rate of infant mortality (the death rate for babies under 1 year) for England of 9·1 per thousand live births, which is the lowest ever recorded.

The figure for 1986, at 9·5 per thousand live births showed a slight increase compared to the previous year. Ministers asked the chief medical officer and the OPCS to inquire further with the assistance of expert advisers.

The studies so far show that the increase in infant mortality occurred in the post-neonatal period (ie between 28 days and 1 year of age). It occurred across all social classes, ages, parity of mother and legitimacy. The increase was predominantly among male infants, with some bias towards children of parents in social class 1. It was probably associated with the unusually severe cold snap which occurred in February 1986.

As regards cause of death, most of the increase was attributed to sudden infant death syndrome. An accompanying fall in the number of deaths ascribed to diseases of the respiratory system probably reflects a continued trend to report more of such deaths as sudden infant death syndrome. The detailed analysis of the 1986 figures is continuing. Other research work into the nature of sudden infant death syndrome is under way in universities and by voluntary organisations.

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish a table showing infant mortality by sex broken down into the months of the year for the latest year available.

Mrs. Currie: The information is shown in the table.

Infant mortality (deaths under one year of age) by month of occurrence, England and Wales 1986[1]

Month	*Sex*	*Number of deaths*
January	male	352
	female	260
February	male	374
	female	237
March	male	336
	female	264
April	male	278
	female	204
May	male	311
	female	224
June	male	264
	female	190
July	male	261
	female	199
August	male	291
	female	178
September	male	281
	female	192
October	male	294
	female	205
November	male	322
	female	197
December	male	338
	female	234

Note:

These will include deaths occurring in 1986 but registered up to the end of March 1987.

[1] Provisional.

Pharmaceutical Inspectors

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the region covered by each pharmaceutical inspector; how many are currently in post; how many vacancies there are in the pharmaceutical inspectorate; what has been the total number of establishment posts by year from 1979 to 1987 and the number of staff in post by region; how many prosecutions have been taken out in each of these years and with what results; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: This information is not available in the Department. The hon. Member may wish to inquire of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain at 1 Lambeth high street London SE1 3JN.

Child Abuse

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his Department's latest estimates of the incidence of child abuse, against males and females as a percentage of the age groups *(a)* under five, *(b)* five to 10 years, *(c)* 11 to 15 years and *(d)* over 15 years, in England and Wales; and what information he has on the social class of victims in each group.

Mrs. Currie: I understand that the NSPCC, from a sample covering areas including about 9 per cent. of the children in England and Wales, estimates that 25,670 children were added to child protection registers in England and Wales in 1987 because of child abuse.

Child abuse statistics have not previously been collected centrally by the Department. We announced on 9 July 1987 that arrangements would be made for the annual collection of national statistics on child abuse. The Department is carrying out a survey for the year ending 31 March 1988. It is planned to publish some provisional results from the survey later this year.

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many children were admitted to hospital in Cleveland between 1 May and 9 July 1987 on suspicion of sexual abuse; how many prosecutions have been brought or are pending in respect of these suspicions; what has been the outcome of the prosecutions heard to date; and if he will make a statement;

(2) how many children removed between 1 May and 9 July 1987 from home under care orders have been returned home with no supervision order by the social services department in Cleveland; of those returned home with supervision orders, how many are voluntary and at the request of the parents; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: I regret that the information requested is not available centrally. Appendix D to the report of the inquiry into child abuse in Cleveland 1987 (Cm 412) contains some information which my hon. Friend may find helpful.

Nursing

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will place a copy of the following reports in the Library: *(a)* nursing in London study, *(b)* regional health authority leavers survey (1 July to 30 September 1987), *(c)* nursing career development project report, *(d)* nursing retention and recruitment by Price Waterhouse and *(e)* the wastage rates in nurse training report.

Mrs. Currie: I will write to the hon. Member.

Organ Donors

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if decisions have yet been reached on the allocation of funding for publicity to improve donor supply from the £250,000 central budget announced on 3 June.

Mrs. Currie: We anticipate that funds in 1988-89 will be allocated in roughly equal proportions between publicity directed towards the general public and material aimed at relevant hospital staff. Officials are consulting interested parties about the specific projects which should be funded; decisions have not yet been taken on all items of expenditure. The level of donated organs continues to run well above 1987 levels.

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he is ready to produce guidelines to regional health authorities for the identification of potential organ donors and the setting up of an audit of brain stem dead patients, as recommended by the Royal College of Physicians working party on donor supply.

Mrs. Currie: I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to him on 26 July.

"Promoting Better Health"

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on his Department's progress to date in achieving the targets set out in the White Paper, "Promoting Better Health".

Mrs. Currie: Detailed discussions on implementing the improvements in primary health care set out in the White Paper "Promoting Better Health" are now well under way with representatives of the professions concerned. Announcements will be made in due course.

Nurses' Homes

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many nurses' homes have been *(a)* closed and *(b)* sold in each regional health authority area in each year since 1979.

Mrs. Currie: Information specific to the closure and sale of nurses' homes is not routinely collected.

Nurse Prescribing

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the remit, membership and timetable of his Department's working group on nurse prescribing; and what work it has carried out since its establishment.

Mrs. Currie: The group will advise the Secretary of State for Health, after consultation with the Standing Medical Advisory Committee, the Standing Nursing and Midwifery Advisory Committee and the Standing Pharmaceutical Advisory Committee, on the professional and ethical issues of prescribing by nurses. It is chaired by Dr. June M. Crown of Bloomsbury health authority and contains a representative of the United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing and Midwifery and two representatives of each of the professional standing advisory committees mentioned above.

The group met for the first time on 19 July to discuss its terms of reference, methods of working and information needs. It will meet again on 7 September and thereafter at monthly intervals. It will report to my right hon. and learned Friend by 1 June 1989.

Doctors (Generic Antibiotics)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on progress in encouraging doctors to prescribe generic antibiotics; and what guidance and training are available to doctors in this respect.

Mrs. Currie: We encourage doctors to prescribe all drugs generically. All doctors are taught to use generic names during their undergraduate training and professional and other independent publications normally refer to drugs by their generic title.

Particular therapeutic categories are not singled out for special attention. Statistics derived from prescriptions of drugs dispensed by community pharmacists show that the percentage of all prescriptions written generically in England has risen from 20 per cent. in 1977 to 39 per cent. in 1987. Figures for antibiotics only are not readily available.

Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital

Mrs. Wise: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many medical physicists are currently employed at the Royal Devon and Exeter hospital; how many were employed on 12 February; what are their grades; and to what extent this staffing complement complies with recommended norms.

Mrs. Currie: There are currently eight medical physicists employed at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital, and eight were employed on 12 February 1988. The table shows their grades and areas of work.

Area of work/Grade	*Top*	*Principal*	*Senior*	*Basic*
Radiation Physics	—	1	3	—
Medical Electronics	—	1	1	—
Clinical Measurements	1	—	1	vacancy

It is for the health authority to determine staffing levels in the light of local needs.

Mrs. Wise: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services under what exact circumstances the observation of side effects in patients receiving radiotherapy at the Royal Devon and Exeter hospital occurred.

Mrs. Currie: It is not unusual for some patients to develop side effects as a result of radiation treatment. A staff nurse, engaged in examining these patients at the Royal Devon and Exeter hospital, noticed that a small number had delayed healing of skin lesions.

Mrs. Wise: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether, after a medical physicist has set a cobalt source such as that used for radiotherapy at the Royal Devon and Exeter hospital, it must be examined and checked by another medical physicist.

Mrs. Currie: As I said in answer to questions arising on this matter in the House on 25 July at columns 25-29, current recommended procedures are set out in guidance on the use of ionising radiation. I have asked the Health and Safety Executive to check that the guidance is being followed and to advise me whether any further action is necessary.

X-ray Equipment

Mrs. Wise: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when the guidance on the use of X-ray equipment, to which the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member of Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie), referred on 25 July, *Official Report*, column *29*, was sent out; and to whom it was sent.

Mrs. Currie: The guidance to which I referred was "Guidance Notes for the Protection of Persons Against Ionising Radiations Arising from Medical and Dental Use". The document replaced the "Code of Practice for the Protection of Persons Against Ionising Radiations arising from Medical and Dental Use", first published in 1957. The last revision of the code was in 1972, and guidance to similar effect was given in that publication.

Copies of the guidance notes—the result of a joint initiative by the National Radiological Protection Board, the Health Departments and the Health and Safety Executive—were distributed to all regional medical officers and radiation protection advisers, as well as all general managers of regional health authorities, district health authorities, and special health authorities for the London postgraduate teaching hospitals on 5 May 1988. A copy is in the Library.

Mrs. Wise: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will be seeking any information on X-ray equipment inventories in the private health care sector beyond that to be made available to him under the Ionising Radiations (Protection of Persons Undergoing Medical Examination) Regulations to monitor the appropriateness of that equipment and the extent of the X-ray exposures which will result from the use.

Mrs. Currie: Inspectors of the Health and Safety Executive during the course of normal inspections will wish to satisfy themselves that X-ray equipment meets the requirements of regulation 33(1) of the Ionising Radiations Regulations 1985—namely, that it should be of such design and construction and so installed and maintained as to be capable of restricting, so far as reasonably practicable, the exposure to ionising radiations of any person undergoing a medical exposure to the extent that this is compatible with the clinical purpose in view.

Inventories kept under regulations 9 of the Ionising Radiation (Protection of Persons Undergoing Medical Examination or Treatment) Regulations 1988 will assist in this matter.

Mrs. Wise: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what procedures he intends to adopt to monitor the appropriateness of X-ray equipment acquisition in the private health sector and to monitor the extent of X-ray exposures which result from that equipment;

(2) if he intends to take any steps to discourage unnecessary proliferation of equipment for X-ray diagnosis in the private health care sector.

Mrs. Currie: Private health care organisations are independent bodies and may acquire what X-ray

equipment they require. All users of X-ray equipment are subject to the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and related legislation.

District health authorities have a general responsibility to ensure that medical, surgical and nursing equipment in private nursing homes and hospitals is adequately maintained. As part of this responsibility, they must inspect each establishment at least twice a year.

The Ionising Radiations Regulations 1985 put a duty on employers to appoint a radiation protection adviser whose functions include the monitoring of X-ray equipment. The Ionising Radiations (Protections of Persons undergoing Medical Examination or Treatment) Regulations 1988 require employers to keep records of such equipment.

Mrs. Wise: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on the rate of replacement of obsolete X-ray equipment in the National Health Service.

Mrs. Currie: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) on 4 February 1988 at column *741*.

Scientists

Mrs. Wise: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will revert to the pre-1980 practice of linking the salaries of National Health Service graduate scientists with scientists in the Civil Service; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: Negotiations in the National Health Service are based on the need to recruit and retain suitable staff at rates that can be afforded.

Consultants

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many consultants are currently in receipt of merit awards; what has been the total cost of merit awards per year since 1979; and what are the criteria for awarding pensionable increases in salary levels as merit awards.

Mrs. Currie: The number of consultants and community physicians in receipt of distinction awards on 31 December 1987 in England and Wales was 5,604.

The total cost of distinction awards authorised for each year since 1979 is as follows (figures are from 1 April in each year).

	£ million
1979	20
1980	29
1981	31·1
1982	33·5
1983	37·1
1984	40·8
1985	45·5
1986	50·8
1987	56·5

The actual amount payable in each year is somewhat less, because part-time practitioners receive a proportion of the award only. In 1987, we estimated that some 86·3 per cent. of the authorised maximum payment was payable. Once awarded, distinction awards become part of salary and are therefore superannuable.

Emergency Planning

Mr. Strang: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he intends to publish the circular on emergency planning in the National Health Service in England.

Mrs. Currie: Revised civil defence planning guidance to the National Health Service in England was published as a Health Circular on 18 July 1988. It replaces the existing guidance issued in 1977 and takes account of changes in the Government's planning assumptions and in management and structure within the NHS. A copy is in the Library.

Mentally Ill and Handicapped and Elderly Patients

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what assessment he has made of the number, in each region, of *(a)* mentally handicapped, *(b)* mentally ill and *(c)* elderly patients who could be discharged into the community if adequate facilities were available.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 26 July 1988]:* The Department has not so far made an assessment of the number of such patients but will be seeking to do so from research findings and any assessments made by health authorities. It is likely to be several months before it is clear whether a useful national assessment can be made from these sources.

National Health Service (Annual Report)

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services why the annual report of the National Health Service contains no accounts.

(2) what were the total assets of the National Health Service at 31 March 1987;

(3) what was the total value of the outputs of the National Health Service during the year ended 31 March 1987.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 12 February 1988]:* Summarised accounts of regional and district health authorities together with summarised accounts of family practitioner committees in England are audited by the National Audit Office, laid before Parliament and published annually as a House of Commons paper (House of Commons paper 20 of 1986-87 contains information for 1985-86). An equivalent publication for 1986-87 accounts was very recently published as House of Commons paper 606 of 1987-88.

The accounts of health authorities and family practitioner committees record their annual capital expenditure and income but there is no record in a balance sheet of capital assets, nor any provision for depreciation of such assets in the revenue accounts. The outputs of the authorities and committees are not valued as such but are recorded as expenditure.

Following is the information for England for 1986-87 included in House of Commons paper 606.

Statement of working balances as at 31 March 1987

	Health Authorities[1] *£000*	*Family Practitioner Committees £000*
Current Assets		
Stocks	212,649	—
Debtors	278,130	5,169

	Health Authorities[1] *£000*	*Family Practitioner Committees* *£000*
Cash and Bank Balances	(42,962)[2]	215
Total	447,817	5,384

[1] Regional and district health authorities and the special health authorities for the London postgraduate teaching hospitals.
[2] Cash book balances (ie reflecting the value of unpresented cheques as at 31 March 1987).

Expenditure for the year ended 31 March 1987
Health Authorities—Hospital and Community Health Services

	£000
Capital Expenditure	
Hospital Services	8,255,383
Community Health Services	1,054,580
Other Services	572,464
Headquarters Administration	434,739
	10,317,166
Capital Expenditure	936,291
Total Expenditure	11,253,457

Family Practitioner Committees

	£000
Family Practitioner Committees Administration	
Current Expenditure	46,662
Capital Expenditure	3,109
	49,771
Family Practitioner Services	
General Medical Services	1,134,612
Pharmaceutical Services	1,696,073
General Dental Services	530,550
General Ophthalmic Services	130,725
	3,491,960
Total Expenditure	3,541,731

Hospital Waiting Lists

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will estimate the number of patients included in the March 1987 waiting list figures, under returns SBH 203, who would have been excluded as self deferred cases under category KHO7a;

(2) if he will list those district health authorities thought to have included self-deferral figures on their returns to SBH 203 for March 1987;

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 5 May 1988]:* The instructions for completing form SBH203 clearly stated that self deferred cases should be excluded. Despite this, it is possible that the figures from some consultants included deferred cases but the extent to which this occurred cannot be measured retrospectively.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) when he expects to be able to publish the waiting list figures for September 1987; and if he will give reason for the dealy;

(2) if he will publish the waiting list for September 1987 for each regional health authority, district health authority, and special health authority including self-deferred cases (KHO7a); and if he will break these down by specialty.

Mr. Pendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many patients are currently on waiting lists for in-patient treatment at National Health Service hospitals in the Tameside and Glossop district and in the north-west region.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answers 5 May and 16 June 1988]:* The national waiting list figures were announced on 27 April and placed in the Library. The detailed district in-patient waiting list figures have now also been placed in the Library. There was a time gap between the two as the district statistical returns required careful checking.

AIDS

Mr. Strang: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what additional funds he has made available to both statutory and non-statutory bodies in England and Wales, for each of the past three years, in relation to HIV and AIDS; what is the provisional allocation of funds for each year until 1989; and what are these figures for each statutory and non-statutory body.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 1 December 1987]:* The information requested for England is shown in the table. The provision of funds to statutory and non-statutory bodies in Wales is the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Wales.

Statutory and Non-Statutory Bodies	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*1987-88 (Estimated Outturn)*	*1988-89 (Provisional)*
Regional Health Authorities	*All figures are in £000s and rounded to the nearest £1,000*			
Northern	15	45	206	1,008
Yorkshire	—	—	83	705
Trent	15	45	146	1,258
East Anglian	—	—	48	567
N W Thames	275	1,093	14,019	30,035
N E Thames	290	1,130	6,163	10,888
S E Thames	145	565	3,553	5,185
S W Thames	—	—	96	1,326
Wessex	—	—	80	1,117
South Western	—	—	73	275
W Midlands	—	35	176	610
Mersey	—	—	89	365
North Western	15	72	218	1,238
Oxford	15	45	115	1,002
London Specialist Postgraduate Hospitals Special Health Authorities	—	—	—	500
English National Board for Nursing	—	15	35	—
Public Health Laboratory Service	740	740	4,365	6,429
National Biological Standards Board	60	60	300	430
Health Education Council/Health Education Authority	68	72	4,470	10,000
Medical Research Council	—	112	232	950
Other research projects				
1. Middlesex Hospital Medical School	40	30	15	—

Statutory and Non-Statutory Bodies	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88 (Estimated Outturn)	1988-89 (Provisional)
2. PHLS, Manchester	7	—	—	—
3. PHLS, London	83	10	26	77
4. University College Hospital	—	16	27	26
5. University College, Cardiff	—	26	35	78
6. Health Care Planning Service	—	2	2	10
7. Manchester Blood Transfusion Centre	—	27	—	—
8. Goldsmith's College, London	—	—	65	99
9. Hull University	—	—	7	71
10. University of Warwick	—	—	—	30
11. University of Kent and Canterbury	—	—	9	17
12. Institute for Social Studies in Medical Care	—	—	—	30
13. University of Newcastle	—	—	26	51
14. St. George's Hospital Medical School	—	—	1	—
15. English National Board for Nursing	—	—	11	—
16. Institute of Psychiatry	—	—	1	—
17. Royal Sussex County Hospital	—	—	14	14
18. National Heart and Chest Hospital	—	—	—	29
19. Birkbeck College, London	—	—	—	23
Not yet allocated to approved projects	—	—	—	400
Other allocations:				
Special hospitals	—	—	200	—
Youth treatment centres	—	—	10	—
Section 64 grants:				
1. College of Health	40	—	—	—
2. Terrence Higgins Trust	35	117	300	—
3. Standing Conference on Drug Abuse	3	10	27	—
4. Family Planning Association	—	11	8	—
5. Brook Advisory Centres	—	4	—	—
6. London Lesbian and Gay Switchboard	—	10	3	—
7. Mutual AIDS Centre	—	86	—	—
8. Immunity	—	—	3	—
9. London Lighthouse	—	—	1,350	—
10. Mildmay Mission Hospital	—	—	200	—
11. National AIDS Trust	—	—	540	—
12. National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux	—	—	17	—
Not yet allocated to approved projects	—	—	—	1,800

In relation to local authority services, £5 million was included in the Rate Support Grant Settlement for 1987-88 to provide for additional personal social services expenditure in relation to AIDS and drug abuse. £2 million joint finance is to be provided in 1988-89 to support expenditure on services for persons with AIDS in particular local authorities. Provision for future years is under consideration.

Mr. Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the Government will reaffirm their support for the principles and aims of the London declaration on AIDS prevention.

Mrs. Currie: The Government fully support the aims, objectives and principles set out in the London declaration, which was adopted by representatives of 148 states at the world summit of Health Ministers held in London in January 1988. The declaration emphasises information and education, aimed both at the general public and specific groups, as the most important component of national prevention strategies, and stresses the need to avoid discrimination against HIV-infected people and people with AIDS. These principles underlie the strategy that we have developed for fighting the spread of AIDS within the United Kingdom. The Government also have a firm commitment to playing a full part in the worldwide effort against AIDS and support the central role of the World Health Organisation in directing and co-ordinating that effort. The full text of the London declaration is as follows:

World Summit of Ministers of Health
London Declaration on AIDS Prevention
28 January 1988

The World Summit of Ministers of Health on Programmes for AIDS Prevention, involving delegates from 148 countries representing the vast majority of the people of the world, makes the following declaration:

1. Since AIDS is a global problem that poses a serious threat to humanity, urgent action by all governments and people the world over is needed to implement WHO's Global AIDS Strategy as defined by the Fortieth World Health Assembly and supported by the United Nations General Assembly.

2. We shall do all in our power to ensure that our governments do indeed undertake such urgent action.

3. We undertake to devise national programmes to prevent and contain the spread of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection as part of our countries' health systems. We shall involve to the fullest extent possible all governmental sectors and relevant nongovernmental organizations in the planning and implementation of such programmes in conformity with the Global AIDS Strategy.

4. We recognize that, particularly in the absence at present of a vaccine or cure for AIDS, the single most important component of national AIDS programmes is information and education because HIV transmission can be prevented through informed and responsible behaviour. In this respect, individuals, governments, the media and other sectors all have major roles to play in preventing the spread of HIV infection.

5. We consider that information and education programmes should be aimed at the general public and should take full account of social and cultural patterns, different lifestyles, and human and spiritual values. The same principles should apply equally to programmes directed towards specific groups, involving these groups as appropriate. These include groups such as:

policy makers;
health and social service workers at all levels;
international travellers;
persons whose practices may place them at increased risk of infection;
the media;
youth and those that work with them, especially teachers;
community and religious leaders;
potential blood donors; and
those with HIV infections, their relatives and others concerned with their care, all of whom need appropriate counselling.

6. We emphasize the need in AIDS prevention programmes to protect human rights and human dignity. Discrimination against, and stigmatization of, HIV-infected people and people with AIDS undermine public health and must be avoided.

7. We urge the media to fulfil their important social responsibilities to provide factual and balanced information to the general public on AIDS and on ways of preventing its spread.

8. We shall seek the involvement of all relevant governmental sectors and nongovernmental organizations in creating the supportive social environment needed to ensure the effective implementation of AIDS prevention programmes and humane care of affected individuals.

9. We shall impress on our governments the importance for national health of ensuring the availability of the human and financial resources, including health and social services with well-trained personnel, needed to carry out our national AIDS programmes, and in order to support informed and responsible behaviour.

10. In the spirit of United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/42/8, we appeal:

to all appropriate organizations of the United Nations system, including the specialized agencies;
to bilateral and multilateral agencies; and
to nongovernmental and voluntary organizations

to support the worldwide struggle against AIDS in conformity with WHO's global strategy.

11. We appeal in particular to these bodies to provide well-coordinated support to developing countries in setting up and carrying out national AIDS programmes in the light of their needs. We recognize that these needs vary from country to country in the light of their epidemiological situation.

12. We also appeal to those involved in dealing with drug abuse to intensify their efforts in the spirit of the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (Vienna, June 1987) with a view to contributing to the reduction in the spread of HIV infection.

13. We call on the World Health Organization, through its Global Programme on AIDS, to continue to:

(i) exercise its mandate to direct and coordinate the worldwide effort against AIDS;
(ii) promote, encourage and support the worldwide collection and dissemination of accurate information on AIDS;
(iii) develop and issue guidelines on the planning, implementation monitoring and evaluation of information and education programmes, including the related research and development, and ensure that these guidelines are updated and revised in the light of evolving experiences.
(iv) support countries in monitoring and evaluating preventive programmes, including information and education activities, and encourage wide dissemination of the findings in order to help countries to learn from the experiences of others.

14. Following from this Summit, 1988 shall be a Year of Communication about AIDS in which we shall:

open fully the channels of communication in each society so as to inform and educate more widely, broadly and intensively;
strengthen the exchange of information and experience among all countries; and
forge, through information and education and social leadership, a spirit of social tolerance.

15. We are convinced that, by promoting responsible behaviour and through international cooperation, we can and will begin now to slow the spread of HIV infection.

Health Spending

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give for each year since 1974-75 (i) total National Health Service expenditure, (ii) current expenditure on hospital and community health service, (iii) capital expenditure on hospital and community health service, (iv) expenditure on family practitioner services, (v) expenditure on centrally funded National Health Service services and (vi) expenditure on personal social services; if he will give each *(a)* in cash terms, *(b)* adjusted using the relevant pay-prices index and *(c)* adjusted using the gross domestic product deflator; and if he will place in the Library details of the methods used to make these adjustments.

Mrs. Currie: *[holding answer 18 February 1988]:* The information requested is as follows.

(a) *Gross Expenditure (England) in £million (cash)*

	National Health Service	*Hospital and Community Health Service*		*Family Practitioner Services*	*Central Health and Miscellaneous Services*	*Other NHS Capital*	*Personal Social Services*
		Current	*Capital*				
1974-75	3,426	2,353	243	697	130	3	692
1975-76	4,511	3,082	327	925	172	5	927
1976-77	5,149	3,518	356	1,078	192	5	1,060
[1]1977-78	5,689	3,936	315	1,220	212	6	1,160
1978-79	6,426	4,422	366	1,473	158	7	1,313
1979-80	7,640	5,298	405	1,731	194	12	1,601
1980-81	9,970	6,989	556	2,173	241	12	1,974
1981-82	11,182	7,717	671	2,504	268	22	2,176
1982-83	12,197	8,284	701	2,894	301	18	2,382
1983-84	12,921	8,709	725	3,110	350	26	2,577
1984-85	13,871	9,205	817	3,419	404	27	2,738
1985-86	14,678	9,699	888	3,600	451	40	2,906
1986-87	15,789	10,421	961	3,871	489	45	3,233
(est.) 1987-88	17,367	11,477	1,026	4,296	526	42	n/a
(plan) 1988-89	18,985	12,629	1,017	4,743	555	41	n/a

(b) Gross Expenditure (England) in £ million (Purchasing power at 1987-88 prices)

	National Health Service	Hospital and Community Health Service		Family Practitioner Services	Central Health and Miscellaneous Services[3]	Other NHS Capital[2]	Personal Social Services
		Current	Capital				
1974-75	14,444	9,899	898	2,840	—	11	2,472
1975-76	14,824	10,066	925	2,937	—	14	2,750
1976-77	14,987	10,097	900	3,081	—	13	2,776
1977-78[1]	15,122	10,403	696	3,199	—	13	2,771
1978-79	15,388	10,661	724	3,417	—	14	2,896
1979-80	15,297	10,601	664	3,394	—	20	2,995
1980-81	15,719	10,924	724	3,483	—	16	3,074
1981-82	16,174	11,151	847	3,621	—	28	3,014
1982-83	16,411	11,241	871	3,869	—	22	3,078
1983-84	16,557	11,243	883	3,943	—	32	3,162
1984-85	16,769	11,230	955	4,055	—	32	3,231
1985-86	16,850	11,251	980	4,057	—	44	3,246
1986-87	17,052	11,307	1,010	4,154	—	47	3,446
1987-88 (estimated)	17,367	11,477	1,026	4,296	—	42	n/a
1988-89 (plan)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	—	n/a	n/a

(c) Gross expenditure (England) in £ million (real terms at 1987-88 prices)

	National Health Service	Hospital and community health service		Family practitioner services	Central health and miscellaneous services	Other NHS capital	Personal social services
		Current	Capital				
1974-75	12,608	8,659	894	2,565	478	11	2,547
1975-76	13,213	9,027	958	2,709	504	15	2,715
1976-77	13,320	9,101	921	2,789	497	13	2,742
[1]1977-78	12,925	8,943	716	2,772	482	14	2,636
1978-79	13,186	9,074	751	3,023	324	14	2,694
1979-80	13,416	9,303	711	3,040	341	21	2,811
1980-81	14,766	10,350	823	3,218	357	18	2,923
1981-82	15,073	10,403	905	3,375	361	30	2,933
1982-83	15,344	10,421	882	3,641	376	23	2,997
1983-84	15,518	10,460	871	3,735	422	31	3,095
1984-85	15,966	10,595	940	3,935	465	31	3,151
1985-86	15,940	10,533	964	3,910	489	40	3,156
1986-87	16,578	10,942	1,009	4,065	515	47	3,395
[4]1987-88	17,367	11,477	1,026	4,296	526	42	n/a
[5]1988-89	18,167	12,085	973	4,539	531	39	n/a

Notes:

n/a—Not available.

[1] Figures for 1978-79 and later years are not directly comparable with figures for 1977-78 and earlier years because of differences in the composition of different programmes (e.g. the costs of FPS administration and of the PHLS are included in the CHMS programme prior to 1978-79; in subsequent years expenditure on these items is included in FPS and HCHS programmes respectively).

[2] Service specific inflation factors are not available for earlier years; for consistency HCHS (Capital) factors have been used for all years.

[3] Because of the variety and multiplicity of individual budgets it is not meaningful to derive a single inflation factor for CHMS expenditure.

[4] Estimate.

[5] Plan.

Pay and Price inflation 1974-75 to 1987-88

	NHS total		HCHS current		HCHS capital		FPS[1] current		PSS[2] (current and capital)	
	Year on Year per cent.	Index (1987-88 base)	Year on Year per cent.	Index (1987-88 base)	Year on Year per cent.	Index (1987-88 base)	Year on Year per cent.	Index (1987-88 base)	Year on Year per cent.	Index (1987-88 base)
1987-88	8·0	100·0	8·5	100·0	5·1	100·0	7·3	100·0	6·6	100·0
1986-87	6·3	108·0	6·9	108·5	5·0	105·1	5·0	107·3	4·8	106·6
1985-86	5·3	114·8	5·2	116·0	5·9	110·4	5·3	112·7	5·6	111·7
1984-85	6·0	120·9	5·8	122·0	4·2	116·9	6·9	118·6	4·0	118·0
1983-84	5·0	128·1	5·1	129·1	2·0	121·8	5·4	126·8	5·3	122·7
1982-83	7·5	134·6	6·5	135·7	1·6	124·2	8·2	133·7	7·2	129·2
1981-82	9·0	144·6	8·2	144·5	3·2	126·2	10·8	144·6	12·4	138·5
1980-81	27·0	157·7	28·0	156·3	25·9	130·2	22·4	160·3	20·2	155·7
1979-80	19·6	200·2	20·5	200·1	20·7	164·0	18·3	196·1	17·9	187·1
1978-79	11·0	239·5	9·6	241·1	11·7	197·9	13·0	232·0	8·3	220·6
1977-78	9·5	265·8	8·6	264·3	14·3	221·1	9·0	262·2	9·6	238·9
1976-77	12·9	291·1	13·8	287·0	12·0	252·7	11·1	285·8	13·3	261·9
1975-76	28·3	328·6	28·8	326·6	30·6	283·0	28·3	317·5	20·4	296·7
1974-75	—	421·6	—	420·7	24·4	369·6	—	407·4	—	357·2

[1] The figures for earlier years have been adjusted from those used on previous occasions to put them on a consistent basis.
[2] For 1983-84 and later years the figures include both capital and revenue inflation. For 1982-83 and earlier years the figures reflect only PSS pay and price inflation in respect of revenue expenditure. Comparable information in respect of capital inflation for earlier years is not available but the difference is not thought to be significant.

General inflation (June 1988) 1974-75 to 1987-88

	Year on year increase percentage	*Index (1987-88 base)*
1987-88	5·03	100·0
1986-87	3·38	105·0
1985-86	5·97	108·6
1984-85	4·42	115·1
1983-84	4·70	120·1
1982-83	7·12	125·8
1981-82	9·90	134·8
1980-81	18·57	148·1
1979-80	16·87	175·6
1978-79	10·70	205·2
1977-78	13·89	227·2
1976-77	13·19	258·7
1975-76	25·66	292·9
1974-75		368·0

Source: Treasury (GDP deflators).

Warrington District Health Authority

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the spending per head of population served by Warrington district health authority in the latest available year; and what is the figure per head, on the most nearly comparable basis, for the United Kingdom as a whole.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 24 February 1988]:* Figures of spending per head of resident population for 1986-87 (the latest year available) are shown in the table:

Revenue expenditure per head of resident population—Hospital and Community Health Services[1]

	£
Warrington district health authority	259
England—average for all district health authorities	214
United Kingdom	228

[1] Includes ambulance, blood transfusion, mass radiography and other services.

Sources:
(a) 1986-87 annual accounts of district and regional health authorities in England and those of the analogous health authorities, boards and agencies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland—as submitted to the central health department in each country.
(b) Mid-year estimates of populations—1986 (Office of Population Censuses and Surveys).

Notes to the table:
1. Capital expenditure on Hospital and Community Health Services is excluded. Expenditure on family practitioner services (which cannot strictly be attributed to particular districts) and expenditure on personal social services (which in Northern Ireland is accounted for by Health and Social Services Boards) is also excluded.
2. Comparisons between the figures are influenced by a number of factors including:
   (a) people travel across district boundaries for treatment and resource allocations reflect the pattern of service provision locally;
   (b) the population figures used make no allowance for people resident in one district who receive treatment in another or for differences in morbidity and age/sex structure of particular populations.

Medical Physicists and Biochemists

Mrs. Wise: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) whether any difficulty is being experienced in retaining the services of National Health Service scientists, namely, medical physicists and biochemists in the National Health Service; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what steps he is taking to improve recruitment and the morale of medical physicists and biochemists in the National Health Service.

Mrs. Currie: There is at present no evidence of general difficulty in recruiting and retaining medical physicists and biochemists. The numbers employed in the NHS in England rose from 1,921 (whole-time equivalent) at 30 September 1985 to 1,943 (whole-time equivalent) at 30 September 1986. The management side of the Scientific and Professional Staffs Whitley Council has recently offered to increase pay rates by 5·5 per cent. and has agreed to undertake a reveiw of recruitment and retention in the light of service needs.

Nurses' Pay

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) whether funds for health authorities to meet the additional costs of the nurses' pay awards are being allocated on the basis of nursing staff in post or on the basis of nursing establishments; and what year is being taken as a basis for the funding of the nurses' pay award;

(2) whether he intends that resources to fund the additional costs of the nurses' pay award will be allocated by all regions on the same basis; and what guidance he has issued to regions on the allocation to districts of these resources.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 9 May 1988]:* The cost of the review body awards was calculated from information derived from health authorities' pay bill estimates based on the number of staff in post at 31 March 1988. Account was also taken of the review bodies' estimates of the average percentage increase for each staff group.

The additional funds provided to health authorities were to meet the cost of all review body awards: no sum was specifically earmarked for the nurses' pay award. The sum available to regional health authorities was allocated in proportion to their 1988-89 initial revenue cash limits. It is for each region to determine how to distribute those funds amongst its districts.

The guidance issued has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information he has about the problems that the Wirral health authority faces with regard to the nurses' pay award; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris) on 27 July.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list for 1979, 1984 and the most recent

year the numbers of staff by grade in the statistical divisions in his Department; if he will differentiate between staff in the statistical posts and staff in administrative posts; and if he will give separate figures for staff employed in the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys and in the Government Actuary's Department.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 21 July 1988]:* The information requested for the Department and for the Office of Population and Censuses is shown in the tables. The number of staff in statistical divisions of the Government Actuary's department is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Departmental staff in statistical divisions (1 April)

Grade	1979		1984		1988	
	Administrative	Statistical	Administrative	Statistical	Administrative	Statistical
3	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	—	1
5	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	—	7
6	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	—	1
7	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	1	35
Senior Assistant Statistician	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	—	5
Assistant Statistician	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	—	7
Senior Executive Officer	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	18	—
Higher Executive Officer	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	43	—
Executive Officer	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	69·5	—
Administrative Officer	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	89	—
Administrative Assistant	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	21	—
Personal Secretary	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	10	—
Total	360	41	270	45	251·5	56

[1] Figures not available by grade.

OPCS staff in[2] statistical divisions (1 April)

Grade	1979		1984		1988	
	Administrative	Statistical	Administrative	Statistical	Administrative	Statistical
3	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	—	2
5	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	1	3
6	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	5	2
7	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	20	13
Senior Assistant Statistician	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	—	2
Assistant Statistician	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	—	2
Senior Executive Officer	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	30	—
Higher Executive Officer	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	60	—
Executive Officer	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	95	—
Administrative Officer	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	199	—
Administrative Assistant	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	65	—
Personal Secretary	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	18	—
Total	574	29	483	27	493	24

[1] Figures not available by grade.
[2] The figures in the White Paper "Government Statistical Services" (Cmnd. 8236) included some staff who worked in support of statistical divisions. These figures relate solely to staff in OPCS statistical divisions.

Departmental Advertising

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the latest figure for the estimated spending in 1988-89 by the National Health Service on *(a)* television advertising, *(b)* radio advertising, *(c)* newspaper advertising and *(d)* other promotional material.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 21 July 1988]:* The information for regional and district health authorities and family practitioner committees in England is not collected in-year and their annual accounts identify advertising expenditure in total only. For 1986-87 (the latest year available) the annual accounts of health authorities and the special health authorities for the London postgraduate teaching hospitals record total expenditure on advertising as £14,089,000 while the accounts of FPCs show £78,000. These costs are predominantly for staff recruitment advertisements in newspapers and professional journals.

The annual accounts of special health authorities and other bodies providing central services to the National Health Service (eg the central blood laboratories authority and the National Health Service training authority) do not separately identify expenditure on advertising, but given the size of their total expenditure, any such costs are not thought to be significant.

The Health Education Authority (the successor to the Health Education Council) is currently expected to incur expenditure on health promotional advertising campaigns in 1988-89 as follows:

	£000[1]
Television advertising	Nil
Radio advertising	450
Newspaper advertising	3,850
Other promotional material	3,200

[1] Estimated.

Social Science Research

Mr. George: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how much has been spent by his Department in each of the past five years on social science research; what percentage this constitutes of total departmental expenditure and of the Department's research budget; and how

much of the research has been undertaken *(a)* within his Department, *(b)* by universities and polytechnics and *(c)* by independent research organisations.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 27 July 1988]*: The readily available information is as follows. Totals include expenditure on research by non-departmental public bodies funded by the Department.

£ million

Year	*Social Science R and D*	*Percentage total expenditure*	*Percentage total R and D expenditure*	*Intramural*	*Universities etc.*	*Independent Research Organisations*
1982-83	9·1	0·02	29·4	0·6	3·9	1·0
1983-84	6·0	0·01	19·9	0·3	3·8	1·0
1984-85	5·8	0·01	21·2	0·3	4·0	1·0
1985-86	5·7	0·01	19·6	0·2	4·2	0·9
1986-87	5·6	0·01	11·3	[1]	4·1	1·0

[1] Information not available

Legionnaires' Disease

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if, in the light of the recent events at the BBC, he will introduce legislation to make it a criminal offence to be negligent in regard to the spreading of Legionnaires' disease; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: I am informed that up to now the Health and Safety Executive has taken the view that the general duties imposed under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 would be sufficient in this regard. Further consideration is, however, being given to the recommendations in the Employment Committee's report "Legionnaires' Disease in the Working Environment".

Hospital Generators (Maintenance Checks)

Mr. Hill: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will issue guidelines to health authorities to ensure that proper maintenance checks are carried out on hospital generators that provide electricity for operating theatres.

Mrs. Currie: I shall write to my hon. Friend.

Health Education Officers (North West RHA)

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many health education officers are employed by the North West regional health authority; and how many are assigned to the Bolton area.

Mrs. Currie: As at 30 September 1986, the latest date for which information is available centrally, the number of health education officers employed by North Western regional health authority and the number assigned to Bolton district health authority were as follows:

	Number
North Western RHA	[1]43
Bolton DHA	0

[1] Rounded to nearest whole time equivalents.

My hon. Friend may wish to contact the chairman of North Western regional health authority for more recent information.

Hospital and Health Centre Buildings

Mr. Ken Hargreaves: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the total amount paid in lieu of rates for hospital and health centre buildings by Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley district health authority for the years 1985-86, 1986-87, 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mrs. Currie: The annual accounts of the Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley health authority record total expenditure on contributions in lieu of rates as follows:

	£
1985-86	549,647
1986-87	620,864
[1]1987-88	457,555

[1] Provisional (ie unaudited) figure.

The reduced expenditure for 1987-88 largely reflects the transfer of administrative responsibility for the Brockhall hospital to the Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale health authority from 1 April 1987

For further information and expected expenditure in 1988-89 (which is not collected in-year) my hon. Friend may wish to contact the chairman of the Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley health authority.

Health Care (Bolton)

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients in the Bolton area received health care initiated by the health authority but provided outside the National Health Service during 1986, 1987 and 1988 to date.

Mrs. Currie: I regret that this information is not available centrally.

Methadone

Mr. Rathbone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much money each regional health authority has spent in each of its districts for methadone treatment for each of the most recent five years for which figures are available.

Mrs. Currie: I regret that the information requested is not held centrally.

Mr. Rathbone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what amount of methadone has been prescribed by general practitioners in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

Mrs. Currie: The number of prescriptions and the volumes of methadone dispensed by community pharmacists in England in each of the years 1983-1987 inclusive is as follows:

Methadone (thousands) *England*

Year	Number of prescriptions	Quantities dispensed Tablets	Mixture[1] (ml)	Linctus[2] (ml)	Injection (ampoules)
1983	105·9	1,443·0	10,064·9	6,713·0	502·6
1984	101·9	1,217·9	11,718·3	6,775·2	588·7
1985	128·6	1,048·6	17,328·8	5,538·4	398·1
1986	184·9	1,740·0	26,738·9	4,863·4	1,175·3
1987	243·5	1,875·2	50,408·3	3,865·2	1,525·8

Note:
These estimates are based on a sample of approximately 1 in 200 prescriptions dispensed in England by chemists and appliance contractors. Information on drugs dispensed in hospitals and by Dispensing doctors is not available.
[1] The mixture is 1mg/ml.
[2] The linctus is 2mg/5ml.

Home Start Consultancy

Mr. Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he intends to make a grant towards the administrative expenses of Home Start Consultancy; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: Ministers recognise the good work done by Home Start and other voluntary agencies in supporting families with difficulties, and are anxious to assist. The Department is increasing its grant towards the headquarters expenses of Home Start Consultancy to £45,000 per annum in 1988-89, 1989-90 and 1990-91, an increase of 50 per cent. over its previous three-year grant of £30,000.

This year Home Start Consultancy has been added to the list of national organisations giving small grants to local groups for under-fives and their families under the Department's small grants scheme. A total of £30,000 has been allocated to Home Start, of which up to £2,850 may be used towards administration costs.

In addition, Home Start Consultancy received an allocation of £180,000 from the retail prices index error money which was announced by my hon. Friend in his reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Wells (Mr. Heathcoat-Amory) on 3 May at columns *422-24*. Some of this money will be available to fund a new national inner cities officer post and to meet the related administrative expenditure.

Registration Service

Mr. Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made on the consultations on reforming the registration service announced by the Government on 3 December 1987, *Official Report*, House of Lords, column 1230.

Mrs. Currie: Those consultations have been completed and we now have the report of a working group set up by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys and the local authority associations, which has also taken the views of the staff associations and other interested parties and which has produced detailed recommendations for the modernisation of the service. Ministers accepted the working group's views as the basis for wider public consultation, and a consultative document based on them will be issued in the autumn.

Mentally Ill Patients

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give figures for each local authority area, for the number of patients suffering from mental illness that have, during the year 1986-87 been transferred from mental institutions to unregistered homes; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: In 1986, the latest year for which figures are available, 1,080 people were discharged into the community after stays of over five years (excluding those who were merely transferred from one hospital to another). On other issues related to this matter I shall write to my hon. Friend.

Supplementary Benefit

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish a table using the low-income families statistics 1985 showing how many people fell below supplementary benefit level, were on supplementary benefit or up to 40 per cent. above supplementary benefit level, analysed according to both economic and family status together.

Mr. Scott *[holding answer 22 June 1988]:* A note has been placed in the Library.

ENVIRONMENT

House Building

Mr. Forth: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give, for every county, borough and metropolitan district in England, the number of new dwellings built for each year since 1980.

Mr. Trippier: Housebuilding figures for each local authority area and county appear in the tables "Housebuilding in England by local authority areas, 1980 to 1987" which have today been placed in the Library. These incorporate late returns from several authorities and some revisions of earlier returns, received since figures for these years were published in "Local Housing Statistics". The tables will be published shortly by the Department.

Westminster City Council

Mr. McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he proposes to take to ensure that the events recorded in investigation 493/Y/82 by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration into a complaint against Westminster city council do not recur.

Mr. Trippier: The reference quoted is one used by the Commission for Local Administration, not the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration, whose remit does not cover London borough councils. The report shows shortcomings in the administration of various statutory provisions relating to housing. Such shortcomings, and their remedy, are a matter for the local housing authority not the Department.

Retail Prices Index

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what weight council house rents and mortgage interest payments have in the retail prices index; and if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the weight given to each in the index in each of the past 10 years, the annual increase in the price of each component and in the index as a whole, and the implied amount currently being spent under each heading.

Mr. Trippier: A separate index for local authority rents is not published. The weights and movements of the rent and mortgage interest components of the retail prices index have been as follows:

	Weight (out of 1,000)		*Percentage increase in year to January*		
	Rents	*Mortgage interest*	*Rents*	*Mortgage interest*	*R.P.I. (all items)*
1978	32	23	—	—	—
1979	32	31	9·4	38·8	9·3
1980	28	38	11·2	51·5	18·4
1981	30	42	22·7	15·1	13·0
1982	36	41	36·8	18·6	12·0
1983	36	30	11·0	−25·4	4·9
1984	35	39	4·8	24·8	5·1
1985	31	46	7·2	16·4	5·0
1986	29	54	7·4	18·4	5·5
1987	[1]34	44	5·9	8·6	3·9
1988	33	42	5·7	−3·7	3·3

[1]Until 1987 the figures for rent were net of rebates.

The implied amount being spent under the mortgage interest component is £8·13 per household per week. For rents the figure is £6·24. Both these figures represent an average (at January 1988 prices) taken over all households (both tenants and owner occupiers) covered by the RPI.

Rates and Taxes

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the forecast revenue from rates in the current financial year, and the estimated revenue from a 1 per cent. levy on the current value of *(a)* residential property, *(b)* agricultural and horticultural land and premises, *(c)* factories, and so on, *(d)* shops, *(e)* offices and *(f)* other land and premises; and if he will include a figure for the yield of a 1 per cent. tax on all personal incomes.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The forecast yield of rates in the United Kingdom for 1988-89 is £19·2 billion. The revenue from a 1 per cent. levy on estimated end 1986 market values is as follows:

	£ billion
Residential property	6·9
Agricultural land, buildings and forestry	0·3
Industrial buildings	0·3
Commercial buildings	1·9
Other buildings	1·1

The yield of a 1 per cent. tax on total household income in 1986 is estimated to be £3·1 billion. More up-to-date estimates are not yet available.

Homelessness

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what the homeless figures are for each of the last five years for *(a)* Doncaster and *(b)* England and Wales; how many of those are single homeless; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what is his estimate of the number of homeless single people for each of the last six years; what is his estimate of the number of homeless single persons for whom no authority is statutorily responsible; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: The numbers of households for whom Doncaster borough council reported accepting responsibility for securing accommodation in the years 1983 to 1986 appear in a table placed in the Library in May 1987. In 1987, 285 households were accepted.

Corresponding figures for England were included in the reply given to the hon. Member for Newcastle-upon-tyne, East (Mr. Brown) on 10 June, at columns 737-78. For Welsh figures I refer the hon. Member to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

The numbers of single people among the households accepted as homeless are not reported by local authorities and my Department has no estimates.

Recruitment and Promotion Policy

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what measures he has implemented to ensure that recruitment and promotion policy in his Department does not directly or indirectly discriminate against applicants who were mature students or women returning to work following a career break due to child care.

Mr. Ridley: My Department has a policy of fair and open competition in recruitment and promotion. The only upper age limit for new entrants recruited directly by the Department is that they need to be able to give five years' service before retirement. Staff are not normally selected for promotion within two years of retirement.

Women are encouraged to return to work by arrangements for reinstatement and by the availability of part-time working, job sharing, and special leave for domestic reasons.

Football Supporters

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects the compulsory membership scheme for football supporters to be fully operational; how much the scheme will cost; and how it will be funded.

Mr. Moynihan: I shall write to my hon. Friend.

Horsham District Council

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he received any application from councillors of Horsham district council for dispensation to vote on the proposal to transfer an empty council house to the Horsham Conservative Association;

(2) what account he has taken of the decision of Horsham council to vote on the proposal to transfer an empty council house to the Horsham Conservative Association in drawing up proposals for a revised national code of conduct for local government.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Yes. The two applications for the Secretary of State's dispensation under section 97(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 were dealt with in accordance with the long-established policy contained in DOE circular 105/73. Where a member's declared interest is immediate the prohibition on speaking and voting is generally strictly maintained, unless at least half the council or relevant committee would otherwise be

disabled. In the cases in question, some 35 of the 43 members of the council were disabled, and dispensations to speak and vote were given.

The White Paper on the "Conduct of Local Authority Business" (Cm. 433), published on 21 July, indicates that the Government will consult the local authority associations in drawing up a revised national code of local government conduct. We shall of course take account of all relevant information in doing so.

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will call in the decision of Horsham district council to grant planning permission to the Horsham Conservative Association to use an empty council house for its office; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley *[holding answer 26 July 1988]:* No. This is not a matter of national or regional importance. I understand that the premises currently used by the Horsham Conservative Association are due to be demolished as part of the town centre redevelopment scheme, and that Horsham district council has given planning permission for two years for the use of premises, also affected by the town centre redevelopment scheme, as offices.

Local Authority Finance

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table giving, for 1987-88 and a forecast for 1988-89, the information on local authority income given in table 16.18 of the 1988 edition of the "Annual Abstract of Statistics".

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The figures requested are not yet available.

London City Airport

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if his Department was consulted by the London Docklands development corporation over the application by London City airport to allow demonstration landings and take-offs by BAe 146 aircraft; and if any of his officials were present at the tests on 24 July.

Mr. Trippier: The London Docklands development corporation informed the Department that a planning application had been received and that planning permission has been granted allowing the London City airport to be used on three days for demonstration flights by British Aerospace 146 aircraft. No officials from my Department were present at the demonstration on 24 July.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make it his policy to order a full public inquiry to consider any application for the scheduled use of London City airport by BAe 146 aircraft; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: In the event of an application being made to the London Docklands development corporation my right hon. Friend will consider carefully whether it should be called in for public inquiry.

Lululla Arborea

Dr. Marek: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to his answer of 25 July, what form of minutes of the consultations between representatives of the European Economic Community member states concerned the proposal to include Lululla arborea in appendix II of the Berne convention are available to his Department; and to what extent such records reveal the indentity of those countries which raised objections to the inclusion of that bird in that appendix.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The consultation took place at a community co-ordination meeting in December 1987. The minutes of the proceedings of such meetings are normally confidential.

County Hall, London

Mr. Dykes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will take steps to procure the publication by the London Residuary Body of *(a)* all the relevant papers on the disposal of the County Hall, Embankment, SE1, including advice from consultants on granting a bid already rejected by a public inquiry, *(b)* the details of the agreement reached between the London Residuary Body and the development group, especially the conditions placed on the bid by both parties and *(c)* full details including scale drawings of the developer's proposals.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: These matters are commercially confidential.

Housing Action Trusts

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the management consultants commissioned to make recommendations on the setting up of housing action trusts; what is the total cost involved in those commissions; and when he expects their reports to be received.

Mr. Trippier: I shall write to the hon. Member shortly.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his current estimate of when the first housing action trusts will be set up; and which further local authority areas are currently being considered for future housing action trusts.

Mr. Trippier: Housing action trusts cannot be designated and established until the Housing Bill has received Royal Assent and the necessary orders have been approved by Parliament.

We have no current plans for further housing action trusts beyond those announced by my hon. Friend the then Minister for Housing and Planning on 11 July.

Homeless People

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to which bed-and-breakfast hotels in London will accept single homeless people without payment of rent in advance and as to what alternative accommodation is available to them.

Mr. Trippier: This information is not collected centrally. Single homeless people can approach their local authority for advice, or assistance, under part III of the Housing Act 1985.

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he has any plans to provide additional funds to those organisations providing shelter for homeless people;

(2) when his Department will be able to provide an estimate of the numbers of single homeless people in London;

(3) if he will provide an estimate of the numbers of single homeless people using direct access hostels each night.

Mr. Trippier: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Mr. Norman Hogg: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will outline the estimated costs to public funds of *(a)* keeping homeless families in hotels and *(b)* building new council houses for those families.

Mr. Trippier *[building answer 14 July 1988]:* Estimates of the revenue costs in 1986-87 in Greater London and English non-metropolitan districts were given by my hon. Friend the Minister for Housing and Planning in reply to the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) on 21 January, at column 826.

Corresponding estimates for English metropolitan districts are as follows:

New build	£3,200 per annum[1]
Bed and breakfast	£26 per day[2]

[1] Estimated average total first year costs to local authorities of a newly built dwelling, derived from information on costs (including land and fees) provided by authorities in housing subsidy. Costs vary widely between authorities and from year to year, reflecting differences in the mix of work and in land costs.

[2] Estimated average gross daily cost per household, based on returns to CIPFA from those authorities which reported both the number of household-days of bed and breakfast provided and the gross expenditure on it.

Caravan Sites

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the total number of sites approved by his Department under the Caravan Sites Act 1968 for each year since 1979; and the amount of money available for each year since 1979 in consequence of the Act.

Mr. Trippier: I shall write to the hon. Member shortly.

Local Government Superannuation Scheme

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will consider making the regulations necessary to allow part-time employees in local government to purchase back credits under the local government superannuation scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 11 July 1988, at column 43, to my hon. Friend the Member for Edmonton (Dr. Twinn).

Water Quality

Mr. Allan Roberts: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will estimate the costs of support to local authority environmental health departments in undertaking their statutory duties to regulate drinking water quality and recreational water quality after privatisation of the water industry;

(2) what arrangements are currently in hand to ensure independent auditing of drinking water quality after privatisation of the water industry;

(3) if he will name those individuals outside his Department presently advising the Department of the Environment on the regulation of drinking water quality after privatisation of the water industry;

(4) what outside advice he will be receiving on the regulation of recreational water quality after privatisation of the water industry.

Mr. Moynihan: I shall write to the hon. Member shortly.

National Rivers Authority

Mr. Allan Roberts: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will be accepting the recommendations of the regional water authorities of England and Wales that the proposed National Rivers Authority should have staffing levels approaching 6,000 persons.

Mr. Moynihan: The staffing levels of the National Rivers Authority will depend on final decisions on the schemes of organisation for the creation of their NRA units submitted by the water authorities.

Mr. Allan Roberts: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what will be the arrangements for ensuring access to independent analytical services on behalf of the National Rivers Authority; and if he will estimate the costs to public funds of such arrangements.

Mr. Moynihan: The National Rivers Authority advisory committee has emphasised the importance of the National Rivers Authority having adequate laboratory and analytical facilities within its own control. The precise arrangements for analytical services for the NRA and their costs must depend on final decisions on the schemes of organisation submitted by the water authorities.

Tower Hamlets (Disposal Consents)

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if, in respect of the application by the London borough of Tower Hamlets for disposal consent for Selby street, he will give the reasons for the delay between receipt by his Department of the application on 3 May and the request by the Department for additional information of 17 June; and if there is any necessary information which has still not been made available to the Department;

(2) if, in relation to the application by the London borough of Tower Hamlets for disposal consent for Masthouse terrace, he will give the reasons for *(a)* the delay between receipt by his Department of the application on 7 December 1987 and the request by the Department for additional information of 13 April and *(b)* for two separate requests for additional information having been made by the Department on 13 April and 20 May; and if there is any necessary information which has still not been made available to the Department;

(3) if, in relation to the application by the London borough of Tower Hamlets for disposal consent for the Hadrian estate, he will give the reasons for the delay between receipt by his Department of the application on 23 February and the request by the Department for additional information of 4 July; and if there is any necessary information which has still not been made available to the Department;

(4) if, in relation to the application by the London borough of Tower Hamlets for disposal consent for

Glenaffric avenue, he will give the reasons for his Department not having responded to the application since the council provided on 4 February all outstanding information requested by the Department; and if there is any necessary information which has still not been made available to the Department;

(5) pursuant to the answer of Monday 25 July to the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey, if he will list in relation to each of the outstanding applications for disposal consent from the London borough of Tower Hamlets *(a)* the names of all outside bodies from whom at any time since receipt of each application necessary information has not been available to his Department, *(b)* the items of necessary information which at any time since receipt of each application have not been available from outside bodies and *(c)* the dates on which outstanding necessary items of information have been provided by outside bodies to his Department.

Mr. Trippier: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Bed-and-Breakfast Accommodation

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the number of people in bed-and-breakfast accommodation in England paid for by public funds at the latest date for which statistics are available.

Mr. Trippier: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Sanitary Ware

Dr. Blackburn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will ensure that sanitary ware bearing the CE mark is not allowed in the United Kingdom market.

Mr. Trippier: I shall write to my hon. Friend shortly.

Plumbing

Dr. Blackburn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will ensure that products used in the plumbing industry in the United Kingdom not bearing the British Standard and water authority approval fail on safety aspects as laid down by British Standards;

(2) if he will ensure that the harmonisation of standards in 1992 in Europe takes into consideration the current low water plumbing pressures currently applicable in the United Kingdom;

(3) if he has any plans to change the British Standards for low water pressure systems in plumbing;

(4) what are the implications of the completion of the internal market for the legal status of water by laws and British Standards related to the plumbing industry; and if he will make a statement;

(5) if the Government intend to impose a 7·5 litre flushing action in the plumbing industry;

(6) when he expects to be able to establish acceptance by Europe of the United Kingdom low pressure domestic water system; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: I shall write to my hon. Friend shortly.

Former GLC Employees (Compensation)

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement regarding the non-payment of moneys owing for the year 1987-88 to former Greater London council employees who are beneficiaries of the Local Government Compensation Regulations 1986.

Mr. Gummer: I shall write to the hon. Member shortly.

Crown Suppliers

Mr. Speller: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he is yet in a position to say when the Crown Suppliers will be privatised; and what exclusive properties with particular reference to mailing lists they will retain.

Mr. Chope: I shall write to my hon. Friend shortly.

Housing Associations

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many new homes were provided by housing associations during 1987; and how many of these were built or refurbished for sale as *(a)* leasehold flats for the elderly, *(b)* old properties refurbished with improvement grants; and *(c)* shared ownership schemes.

Mr. Trippier: I shall write to my hon. Friend shortly.

Organisms (Releases)

Mr. Wood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has to strengthen his Department's ability to review the environmental implications of releases of non-indigenous and of genetically manipulated organisms.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: My right hon. Friend has decided to establish a committee of independent experts which will advise him on the ecological implications of releases of non-indigenous organisms and strengthen the Department's contribution to existing arrangements for evaluating the release of genetically manipulated organisms.

Sir Kenneth Blaxter has agreed to be chairman of the new committee and its full membership will be announced shortly.

The terms of reference of the committee are:

a) on an interim basis, pending advice from the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution and the Government's response to this, to advise the Department, on request, on matters relating to the ecological implications of releasing novel organisms and viruses (other than those already covered by existing product based controls);

b) to provide ecological advice to other Departments and Government agencies and advisory bodies at their request either through the Department or direct as appropriate and, in particular, to provide such advice to the Health and Safety Executive and the Advisory Committee on Genetic Manipulation on proposals for the planned release of genetically manipulated organisms into the environment.

Dartford (Planning Appeals)

Mr. Dunn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish in the *Official Report* the dates and details of each public inquiry held for planning appeals in the borough of Dartford since 1983; what length of time elapsed from the holding of each public inquiry to the issue of the decision; and how many planning appeals remain outstanding.

Mr. Chope: I shall write to my hon. Friend.

Birtenshaw Farm

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will now announce his decision on Birtenshaw farm; and what account he has taken of the advice of the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities on the sufficiency of land available for housing in the Greater Manchester area and on pressure on green field sites.

Mr. Chope: I shall write to my hon. Friend.

Rating Appeals

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish the length of time it takes for rating assessment appeals to be heard in authorities in West Yorkshire, giving a breakdown for each authority; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* A number of factors determine the time taken for an appeal to reach a local valuation court hearing. These include the complexity of the case, the workload of each of the parties to the appeal and the workload of the local valuation panel. On average, an appeal in west Yorkshire is heard by the local valuation court within nine to 12 months of its receipt.

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish the details of rating valuation assessments appeals in the West Yorkshire area, giving information as to agreements reached with the valuation offices and appeals submitted to the valuation courts; and if he will give a breakdown for each local authority area.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* During the year 1987-88 in the west Yorkshire area, 19,906 proposals by the valuation office to alter rateable values were settled without objection. A further 449 proposals by the Valuation Office, to which objections were received, were settled within the statutory period and 2,038 such proposals were passed to the local valuation panel as appeals to the local valuation court. In the same period, 1,800 proposals by ratepayers were settled within the statutory period and 4,860 proposals were passed to the local valuation panel as appeals. It is not possible in the time available to give a breakdown of these figures by local authority area.

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish a list of the outstanding rating valuation appeals for the Yorkshire and Humberside region, giving details of the appeals outstanding for each local authority area, and a breakdown of domestic and industrial appeals.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* The number of appeals outstanding at 30 June 1988 in the local valuation panels in the Yorkshire and Humberside region is as follows:

	Appeals
Humberside	1,848
North Yorkshire	1,107
South Yorkshire	1,837
West Yorkshire	4,594

It is not possible, in the time available, to give a breakdown of these figures by local authority area or to provide a breakdown between domestic and non-domestic appeals.

Derelict Land Grant

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether, having regard to the derelict land programme and paragraph 39(vii) of circular 27/87, derelict land grant is payable for wildlife habitat creation projects in addition to industrial housing and commercial projects.

Mr. Chope: I shall write to my hon. Friend shortly.

Sewers

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what provisions are to be made for communal sewers in gardens of properties to be included in the responsibilities of the water undertakers following privatisation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: I refer the hon. Member to the announcement of the outcome of the water and sewerage law review on 11 May 1988, at column 132.

River Thames

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what is his policy towards greater use of the River Thames; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if the Government will make it their policy to promote and uphold the environment of the River Thames; and if he will make a statement;

(3) what representations his Department has received requesting the Government to make greater use of the River Thames; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* I shall write to my hon. Friend.

Departmental Programmes

Mr. George: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much has been spent by his Department in each of the past five years on the evaluation of departmental programmes; and what proportion this constitutes of *(a)* the amount allocated for evaluation and *(b)* the Department's total budget.

Mr. Ridley *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* The process of evaluation of my Department's programmes is part of the work itself. It is therefore not possible to identify separately the resources involved.

Local Authority Finance

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish in the *Official Report*, in the same format as his reply of 13 July *Official Report*, columns *231-34*, an analysis of capital receipts on his programmes.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* The analysis is set out in the table.

	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91
Housing									
Housing Corporation	75	112	91	102	130	112	80	80	90
Other Central Government (Homeloan)	—	—	1	2	2	4	2	—	—
Local authorities	1,739	1,761	1,628	1,617	1,906	2,200	1,876	1,920	1,920
New Towns	63	84	88	64	98	119	110	80	70
Total	1,877	1,958	1,808	1,785	2,136	2,435	2,068	2,080	2,080
Other environmental services									
New Towns	72	79	83	138	171	312	311	180	150
Local environmental services	215	235	312	330	463	745	542	540	540
Total	287	314	395	458	534	1,057	853	720	690

Figures: 1982-83 to 1986-87—outturn; 1987-88—provisional outturn; 1988-89 to 1990-91—planned expenditure.

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish in the *Official Report* in the same format as his reply of 13 July, *Official Report*, columns *231-34*, a detailed analysis by nature of charge and functional area for total DOE housing expenditure and for local environmental services and other local authority current expenditure.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* For DOE housing expenditure, no further breakdown is available beyond the figures given in my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State's reply of 13 July. All the receipts for charges relate to local authorities' non-housing revenue account current expenditure.

Figures for local environmental services and other local authority current expenditure are as follows:

	Local environmental services	*Other local authority current* *Local authority rate collection*	*Records and registration of births, deaths and marriages*
	£'000	*£'000*	*£'000*
1982-83	575,722	2,713	9,545
1983-84	572,089	4,239	3,557
1984-85	687,624	4,569	9,578
1985-86	746,249	5,110	10,033
1986-87	816,651	5,061	10,530
1987-88	771,148	4,569	4,525
1988-89	700,920	4,848	9,893
1989-90	782,151	5,034	10,548
1990-91	750,594	5,197	11,038

Figures: 1982-83 to 1987-87—outturn; 1987-88—provisional outturn; 1988-89 to 1990-91—planned expenditure.

Public Expenditure

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish a table in the *Official Report*, in the same format as his reply of 13 July, *Official Report*, columns *231-4*, on receipts classified as charges in respect of his programme expenditure over the years 1982-83 to 1990-91, indicating the receipts in respect of running costs expenditure, together with a supplementary analysis indicating separately, the amount of receipts in respect of programme expenditure and of running costs expenditure estimated to have been met from other public expenditure programmes.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* The table gives information on charges made for the running costs of DOE (central). Equivalent information on programme expenditure was given in my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State's answer of 13 July.

£'000

	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91
Receipts in respect of running costs expenditure:									
Royal palaces, royal parks and royal armouries	—	—	—	259	511	—	—	—	—
Historic buildings, ancient monuments and national heritage	—	—	8	—	28	—	—	—	—
Departmental administration	28,309	29,410	29,138	29,138	33,316	34,905	35,149	36,028	36,928
Total	28,309	29,410	29,146	29,397	33,855	34,905	35,149	36,028	36,928
Of which included in running costs of other Government Departments[1]									
Royal palaces, royal parks and royal armouries	—	—	—	251	511	—	—	—	—
Historic buildings, ancient monuments and national heritage	—	—	8	—	—	—	—	—	—
Departmental administration	1,584	1,699	2,790	3,756	1,776	3,151	3,279	3,361	3,445
Total	1,584	1,699	2,798	4,007	2,282	3,151	3,279	3,361	3,445

[1] Information is available for charges falling on the running costs of other Departments, but not for those falling on other public expenditure programmes.
Figures:
1982-83 to 1986-87—outturn; 1987-88—provisional outturn; 1988-89 to 1990-91—planned expenditure.

London Theatres (Listed Building Status)

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the theatres in London with listed building status.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[holding answer 26 July 1988]:* The following theatre buildings in London have been listed:

Central London theatres
- Adelphi Theatre
- Albery Theatre
- Aldwych Theatre
- Ambassadors Theatre
- Apollo Theatre
- Bush Theatre (BBC Television Theatre)
- Camden Theatre
- The Coliseum
- Comedy Theatre
- Criterion Theatre
- Domnar Warehouse
- Duke of York's Theatre
- Garrick Theatre
- Globe Theatre
- Golders Green Hippodrome
- Her Majesty's Theatre
- Jeanette Cochrane Theatre
- London Palladium
- Lyceum Theatre
- Lyric Theatre, Shaftesbury Avenue
- New Victoria
- Old Vic
- Palace Theatre
- Phoenix Theatre
- Playhouse Theatre
- Queens Theatre
- The Round House
- Royal Court Theatre
- Royal Opera House
- Sadlers Wells
- St. Martins Theatre
- Savoy Theatre
- Shaftesbury Theatre
- Strand Theatre
- Theatre Royal, Drury Lane
- Theatre Royal, Haymarket
- Vaudeville Theatre
- Victoria Palace
- Wyndhams

Outside Central London
- Grand Theatre, Wandsworth
- Hackney Empire
- Hoxton Hall
- Richmond Theatre
- Theatre Royal, Stratford East
- Wiltons Music Hall, Tower Hamlets
- Wimbledon Theatre

Housing Association Tenants (Transfer Discounts)

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he is taking to enable housing association tenants of pre-HAG properties to benefit from HOTCHA transfer discounts.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* Section 45 of the Housing Associations Act 1985 limits the HOTCHA scheme to tenants of houses or flats provided with the help of housing association grant.

Housing Associations (Share Purchase Schemes)

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he is taking to encourage housing associations to provide share purchase schemes for existing and future tenants.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* In 1987-88 the Housing Corporation approved shared ownership schemes providing 776 new homes. The corporation's development programme for 1988-89 will allow expansion of shared ownership and other forms of provision for low cost home ownership by housing associations. My noble Friend the Minister for Housing has written to my hon. Friend.

Sewage Discharges

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he has reviewed the consents given to the Anglian water authority in December 1986 to discharge sewage into the estuary after 31 December 1987, in terms of the permission given; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what recent advice he has had from the Thames water authority about the quality of bathing water in Southend-on-Sea; and if he will make a statement;

(3) if he will review his decision of December 1986 about the treatment of sewage by the Anglian water authority in the Southend area; and if he will make a statement;

(4) what advice he has had from the Anglian water authority about the delays in the construction to the extended outfall in Southend-on-Sea; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* I will write to my hon. Friend.

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what measures he will take to ensure that all sewage treatment works meet the requisite effluent discharge standards; what proposals he has to encourage water authorities to make the necessary financial investment; whether the Government will relax controls on water authority capital expenditure in order to stimulate the necessary investment; and whether he will impose a deadline on discharge standards being met;

(2) if he will list for each year since 1974, by water authority, the percentage of sewage treatment works that have failed to meet their effluent discharge standards;

(3) if he will state the number of occasions on which he has reviewed the effluent discharge standards laid upon specific water authority sewage treatment works; and for how many works the effluent discharge standards were relaxed following review;

(4) if he will, by water authority region, list the names of those water authority sewage treatment works that failed to meet their effluent discharge standards in 1987, the measures that are proposed for each of these works to bring them up to standard, and the year by which it is anticipated that they will have been brought up to standard.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* I shall write to the hon. Member.

Council House Sales

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is now the total number of council houses which have been sold under the right to buy provisions of the Housing Act 1980 to sitting tenants; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* 709,000 dwellings in England have been sold by local authorities and new towns under the right-to-buy legislation up to March 1988.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish in the *Official Report* a list of the number of council houses which have been sold under the Housing Act 1980 to sitting tenants of each local authority since 1982.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* I shall write to my hon. Friend.

Slurry and Silage Facilities

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) whether the regulations to be made under section 31(4) of the Control of Pollution Act 1974, controlling the construction of slurry and silage facilities, will cover existing as well as new and extended facilities;

(2) when he proposes to introduce regulations under section 31(4) of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 to control the construction of new or extended silage and slurry facilities, as outlined in paragraph 3.11 of "Observations by the Government on the Third Report of the Environment Committee on the Pollution of Rivers and Estuaries".

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* I shall write to the hon. Member.

Rating Reform

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what would be the average total community charge payable in 1988-89, with the community charge fully operational, and using 1988-89 figures for local authority total expenditure and population, by the following categories of income units: *(a)* all income units in England and Wales on income support, *(b)* all income units in the United Kingdom on income support, *(c)* all income units consisting of a single person with or without dependent children, who is not cohabiting and is on income support, *(d)* all income units consisting of a married or cohabiting couple, with or without dependent children, who are on income support, and *(e)* all income units on income support where the claimant is aged less than 25 years, giving the averages for each category for each region.

Mr. Gummer *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* The information requested is not available. I shall write to the hon. Member.

Social Science Research

Mr. George: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much has been spent by his Department in each of the past five years on social science research; what percentage this constitutes of total departmental expenditure and of the Department's research budget; and how much of the research has been undertaken *(a)* within his Department, *(b)* by universities and polytechnics and *(c)* by independent research organisations.

Mr. Ridley *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* The figures for expenditure on research for 1982-83, 1983-84, 1984-85, 1985-86 and 1986-87 are as follows:

£ million

	1982-83	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*
Total research and development[1]	39·0	36·9	41·0	48·8	63·5
Total social science and humanities	1·2	1·5	1·9	1·9	2·6
Social science and humanities as a percentage of total research and development	3·1 per cent.	4·1 per cent.	4·6 per cent.	3·9 per cent.	4·1 per cent.
Research and development for social science by universities and higher education	0·4	0·3	0·4	0·3	0·3
Research and development for social science by independent research organisations	0·1	0·03	0·01	0·0	0·08

[1] Total research and development for science and technology and social science and humanities.

The figures above relate to the available information for gross expenditure on research and development by DOE, including that performed elsewhere in central Government, for research and development in total and for social science and humanities.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Household Incomes

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will provide a breakdown of the rise in real household incomes by household type between 1979 and 1985 for the bottom 10 per cent. and top 10 per cent. of individuals in the manner of his answer to the hon. Member for Liverpool, West Derby (Mr. Wareing), 16 June, *Official Report*, column *279*.

Mr. Scott: The information requested is set out in the table:

Increases in real average incomes of individuals in households 1979 to 1985
(Adjusted for family size and composition, before housing costs)

Family type	*Below 10 per cent.*	*Above 90 per cent.*
Married pensioner	2	16
Single pensioner	5	11
Married with children	13	17
Married without children	4	20
Single with children	5	21

Family type	Below 10 per cent.	Above 90 per cent.
Single without children	15	16
All family types	6	18

Notes to table

1. Further details on methods and assumptions can be found in "Households Below Average Income: A Statistical Analysis, 1981-85", copies of which are in the Library. Also relevant is "Low Income Statistics—Report Of A Technical Review", May 1985, which is also in the Library.
2. Household income is defined after the payment of any income tax and national insurance and the receipt of any social security benefits. Individuals within households have been ranked by their (equivalent) household income.

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will publish a table showing the increase in real income between (i) 1981 and 1983 and (ii) 1983 and 1985 for tables A1,3; C1,3; D1,3 and F1,3 from "Households Below Average Income: A Statistical Analysis".

Mr. Scott *[holding reply 22 June 1988]:* A note has been placed in the Library.

Benefits

Mrs. Wise: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many people have lost housing benefit as a result of the replacement of free milk and free school dinners by a cash payment which is then reckoned as income for the purpose of calculating housing benefit *(a)* in Preston and *(b)* nationally.

Mr. Scott: Compensation is provided in the basic rates of family credit for the loss of entitlement to free school meals and free welfare milk. We estimate that 160,000 people nationally saw a reduction in their housing benefit as a result of this; but this reduction will have been more than outweighed by the increase in family credit. Information is not available other than on a national basis.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the amount by which child benefit could be increased on a revenue neutral basis, if taxable, the gross and net cost to the Exchequer of raising the benefit to £20 for the first child and £15 for subsequent children, the estimated saving to public authorities as a result of the consequential reduction in other benefits, the tax saving from the abolition of the additional allowance for income tax purposes, and the estimated distribution of individual child benefits by range of income and tax status of their parents or guardians;

(2) how many adult male and female workers have been unemployed for one, two and three complete years, respectively; and whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the cost of paying each person a bonus of four weeks' benefit for each complete year of unemployment;

(3) how many children are being helped by payments from social security under the various headings and at what cost to the national insurance fund; how many would still need help if child benefit were raised to £20 taxable for the first and £15 taxable for subsequent children; and at what cost to the national insurance fund;

(4) how many unemployed adult males and females of working age have exhausted their entitlement to unemployment benefit; what is his estimate of the gross cost of removing the time limit in the case of *(a)* males and *(b)* females; and what would be the saving in each case in (i) other benefits and (ii) increased tax.

Mr. Scott: I will write to the hon. Member.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many working days, on average, his Department's offices take to deal with supplementary benefit claims *(a)* nationally and *(b)* in Doncaster.

Mr. Scott: Supplementary benefit was replaced by income support from 11 April 1988. The average clearance times for claims to income support between 11 April to 30 June is as follows:

	Days
National	5·8
Doncaster East local office	3·0
Doncaster West local office	6·5

Source: Internal Management Statistics. This information is provisional and subject to amendment).

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will publish a table showing the value of *(a)* child benefit and *(b)* invalidity benefit for a married couple as a proportion of average net earnings for all males and all manually employed males for each year between November 1978 and the latest date available.

Mr. Scott: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security which types of accommodation currently qualify for funding under schedule 5 to the Supplementary Benefits Act 1976.

Mr. Scott: Schedule 5 to the Supplementary Benefits Act 1976, as amended, lays a duty on the Secretary of State to provide and maintain resettlement units at which persons without a settled way of life are afforded temporary board and lodging with a view to influencing them to lead a more settled life. That duty may be discharged by the actual provision of units, or by funding local authorities or voluntary organisations to do so, provided the purpose of these facilities is similar to that of resettlement units. My right hon. Friend the Member for Braintree (Mr. Newton) announced in February 1985 that we intended to move towards the closure of the directly administered units and use the money saved to finance further facilities to be set up and run by local authorities and voluntary organisations.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether he will now place further advertisements in national and regional newspapers advising pensioners how to apply for transitional payments in respect of housing benefit increases.

Mr. Scott: Yes. A two-week advertising campaign in national newspapers began on Thursday 28 July.

Ms. Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if there is a final date for applications for the transitional additions payable in respect of people who lost as a result of the introduction of the new housing benefit system.

Mr. Scott: No cut-off date for applications has yet been announced.

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is the estimated administrative cost per successful application for housing benefit transitional payments made by the Glasgow unit.

Mr. Scott: It will not be possible to provide the information requested until we know more about the number of successful applications and the final cost of setting up the transitional payments unit.

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is the total planned expenditure for advertising the availability of housing benefit transitional protection.

Mr. Scott: The first stage of an advertising campaign publicising changes to housing benefit capital rules and transitional payments appeared in the national press at the end of May at a cost of £263,000. The second stage of this campaign began on Thursday 28 July and will cost £248,000. This is the total planned expenditure on advertising the changes to date.

Family Credit

Mr. Heddle: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will investigate why Mrs. V. Brady of 51 The Uplands, Great Haywood, Staffordshire, has not received her family credit since 24 May last; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: I will write to my hon. Friend.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will state the number and proportion of claimants of family credit whose income is currently above *(a)* the national insurance threshold, and *(b)* the tax threshold.

Mr. Scott: This information is not available in respect of the people actually receiving family credit. However, on the same basis as the estimates in "Impact of the reformed structure of income-related benefits: October 1987", but using the 1988-89 thresholds, the breakdown is as follows:

	Number	*Proportion per cent.*
(a) Family credit recipients with incomes above the national insurance threshold	435,000	98
(b) Family credit recipients with incomes above the tax threshold	350,000	78

Ms. Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is the average time between claiming family credit and a payment order book being dispatched to the claimant.

Mr. Scott: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Sunderland, North (Mr. Clay) on 7 July at column *725*.

Departmental Offices (Norwich)

Mr. John Garrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security in respect of the local offices of his Department at Chantry house and Baltic house, Norwich, broken down by staffing grades *(a)* what is the current staffing complement, *(b)* how many permanent staff are currently in post, *(c)* how many temporary staff are currently in post, *(d)* how many staff members are currently being trained, *(e)* how many qualified officers are engaged in training staff and *(f)* what is the annual turnover of permanent staff.

Mr. Scott: The information requested is as follows:

Chantry Integrated Local Office, Chantry House

Grade	*Complement 1988-89*	*Permanent staff in post 1 July 1988*	*Temporary staff in post 1 July 1988*	*Turnover*
Principal	1	1	—	—
Senior Executive Officer	1	1	—	1
Higher Executive Officer	8	8	—	2
Local Officer 1	51	51·5	—	4
Local Officer 2	79	89·5	—	10
Administrative Assistant	27	29·5	3	5
Typist	4	4	—	1
Messenger	3	3	—	—
TOTAL	174	187·5	3	23

On 21 July 1988 there were no staff members being trained or engaged in training.

Mountergate Integrated Local Office, Baltic House

Grade	*Complement 1988-89*	*Permanent staff in post 1 July 1988*	*Temporary staff in post 1 July 1988*	*Turnover*
Principal	1	1	—	—
Senior Executive Officer	1	1	—	—
Higher Executive Officer	9	9	—	—
Local Officer 1	59	55·5	—	2·5
Local Officer 2	89	100	—	14
Administrative Assistant	31	31	2	6·5
Typist	4	3·5	0·5	—
Messenger	2	2	—	—
TOTAL	196	203	2·5	23

On 21 July 1988 there were five Local Officer 2s being trained and one Local Officer 1 engaged in training.

The information regarding turnover relates to the period 1 April 1987 to 31 March 1988.

Family Income Supplement

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will state the number and proportion of claimants of family income supplement whose income was above *(a)* the national insurance threshold and *(b)* the tax threshold for each year since 1978.

Mr. Scott: This information could be provided only at disproportionate expense.

Job Sharing

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many job sharing and part-time working is encouraged in his Department; by whom and where it is publicised; and with what results.

Mr. Scott: The provisions for job sharing and part-time working are published in departmental circulars which are drawn to the attention of all staff. The Department's house journal, "Window", has also included occasional articles on part-time working. At 31 March 1988, the latest date for which figures are available, 596 women and 12 men were job sharing and 4,844 women and 109 men were working part-time.

Social Fund

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) what information he has on the take-up of loans and grants from the social fund; what were the projected take-up levels for the period from the introduction of the social fund to the present time; what has been the actual take-up shown by the latest available data; and if he will make a statement;

(2) how much he anticipated would be allocated by officers of his Department by way of community care grants to date; how much has been allocated; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: As my hon. Friend announced in his reply to the hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) on 6 May, at column *656*, monthly information on the operation of the social fund in individual local offices, including figures for both applications and awards, is available in the Library. The national model profile of expected expenditure was contained in my hon. Friend's reply to the hon. Member for Derby, South on 11 July, at column *61*. This was based on the established pattern of seasonal variation in expenditure for single payments. Provisional figures show that in the period up to the end of June, £17 million was awarded for loans (60 per cent. of expected expenditure) and £4 million was awarded for community care grants (29 per cent. of expected expenditure).

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what are the total number of *(a)* loans and *(b)* grants made under the social fund for April, May and June of this current year for each London social security office; and what are the projected payments for the financial year 1988-89.

Mr. Scott: Information on the operation of the social fund and on allocations for 1988-89 is in the Library.

Earnings-related Supplement

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is his estimate of the cost to the national insurance fund in the current financial year of restoring the earnings-related supplement on the basis which applied before the Social Security (No. 2) Act 1980 for unemployed people only, what would be the saving in tax and other benefits; and how many males and females would benefit.

Mr. Scott: Information on which to base estimates is not available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Over-80s (Pensions)

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how much it would cost, net of income support, to uprate the over-80s pension to the level of the basic retirement pension; and how many pensioners would be affected.

Mr. Scott: I regret that the information requested is not available.

Social Security Budget

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing in terms of 1985 prices expenditure under the social security budget under the principal heads in 1986-87 and 1987-88; and if he will include his estimate for 1988-89.

Mr. Scott: The information requested is set out in the table. The figures are based on the cash provision shown in the public expenditure White Paper published in January 1988.

Expenditure[1] in 1985-86 prices[2] divided by broad groups of beneficiary Great Britain

£ million

	1986-87	*1987-88*	*1988-89*
Elderly people	20,370	20,490	20,400
Sick and disabled people	6,020	6,330	6,500
Unemployed people	6,690	5,980	5,800
Widows and orphans	1,090	1,040	1,000
Family benefits[3]	6,960	6,910	7,000
Administration	1,880	2,060	2,100
Total	43,010	42,810	42,800

Notes:

[1] Analysis covers all public expenditure on the social security programme.

[2] Converted to 1985-86 prices using the GDP deflator.

[3] Includes housing benefit paid to people in work.

Benefit Payments Errors

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is the percentage rate of benefit payments errors at his Department's offices *(a)* as a national average and *(b)* in Doncaster.

Mr. Scott: In the period 11 April 1988 to 30 June 1988 the average error rates, nationally and for the two Doncaster offices, were as follows:

	National Per cent.	Doncaster East Per cent.	Doncaster West Per cent.
Contributory benefits	4·6	2·2	5·2
Income support and Supplementary benefit	11·4	4·2	7·7

Departmental Recruitment and Promotion Policy

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what measures he has implemented to ensure that recruitment and promotion policy in his Department does not directly or indirectly discriminate against applicants who were mature students or women returning to work following a career break due to child care.

Mr. Scott: The Department operates an equal opportunities policy aimed at avoiding discrimination. All those involved in recruitment and promotion selection are issued with guidance on how to avoid unfair and unjustifiable discrimination. Chairmen of recruitment and promotion boards are required to ensure that no discrimination of any kind, direct or indirect, is allowed to prejudice the assessment and selection of candidates. Boards' decisions and the reasons for them, which are required to be recorded, must be impartial and restricted to matters relevant to the job and a candidate's ability for it.

Unclaimed Benefits

Mr. David Howell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what was the total sum of unclaimed social security benefits in the latest convenient 12-month period.

Mr. Scott: I refer my hon. Friend to paragraphs 21 to 25 and table 15.17 on pages 272 to 273 of Cm. 288, the 1988 public expenditure White Paper.

Income Support

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will list for each of his Department's local offices in London postal districts *(a)* the numbers of income support recipients at each London office in the week beginning 11 April, *(b)* the numbers of income support recipients in receipt of transitional additions in the week beginning 11 April, at each London office, and *(c)* the numbers of income support recipients with the transitional addition who are pensioners, families with two parents, single parents, recipients of disability premium and other categories of claimants.

Mr. Scott: I regret that this information is not available.

Ms. Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many people transferred from supplementary benefit to income support were, on 11 April, receiving a transitional protection payment under the income support regulations, for each of his Department's local offices of Redcar, Middlesbrough, Eston, Hartlepool and Stockton.

Mr. Scott: I regret that this information is not available.

Pensioners (Benefits)

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) if he will detail at what level income support is paid to those persons of pensionable age who are *(a)* single and *(b)* married; what additional expenditure on the part of the claimant is taken into account for this purpose; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will detail the criteria laid down for determining the level of benefit paid to *(a)* single pensioners and *(b)* married pensioners; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: Assuming that the pensioner is not responsible for a child or young person and has no eligible housing costs, the information is as follows:

Premium Entitlement	(a) Single £	(b) Couple £
Pensioner premium	44·05	67·70
Higher Pensioner Premium	46·45	70·05
Higher Pensioner Premium and severe disability premium	71·70	[1]94·80 [2]119.55

[1] One qualifies.
[2] Both qualify.

The criteria for entitlement to the premiums are set out in schedule 2 to the Income support (General) Regulations 1987, (SI 1987 No. 1967).

The personal allowances take account of the average additional expenditure arising from the claimant's responsibility, from April, for 20 per cent. of his general rates, and water rates.

In setting the rates for personal allowances and premiums, the available resources were directed at those groups most in need, including pensioners. This more effective targetting is a central objective of the social security reforms.

Community Care Grants

Ms. Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security on what assumption the social fund community care grants budget for 1989-90 will be set.

Mr. Scott: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) on 8 July at column *787*.

Supplementary Benefit

Ms. Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) how many people were *(a)* in receipt of supplementary benefit on 1 April, and *(b)* in receipt of income support on 1 May for each of his Department's local offices of Redcar, Middlesbrough, Eston, Hartlepool and Stockton;

(2) if he will give the number of, or estimates of, people who were, in November 1987 *(a)* in receipt of supplementary benefit and *(b)* dependent upon supplementary benefit, in respect of his Department's offices of Redcar, Middlesbrough, Eston, Hartlepool and Stockton.

Mr. Scott: The numbers of people in receipt of supplementary benefit and income support in November 1987 and May 1988, the closest dates available, are as follows:

	Redcar	Middlesbrough	Local Offices Eston	Hartlepool	Stockton
Number of people in receipt of supplementary benefit at 17 November 1987	9,492	23,141	8,445	12,365	20,321
Number of people in receipt of income support at 31 May 1988	8,528	20,714	7,572	11,083	17,597

Source: 100 per cent. of cases in action which includes a small number of cases not actually in receipt of benefit. These figures may, however, overstate the number of people receiving supplementary benefit. The footnote to the reply given to my hon. Friend the Member for Hyndburn (Mr. Hargreaves) on 31 March 1988, at columns *660-61*, refers.

Note: This information is provisional and subject to amendment.

I regret that information on the number of people dependent upon supplementary benefit is not available at local level.

Form AG1

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what actions have been taken by his Department in respect of incomplete or false declarations on form AG1; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: Generally, incomplete claim forms AG1 are returned to the claimant drawing attention to the omissions. Such claims are given priority when they are resubmitted. If a deliberately false declaration were to be detected or suspected further investigation would be carried out and appropriate action taken.

National Insurance Retirement Pension

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is his estimate of how many people over pensionable age are receiving national insurance retirement pension, either basic, additional or graduated, of less than £1 per week.

Mr. Scott: The information is not available in the exact form requested. However, at 28 June 1988, a total of 143,642 pensioners had entitlement to small amounts of additional pension or graduated retirement benefit of £2 a week or less.

Benefit Claimants

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is his latest information regarding the number of claimants who as a result of delays in the processing of *(a)* the new family credit benefits and *(b)* the reimbursement of housing benefit losses resulting from the changes in April have incurred debt.

Mr. Scott: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Mr. David Howell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what it the total aggregated sum of unclaimed social security benefits; whether he will make arrangements for such sums to be held and accounted separately; and whether he will now make plans to distribute these sums in the form of capital sums to appropriate recipients.

Mr. Lester: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will publish a table showing the number of people claiming *(a)* supplementary benefit-income support, *(b)* rent rebates-allowances, *(c)* rate rebates and *(d)* family income supplement-family credit, in each year since 1975, including estimates for 1988, distinguishing between pensioners and those of working age and between certificated and standard housing benefit.

Mr. Scott: I shall write to my hon. Friends.

Transitional Protection Unit, Glasgow

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many staff are employed by the transitional protection unit at Glasgow; and what is the estimated annual pay bill.

Mr. Scott: On 28 July, there were 505 staff in post in the transitional payments unit. This number will reduce quickly as applications are assessed and payments are made. The manpower cost is estimated as follows:

	£000
1988-89	3,000
1989-90	1,500
1990-91	900
1991-92	600

Norcross Office, Blackpool

Sir John Farr: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) what is the average waiting time before a matter referred to his Department's office at Norcross, Blackpool, is cleared up;

(2) what is the policy of his Department's office at Norcross, Blackpool, on acknowledging correspondence from the general public; and how long on average that takes.

Mr. Scott: I shall write to my hon. Friend.

Disabled Pensioners (RPI Error)

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what plans he has to pay additional compensation to severely disabled war and industrially injured pensioners who lost significantly more than £8 as a result of the error in the calculation of the retail prices index.

Mr. Scott: I explained to the House on 18 December that we would be paying additional compensation to severely disabled war and industrially injured pensioners who have lost significantly more than £8—the amount of the special payment made in February. Losses over £8 incurred by these two groups range from nothing at all to some £60 over the full two years affected by the error—April 1987 to April 1989.

We have decided to make additional special payments to everyone in these two groups whose loss exceeds £8 by £10 or more: that is, by more than about 10p a week over the full two years affected. The ranges of loss in excess of £8, the weekly benefit entitlements to which they relate and the amounts of additional payments are shown in the table. The relationship between loss and weekly benefit

entitlement is not the same for both groups; this is because war pensioners can receive several additions to benefit which were not affected by the error.

We expect to start making these additional payments in September.

£s

War pensioners (weekly entitlement)	Industrially injured pensioners (weekly entitlement)	Loss exceeds £8 by between	Amount of additional payment
Over 230	—	50-60	55
Between 190-230	Over 170	40-50	45
Between 150-190	Between 130-170	30-40	35
130-150	115-130	20-30	25
100-130	100-115	10-20	15

Community Charge Rebate Regulations

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what steps he is taking to introduce community charge rebates regulations to have effect in Scotland in 1989-90.

Mr. Scott: Before rebate regulations can be laid, the Social Security Act 1986 has to be modified to provide the necessary statutory powers. It is our intention to lay the modification regulations as soon as possible after the Local Government Finance Bill receives Royal Assent. These regulations, which will be made under section 24 of the Abolition of Domestic Rates (Etc.) Scotland Act 1987, will provide for the introduction of Housing Benefit (Community Charge Rebate) Regulations. Once the modification regulations have been made, formal consultation with the local authority associations will begin on the draft community charge rebate regulations. In the meantime, Scottish local authorities have already received a substantial part of the draft regulations and we shall be issuing a complete draft to them shortly.

Relocation

Mr. Michael Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow) of 23 June, *Official Report*, columns *723-24*, he will now make a statement on the relocation of work in his Department from London.

Mr. Scott: We have decided to go ahead with relocating some work from local offices in London broadly on the scale recommended in the report, "The Business of Service", which was published on 24 June. Consideration is still being given to the possibility of relocating some headquarters work.

Child Benefit

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will give the number of families in receipt of child benefit and the average percentage of family income for 1979 and 1988-89 derived from child benefit for the *(a)* bottom 10 per cent., *(b)* bottom 30 per cent., *(c)* bottom 50 per cent. and *(d)* top 50 per cent. of families.

Mr. Scott *[holding answer 14 July 1988]:* The information is as follows:

Percentage contribution of child benefit to the incomes of households with children below various percentiles of the whole population

	Percentile of the income distribution			
	Below 10 per cent.	*Below 30 per cent.*	*Below 50 per cent.*	*Above 50 per cent.*
1979	19	13	10	5
1985	18	14	11	4

Notes to table

1. The income measure used is the same in all respects as that used in "Households Below Average Income: A Statistical Analysis, 1981-85" and is before housing costs.
2. The percentile points in the table are for the whole population, but the analysis is for households with children only. A corresponding analysis demonstrating the percentage contribution of child benefit to the incomes of all individuals below the percentile points shown can be found in HBA1, table G on page 24 of the tables.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the latest estimated distribution of children qualifying for child benefit by parental status and by range of parental income.

Mr. Scott *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* Information about the incomes of families receiving child benefit is not routinely collected. The following estimates of the distribution of children by gross parental income in 1988-89 are therefore made on the basis of sample survey data which are subject to normal sampling and response variation. "Parental status" has been interpreted to mean economic status.

Number of children by gross family income

Thousands

Band of gross family income	Parental (economic) status			
	Full-time work[1]	*Unemployed*[2]	*Other*[3]	*Total*
Under £5,000	30	210	540	780
£5–10,000	1,600	870	880	3,350
£10–15,000	3,140	—[4]	60	3,210
£15–20,000	2,250	—[4]	—[4]	2,280
£20–25,000	1,140	—[4]	—[4]	1,150
£25,000–50,000	1,170	—[4]	—[4]	1,180
Above £50,000	180	—[4]	—[4]	180
	9,510	1,100	1,501	12,120

Notes:

(1) With the additions noted below, this answer is provided on the same basis as set out in my reply of 7 June to my hon. Friend the Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett) at columns *371-72*.

(2) Economic status categories are based on the FES:

[1] Full-time work: either head or spouse in full-time work (over 24 hours per week).

[2] Unemployed: either head or spouse unemployed and neither in full-time work. The definition of unemployment is self-reported in the FES and does not correspond to receipt of an unemployment related benefit.

[3] Other: includes part-time workers, economically inactive/one-parents, sick and disabled and early retired.

[4] sample numbers are too small to provide a detailed breakdown.

Resettlement Units

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security which schemes of alternative provision for his Department's resettlement units have been approved; how much in each case has been provided for capital and revenue spending; and how much per head on capital and revenue this is for each scheme.

Mr. Scott *[holding answer 19 July 1988]:* Schemes for alternative provision for resettlement units approved to date, and the sums to be provided by the Department, are as follows:

Scheme	*Approved capital cost* £ million	*Average capital cost per bedspace* £	*Approved revenue cost (PA)* £	*Average revenue cost per bedspace* £
Camberwell	4·46	20,400	1,420,000	1,500
Brighton	1·130	15,300	143,000	1,900
South West	1·5	10,500	223,000	1,600
Liverpool	0·76	21,500	224,000	6,200
York	—	—	81,000	4,500
Southampton	2·436	14,100	313,000	1,800
Derby	2·0	17,500	356,000	3,100
Humberside	0·43	13,900	194,000	6,300
North Staffordshire	0·42	14,000	130,000	4,300
Manchester	1·88	12,000	463,000	3,000

Notes:

All figures are at 1987-88 prices.

Each approved scheme includes a number of separate projects of different sizes and catering for a variety of needs. Accordingly the planned cost of individual projects varies. In addition, some projects will be eligible for Hostel Deficit grant from DOE; funds from other sources eg local authorities and voluntary organisations may also be available.

For these reasons it is not possible to make direct comparisons between the relative costs of schemes as shown in the table.

Spending Power

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will publish tables using the data and assumptions in his answer to the hon. Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden) on 22 June, *Official Report*, columns 575-80, but using expenditure and benefit figures appropriate for similar families in Newcastle upon Tyne together with a column showing the extent of the differences that would have resulted from the April benefit changes.

Mr. Nicholas Scott *[holding answer 11 July 1988]:* I have today placed the appropriate tables in the Library.

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will publish tables using the data and assumptions in his answer to the hon. Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden) on 22 June, *Official Report*, columns *575-80*, but using expenditure and benefit figures appropriate for similar families in *(a)* Wear Valley district council, *(b)* Derwentside district council and *(c)* Durham county together with a column showing the extent of the differences that would have resulted from the April benefit changes.

Mr. Scott *[holding answer 25 July 1988]:* The information requested for Wear Valley district council and Derwentside district council has been placed in the Library. I regret that similar tables cannot however, be prepared for Durham county.

Transitional Payments

Mr. McKelvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many claimants have applied for transitional payment benefit in *(a)* Kilmarnock; *(b)* Ayrshire and *(c)* Scotland as a whole; how many in these classifications have had their benefit calculated; and how many are in receipt of the benefit.

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many people in the constituency of Strathkelvin and Bearsden have applied for housing benefit transitional payments; and what is his estimate of the number who will qualify and when he expects them to be paid.

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) what is the average waiting time for claimants receiving transitional payments in his Department's Dundee, East and Dundee, West offices;

(2) how many applications for transitional payments have been made at his Department's Dundee, East and Dundee, West offices; how many of these have been processed; and how many payments have been paid.

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many people have applied for transitional payment benefit in *(a)* Greenock and Port Glasgow, *(b)* the Strathclyde region and *(c)* Scotland as a whole; how many in these have had their benefit assessed; and how many are now in receipt of such benefit.

Mr. Scott *[holding answers 14 July, 18 July and 20 July 1988]:* Information in the form requested is not available. In due course, statistics will be collected within the transitional payments unit to determine the number of applications received, the number of payments made and the time taken to process applications on a national basis, but they are unlikely to be available on either a constituency or district basis. It is not possible to estimate in advance the number of cases in which payments will be made as applications are still being received. Except for urgent cases, they are being processed in the order in which they were received and the date of payment will therefore depend upon the date of receipt at the transitional payments unit.

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many applications have now been received by his Department's unit in Glasgow regarding transitional payments; how many have been duly processed and payments made; and when he expects the remainder of the applications to be processed and payment made.

Mr. Scott *[holding answer 22 July 1988]:* As planned, the transitional payments unit became fully operational

this month, making the first housing benefit transitional payments on Thursday 14 July. Up to 25 July, the unit had received 41,024 written inquiries, 20,951 telephone inquiries and 119,143 applications for transitional payments. Already, 47,580 inquiry forms, to obtain the information necessary to assess eligibility for payment, have been sent out to local authorities. In the 7,839 cases where they have been returned, 3,296 assessments have been made. 1,624 applicants were found to be ineligible for payment and in the other 1,604 cases, applicants have been notified of their award and 68 payments have been made. In addition, regular payments are being made in respect of income support transitional payments. Depending upon the rate and volume of applications received we expect all applications to be processed by October.

EMPLOYMENT

Training and Work Experience

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many voluntary or charitable organisations operate training and work experience programmes for the single homeless and unemployed persons; and if he would provide an estimate of the Government funds provided to each.

Mr. Nicholls: The information required is not available.

Consultants

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give the cost to the Manpower Services Commission of employing management or computer consultants for each year from 1983 to 1987.

Mr. Nicholls: The Manpower Services Commission, now the Training Commission, spent the following amounts on management and computer consultancy in the financial years 1984-85, 1985-86, 1986-87 and 1987-88.

Year	*£ thousands*
1984-85	847
1985-86	994
1986-87	1,422
1987-88 MSC	1,279
ES	[1]373

[1] It should be noted that the figures provided relate to the organisation of the MSC prior to reorganisation on 26 October 1987 and therefore include spend appropriate to the employment service. The 1987-88 figures have been split to show the amounts appropriate to MSC and ES.

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give the cost to his Department of employing management or computer consultants for each year from 1983 to 1987.

Mr. Nicholls: Expenditure in the Department of Employment Group, excluding the Training Commission and employment service in each year from 1983 to 1987 on management and computer consultancy was as follows:

	£ thousands
1983	307
1984	346
1985	407
1986	670
1987	1,007

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list each management or computer consultancy contract extant in his Department as at 1 January 1987, giving in each case the name of the consultancy firm and the subject of the assignment.

Mr. Nicholls: The following firms had consultancy contracts extant in the Department of Employment group, excluding the Manpower Services Commission, at 1 January 1987:

Firm	*Subject of Assignment*
CMG Ltd.	Study into Electronic Mail
EDP Ltd.	Support for financial payments systems
Logica	Support for personnel records system
PA Consultants	Advice on Office Automation systems appraisal
Portfolio Systems	Support for DE Unemployment Benefit Service administrative and staff training systems development
Segal, Quince and Wicksteed	Encouraging Small Business start-up and growth
Ms. Jeanette Taylor	Human Resource Development
Mr. M. Willmer (Manchester Business School)	Enterprise—DE Contribution

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list each management or computer consultancy contract extant in the Manpower Services Commission as at 1 January 1987, giving in each case the name of the consultancy firm and the subject of the assignment.

Mr. Nicholls: The list of management and computer consultancy contracts extant as at 1 January 1987 is as follows:

Management consultancy projects: 1 January 1987

Consultants	*Subject of assignment*
Jones, Lang, Wootton	Feasibility study on untying MSC from Property Services Agency
Central Unit of Purchasing (Her Majesty's Treasury consultant)	Provide advice about purchasing arrangements within MSC
PIEDA	To improve Local Labour Market operations in Scotland
Centre for Urban and Regional Industrial Development (University of Manchester)	Manchester Labour Market Consultancy Project

2. Computer consultancy projects

Consultants	*Subject of assignment*
1. P.E. Consulting Services	to study current and future needs of Sheltered Employment Branch
2. C. J. Makeson	a study to examine MSC's proposals for, and design of a Network Terminal Protocol
3. COMSHARE	to provide MSC Senior Management with on line access to screen based reports of corporate information
4. Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency (CCTA)	to examine the PLECTRUM computer system, evaluate errors and security procedures

Consultants	Subject of assignment
5. A. J. Aykroyd	a consultant to assist with the development of the "Master Modeller" software package
6. Coopers and Lybrand	to advise the Director of the MSC on the levels of investment the Commission should make in Information Technology
7. P. A. Computer and Telecommunications	to assist MSC in the introduction of Office Technology in Head Office
8. Arthur Young	to assist MSC in deciding whether data sharing is applicable in the MSC environment
9. P.E. Consulting Services	to produce options and recommendations for stand alone Office Technology systems
10. Hoskyns Group	to study the options for the continuing support of the TOPS and SPECTRUM systems
11. Mr. Boothroyd	to monitor the progress of the introduction of Office Technology for senior management and Special Measures Division
12. Concurrent Computer Corporation Ltd.	to test the workload capacity of the SUPERVACS system
13. Arthur Young	a consultant to provide technical support in information engineering concepts and methods
14. CCTA Consultant	a feasibility study into the expansion of the BACIE database
15. CCTA Consultant	to examine MSC's use of automated software development tools and to make recommendations for future use
16. Mr. Harrison	to produce a distance learning package for SUPERVACS operators
17. Mr. Boothroyd	to provide advice to Head of Computing on proposed Office Technology development
18. CCTA	to establish the effectiveness of control, management and working methods employed on the FMAS project
19. CCTA	to establish the user requirements, system specification and business case for Central Research Information System
20. Mr. Humphries	a consultant to provide advice about the Training Access Point project
21. ICL	a consultant to provide advice about the implementation of a free text multi user database
22. CAP Industry Ltd.	to provide quality assurance for the SUPERVACS project
23. CCTA	to provide contingency plans to support the SUPERVACS system
24. Compsoft	a consultant to provide advice about computerisation of the Staff Deployment Survey
25. South Yorkshire Micro-systems Centre	to develop a database and provide training for the RESTART project
26. Comshare	additional development work on providing information to MSC senior management
27. P. A. Consultants	a consultancy to provide a training course for the implementation of the Office Technology Systems
28. CCTA	to carry out further work on the Central Research Information System
29. CCTA Consultant	to carry out a Post Implementation Review of the 'VETO' reorganisation project
30. Xentec	to assist in the running of the SPECTRUM system
31. J. Westgate (Consultants) Ltd.	to assist with the implementation of Network Terminal Protocol
32. CAP	to look into the feasibility on implementing a Terminal Protocol on an Open Systems interconnection conforming network
33. Xentec	to assist in the maintenance of the SPECTRUM system
34. C. Makemson	to provide Quality Assurance for the various outputs from MSC's Virtual Terminal Protocol Project
35. Sherringtom Software Ltd.	to provide programmers for work on the TOPS MINIS Project
36. CCTA Consultant	to establish the requirements for the display of vacancies on ORACLE

Training Schemes

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will state, when potential training managers in employment training are given their review of training arrangements prior to receiving ATO status, how many of their work experience placements will be visited and assessed for their quality and health and safety arrangements by Training Commission officials; what length and type of training these Training Commission officials will have had in identifying health and safety hazards; what steps he is taking to ensure that all the work placements used by ET are properly registered with the Health and Safety Executive Factory Inspectorate; whether the Training Commission will publish ET health and safety incident statistics; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: The number of locations to be visited by Training Commission staff and assessed for their quality

and health and safety arrangements will be determined by the size of a training manager's employment training operation. The minimum sampling levels will be:

Number of training locations used by a Training Manager	*Minimum number of locations to be visited*
12 or less	3
13-24	4
25-50	5
51-100	8
101-150	10
151-200	12
more than 200	5 per cent. (subject to a minimum of 12)

Each sample will include a cross-section of directed training locations and practical training locations.

Every Training Commission area office will have staff who have been specially trained to help them identify the more obvious health and safety hazards and their training will be given by staff who are affiliate members of the Institute of Occupational Safety and Health and who have wide experience in dealing with health and safety issues on YTS.

In addition every Training Commission region has a part-time professional safety adviser to provide expert advice on the more complex health and safety issues.

The Training Commission will be entering into a contractual agreement with every training agent and training manager which will require written assurances that their premises and those of their subcontractors will be registered with the appropriate enforcing authority. Training managers themselves will also be expected to monitor health and safety on all of the training provision that they will be responsible for.

The Training Commission will be recording and publishing employment training accident statistics in exactly the same way as for YTS.

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if his Department's adjudication officers will be required to impose benefit penalties on ET trainees for making themselves voluntarily unemployed if *(a)* they chose to terminate their training before the end of their agreed training plan because they are dissatisfied with their training or work experience placement, *(b)* they are dismissed from their training scheme for absenteeism or lateness and *(c)* they are dismissed from their training scheme for misconduct; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Cope: Participation in Employment Training will be voluntary and leaving the programme early for any one of the reasons mentioned will not in itself provide grounds for refusal of benefit.

Benefit Advisers

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many claimant advisers are in post; how many interviews with claimants they have carried out in each year since 1986; what has been the outcome of those interviews; how many claimants have been referred to the Department of Health and Social Security for advice on other benefits or to adjudication officers because of doubts about their availability for work; how many have been encouraged to apply for the job start allowance; if he will give the costs of the claimant adviser service; and if he will make a statement about their current priorities.

Mr. Cope: At the end of June 1988, there were 796 claimant advisers in post; estimated costs for the 1988-89 financial year are approximately £14 million.

The number of interviews conducted and the outcome of those interviews for each financial year is shown in the table.

The priority of the claimant adviser service is to provide advice and guidance to claimants to help them move out of unemployment. In accordance with the priorities of the employment service, they concentrate their advice on those who have been unemployed for six months or more.

Claimant Adviser Performance

	November 86 March 87	*April 87 April 88*	*April 88 June 88*
Number of Interviews[1]	65,000	620,000	192,000
Referrals to DHSS[2]	7,600	63,500	16,400
Referrals to AO[3]	2,500	26,100	5,800
Outcomes			
—found work or placed in a programme	2,600	100,000	36,500
—alternative benefit	5,400	56,500	15,600
—other[4]	10,000	88,000	26,000

[1] This figure relates to the number of interviews, rather than the number of claimants interviewed, as claimants may have more than one interview.

[2] It is only possible to provide figures for the total number of referrals made to DHSS for all reasons.

[3] Figures are for total referrals to adjudication officers for all doubts arising.

[4] Figures are not available for those who have encouraged to apply for jobstart allowance.

Local Employer Networks

Mr. Anthony Coombs: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the latest information on the number of local employer networks that have been established.

Mr. Cope: There are plans for 107 networks by the end of July. A further 12 networks are under negotiation. We expect that by October about 130 networks will have been established, with at least one in every local education authority area.

Part-time Workers

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he has any plans to seek to improve the rights of part-time workers to paid holidays and pensions.

Mr. Nicholls: No. Terms and conditions of employment are a matter for employers and employees or their representatives to determine. Pension rights are a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Security.

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he has any plans to seek to improve the pay levels of part-time workers.

Mr. Nicholls: No. Pay is a matter for employers and employees or their representatives to determine.

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he has any plans to seek to improve the protection of part-time workers against unfair dismissal.

Mr. Nicholls: No.

Training

Mr. Couchman: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what plans he has to encourage industry to train those over 25 years of age for the jobs of the future; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: The falling number of young people entering the labour market means that employers will need to invest more in the training of adults to provide the skills they need to compete. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has taken and is planning a number of steps to support and encourage increased efforts by employers to train and retrain the adult work force, including those over 25 years old, through working life.

The £1·5 billion employment training programme will provide, from September, an opportunity for employers to equip up to 600,000 adult unemployed people a year with the skills needed to fill the job vacancies our economy is creating: 25 to 50-year-olds unemployed for two years or more enjoy a special priority under the programme.

The Training Commission is reviewing its current range of measures to support firms, especially smaller firms; investment in the training of their employees, to improve access and encourage greater responsiveness to new skill needs.

The Training Commission has joined with the National Economic Development Office in a campaign to encourage employers to upgrade training and retraining of adults in response to the prospective fall in the supply of young people. Industry training organisations are being encouraged to promote a similar response.

Employment Training Scheme

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people are employed under the new employment training scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: Employment training will be launched on 5 September 1988 and will provide around 300,000 training places when fully operational. Participants in employment training will be trainees and not employees. Excellent progress has already been made, and the Training Commission has reached agreement with prospective providers for the provision of some 270,000 of the 300,000 places needed. I am confident that contracts for the remaining 30,000 places will be agreed before 5 September.

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish in the *Official Report* a breakdown of *(a)* the percentage of places for which bids have been received and *(b)* the percentage of places provisionally allocated nationally for the local education authority maintained further education sector and other agencies which are directly controlled by county or metropolitan authorities under the new employment training scheme.

Mr. Nicholls: The Training Commission has received bids to provide over 700,000 training places, more than twice the 300,000 places needed for employment training. No breakdown of these bids is available.

On 12 July, the latest date for which detailed information is available, about 24 per cent. of places had been provisionally allocated to local authorities.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has received any representations from the Transport and General Workers Union concerning the employment training programme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has had no formal representation from the Transport and General Workers Union about employment training. I am aware, however, that a compaign of opposition and protest has been organised by the union in some parts of the country in an attempt to disrupt the implementation of the programme in September. I am pleased to say that this campaign has had no effect on the process of contracting, which is now well advanced. Employment training will be launched exactly as planned on 5 September.

Job Creation

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many new jobs have been created in Great Britain since 1983; what are the comparable figures for the other member states of the European Economic Community; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: I shall write to my hon. Friend as soon as possible and place a copy of my letter in the Library.

Strikes

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many working days were lost due to strikes in *(a)* February 1979 and *(b)* February 1988; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: I will write to my hon. Friend as soon as possible and will place a copy of my letter in the Library.

Service Jobs

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the variations in the rate of increase of the number of jobs created in the services in the regions of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Nicholls The following table shows the net increases and the percentage increases in the number of employees in employment in service industries between March 1987 and March 1988 in each region and in the United Kingdom.

Employees in employment
Service industries[1]

	Change March 1987-March 1988 (thousands)	*Change March 1987-March 1988 (per cent.)*
South East	+183	+3·00
East Anglia	+33	+7·00
South West	+19	+2·00
West Midlands	+43	+4·00
East Midlands	+27	+3·00

	Change March 1987-March 1988 (thousands)	Change March 1987-March 1988 (per cent.)
Yorkshire and Humberside	+40	+4·00
North West	+20	+1·00
North	+20	+3·00
Wales	+11	+2·00
Scotland	+17	+1·00
Northern Ireland	+4	+1·00
United Kingdom	+418	+3·00

[1] Divisions 6 to 9 of Standard Industrial Classification 1980.

EC Job Creation

Mr. Dykes: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment when he next expects to meet his European Economic Community opposite numbers to discuss new job creation in the Community.

Mr. Cope: An informal meeting of Community Labour and Social Affairs Ministers will be held on 19-20 September. The agenda has not yet been decided, but we will be continuing our efforts to ensure that market-led employment growth is a Community priority and that the Community takes full advantage of the potential of the single market.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he will consider the publication of a quarterly figure of unemployment based on the quarterly supplements to the labour force survey.

Mr. Lee: The quarterly results are (because of the small sample on which they are based) insufficiently reliable for it to be appropriate to publish actual quarterly estimates of unemployment. They can, however, support valid quarterly indications of the trend in such variables.

Officials are considering the quality of the quarterly data and of trend indicators which might be derived from them. Decisions about publication will be taken when that consideration has been completed.

Single Market

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what research is being undertaken by his Department into the employment implications of the completion of the European Community internal market in 1992 for the regions of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Cope: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy (Dr. Thomas) on 5 July 1988, at columns 188-89.

Recruitment and Promotion Policy

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what measures he has implemented to ensure that recruitment and promotion policy in his Department does not directly or indirectly discriminate against applicants who were mature students or women returning to work following a career-break due to child care.

Mr. Nicholls: Recruitment to and promotion within my Department is conducted within the general guidance applying across the Civil Service. As an equal opportunities employer, the Department of Employment recruits and promotes staff solely on merit and implements policies that do not disadvantage any group. I am satisfied that no additional measures are needed to safeguard the position of mature students or women returning to work after a career break.

Training Programme (Disabled People)

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has made a decision on the Training Commission's proposal for continuous part-time participation for disabled and other groups of people in the new training programme.

Mr. Nicholls: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has decided that part-time training opportunities will be available for people whose disabilities or domestic responsibilities restrict their ability to train full-time.

Dock Labour Scheme

Mr. Woodcock: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will estimate the financial effect on British industry of retention of the registered dock labour scheme after 1992.

Mr. Nicholls: No.

Manchester Ship Canal (Dock Labour Scheme)

Mr. Woodcock: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will estimate the continuing extra cost of retention of the registered dock labour scheme on users of the Manchester ship canal.

Mr. Nicholls: I have not made any estimate of the costs of using this canal. It would not be possible to make any such meaningful assessment.

Community Programme

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many bids under the new employment training scheme have been accepted from existing community programme projects run by APEX; and what proportion this represents of bids received from APEX community programme schemes.

Mr. Nicholls: Detailed information about bids for employment training places is not available centrally. APEX currently has some 1,348 filled places on the community programme and it and some other organisations with whom it plans to associate in the new programme have been offered some 4,300 employment training places.

Unfair Dismissal

Mrs. Mahon: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what proportion of the work force have statutory protection against unfair dismissal.

Mr. Nicholls: Data from the spring 1986 labour force survey indicate that in March 1986 approximately 70 per cent. of the work force were covered by the unfair dismissal provisions of the Employment Protection (Consolidation) Act 1978.

Manpower Services Commission

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will state the number of Manpower Services Commission staff employed for each year since 1978 and their total cost to public funds.

Mr. Nicholls The information requested is as follows:

Number of Manpower Services Commission staff		*Total cost of Manpower Services Commission staff to public funds (£000s)*	
At:			
1 April 1978	25,332	1978-79	209,996
1 April 1979	26,289	1979-80	246,238
1 April 1980	25,868	1980-81	300,269
1 April 1981	24,225	1981-82	316,192
1 April 1982	24,250	1982-83	329,629
1 April 1983	22,687	1983-84	333,666
1 April 1984	21,929	1984-85	331,311
1 April 1985	20,803	1985-86	363,491
1 April 1986	21,075	1986-87	412,808
1 April 1987	23,953	1987-88	348,700
1 April 1988	12,520·5	1988-89	237,532

Notes:
(1). The 1988-89 figures is an estimate.
(2). On the passage of the Employment Act 1988 the Manpower Services Commission was renamed the Training Commission.

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give the estimated expenditure of the Manpower Services Commission and his Department in Scotland in each of the years 1988-89, 1989-90 and 1990-91.

Mr. Nicholls: The estimated expenditure of the Training Commission (formerly the Manpower Services Commission) in Scotland in 1988-89 is £210,082,000. Estimates of expenditure for the years 1989-90 and 1990-91 will only be made when the Supply Estimates for these years are prepared.

No estimate is made of the territorial distribution of expenditure in the rest of the Department of Employment group.

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give the total expenditure of the Manpower Services Commission and his Department in Scotland in each of the years 1979 to 1987, inclusive.

Mr. Nicholls: The Manpower Services Commission (named the Training Commission from May 1988) keeps records on the basis of the standard financial year for accounting for Government expenditure. The year runs from 1 April to 31 March.

The proportion of the commission's costs that can be specifically indentified with services in Scotland is financed by a contribution to the commission's grant-in-aid from the Industry Department for Scotland.

The figures for this contribution are published in the annual Appropriation Accounts and are as follows:

	£
1979-80	53,244
1980-81	73,552
1981-82	92,211
1982-83	107,414
1983-84	118,541
1984-85	127,400
1985-86	133,896
1986-87	162,077

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give the total expenditure on the Manpower Services Commission's programme for the unemployed in each of the years 1979 to 1987, inclusive.

Mr. Nicholls: All Training Commission (formerly Manpower Services Commission) programmes are concerned to some extent with the problems of unemployment, and expenditure on those specifically for the unemployed is not identified separately. Figures for the commission's total programme expenditure, and expenditure on programmes which it manages on behalf of the Department of Employment are shown by financial year in the table.

£000s

	Training Commission	*Community Programme*	*Community Industry*	*Sheltered Employment*	*Total*
1979-80	394,395	50,966	16,952	41,954	504,267
1980-81	479,177	45,736	18,994	54,940	598,847
1981-82	646,527	92,741	23,376	58,888	821,532
1982-83	783,697	154,796	23,601	66,772	1,028,866
1983-84	970,378	401,542	23,637	72,691	1,468,248
1984-85	1,087,049	532,702	24,125	63,783	1,707,659
1985-86	1,210,916	683,224	24,447	67,185	1,985,772
1986-87	1,444,492	1,007,031	25,309	56,801	2,533,633

Training (Expenditure)

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give an estimate of the percentage of gross domestic product spent on training in each of the years 1979 to 1987, inclusive; and if he will provide such comparative statistics as are available to him for each of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries over the same period.

Mr. Nicholls: The information requested is not available.

European Social Fund (Women's Training Places)

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many women's training places have been approved by his Department under the European social fund for each year since 1983.

Mr. Cope: My Department does not approve training places for projects supported by the European social fund; this is a matter solely for the European Commission to decide.

For each of the years since 1983 the European Commission approved the following number of training places in the United Kingdom under the European social

fund guideline strictly reserved for women returning to the labour market for occupations in which they are under-represented.

Training places approved by European Commission under European social fund guideline for women

Year	Number
1983	1,466
1984	3,377
1985	6,206
1986	8,200
[1]1987	16,007
[1]1988	20,435

[1] Provisional.

In addition, 955,729 United Kingdom training places for women were approved by the European Commission under other social fund guidelines for the period 1984 to 1986. Figures prior to 1984 were not divided by gender and those for 1987 and 1988 are not yet available.

Youth Unemployment

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what have been the levels of youth unemployment in percentage terms for *(a)* 16 to 18-year-olds and *(b)* 18 to 25-year-olds in each of the last 10 years.

Mr. Nicholls: The available information is published in table 2.15 of the *Employment Gazette*. Summarised are the figures for April of each year from 1980 to 1988, taken from this publication. Direct comparisons of unemployment by age since 1980 are not possible because of changes in the coverage of the count.

Table A. Rates by age. Unemployed registrants

April	Under 18 Per cent.	18-19 Per cent.	20-24 Per cent.
1980	13·3	11·0	9·3
1981	17·8	18·7	15·6
1982	22·4	22·8	17·9

Table B. Rates by age. Unemployed claimants

April	Under 18 Per cent.	18-19 Per cent.	20-24 Per cent.
1983	24·0	23·6	17·1
1984	18·9	24·6	17·1
1985	18·8	23·3	17·5
[1]1986	21·5	21·8	17·2
1987	13·8	20·6	15·7
1988	11·5	15·4	12·4

[1]Because of a change in the compilation of the unemployment statistics, unadjusted figures from April 1986 are not directly comparable with earlier figures.

YTS

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) what has been the average cost of the YTS per entrant, in each of the years since the scheme's inception;

(2) how many young people, having completed YTS, go into *(a)* further or higher education, *(b)* jobs, *(c)* unemployment and *(d)* other destinations, in percentage terms, in each of the years since the scheme's inception;

(3) how many places have been available on the YTS in each year since its inception; and how many in each year have been taken up;

(4) what has been the annual cost of the YTS since its inception to the most recent date available at constant prices.

Mr. Cope: I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible and will place a copy of my letter in the Library.

Coal Industry (Accidents)

Mr. Illsley: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the accident rate and the percentage change in fatal and major injury accidents in *(a)* private licensed mines and *(b)* British Coal operated mines between the period 1985-86 and 1986-87; and what is the latest trend in these figures.

Mr. Nicholls: The table gives the available information for the years 1985-86 and 1986-87, based on a rate per 1,000 employed. It is not possible to indicate any trend as licensed mines employment figures are not available for 1987-88.

Year	Fatal rate	Percentage change	Major injury rate	Percentage change
Licensed mines				
1985-86	0·75	+214	12·82	+76
[1]1986-87	2·26		22·6	
British Coal mines				
1985-86	0·18	−33	4·62	+64
[1]1986-87	0·12		7·59	

Figures for licensed mines are based on workforce figures supplied by British Coal.

[1] The introduction of RIDDOR Regulations on 1 April 1986 widened the coverage of serious accident categories. The figures for 1986-87 are not directly comparable with earlier years.

Mr. Illsley: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if, in the light of the increase in the rate of fatal and major injury accidents in private licensed mines, he will make it his policy not to lift the safety restrictions on small private mines.

Mr. Nicholls: The Mines and Quarries Act 1954 and associated legislation is currently being reviewed and the provisions relating to licensed mines will be included in the exercise. The review is subject to full consultation with both sides of the industry.

Mr. Illsley: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the number of fatal accidents in private licensed mines since April 1988, giving a comparable rate of fatalities per 1,000 people employed for *(a)* such mines and *(b)* mines operated by British Coal.

Mr. Nicholls: Since April 1988, there have been two fatalities at licensed coal mines and six fatalities at British Coal mines. It is not possible to give a comparable rate as the current figures for people employed at licensed mines is not available.

Channel Tunnel (Registered Docks)

Mr. Woodcock: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what steps will be taken to ensure registered docks will be in a position to compete fairly with the Channel tunnel; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: I have been asked to reply.

The tunnel does not enjoy favoured treatment over ports. There is no public funding or guarantee, and the Government are committed to even-handedness, for example, of infrastructure and frontier control measures. As regards ports in the dock labour scheme, we have no present plans to change their position.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Mortgage Interest Relief

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for those with and those without investment income in 1986-87 the numbers in each income band up to a lower limit of £100,000 benefiting from mortgage interest relief divided as between single persons and one and two-earner married couples; and if he will provide an estimate for 1987-88;

(2) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* tables showing the estimated number of tax units under age 65 years in each income band up to a lower limit of £100,000 in receipt of mortgage interest relief in the current financial year and the percentage with investment income; and if he will also distinguish between single persons, one-earner and two-earner married couples.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* The available information is in the tables. Following the introduction of MIRAS in April 1983, it is no longer possible to estimate the distribution of mortgage interest relief from Inland Revenue records. The estimates in the table are based on projections of data from the family expenditure survey but, as the sample size for the FES is relatively small, it is not possible to provide reliable estimates in all the detail requested nor to provide separate figures for non-aged tax units. Estimates are subject to revision.

Tax units[1] receiving mortgage interest relief by range of total income 1986-87

Thousands

Range of total income	*With no investment income*	*With investment income*	*Total*
Up to £5,000	340	410	750
£5,000 to £10,000	570	1,330	1,900
£10,000 to £15,000	560	1,970	2,530
£15,000 to £20,000	260	1,360	1,620
£20,000 to £30,000	100	900	1,000
£30,000 plus	20	380	400
Total	1,850	6,350	8,200

[1] Single people and married couples.

Tax units[1] receiving mortgage interest relief by range of total income 1987-88

Thousands

Range of total income	*With no investment income*	*With investment income*	*Total*
Up to £5,000	330	390	720
£5,000 to £10,000	470	1,150	1,620
£10,000 to £15,000	600	1,900	2,500
£15,000 to £20,000	300	1,470	1,770
£20,000 to £30,000	130	1,140	1,270
£30,000 plus	20	500	520
Total	1,850	6,550	8,400

[1] Single people and married couples.

Tax units[1] receiving mortgage interest relief by range of total income 1988-89

Range of total income	*Number (thousands)*	*Percentage with investment income*
Up to £5,000	690	54
£5,000 to £10,000	1,300	70
£10,000 to £15,000	2,440	77
£15,000 to £20,000	1,890	83
£20,000 to £30,000	1,580	89
£30,000 plus	700	93
Total	8,600	79

[1] Single people and married couples.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 19 October 1988

WALES

Temporary Traffic Lights

Dr. Marek: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many temporary road traffic lights there are on trunk roads in Wales at present; and what are the two longest times of operation and their locations.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: There are 25 temporary road traffic lights associated with roadworks on trunk roads in Wales at present. The two longest times of operation and their locations are:

(a) A494 Drws-y-Nant, Gwynedd, in operation from January 1979 and expected to remain until June 1991, and,

(b) Aberaeron-Aberarth, Dyfed, in operation from January 1984 and expected to remain until September 1989.

Information regarding temporary traffic lights for statutory undertakers' works is not held centrally.

Curriculum Council

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement about the establishment of the Curriculum Council for Wales.

Mr. Peter Walker: The Curriculum Council for Wales, which I appointed in shadow form in May 1988, was formally established on 16 August 1988. Its chairman is Mr. Hywel Evans OBE, JP, headteacher of Aberconwy school, Gwynedd. The other 13 members are:—

Mr. Richard Daugherty—Senior Lecturer, Department of Education, University College Swansea, West Glamorgan

Mr. Alwyn Evans—Chief Adviser, Gwynedd LEA

Mrs. Margaret Hemmings—Headteacher, Lewis Girls School, Mid Glamorgan

Mr. Michael Jones—Solicitor, Cardiff, South Glamorgan

Mr. Wynne Lewis—Head of Science Department, St. Cyres School, Penarth, South Glamorgan

Mr. John Love—Headteacher, Dyffryn Comprehensive School, Newport, Gwent

Miss Anne Powell—Headteacher, Birchgrove Infants School, Swansea, West Glamorgan

Mr. Eddie Roberts—Director of Education, Mid Glamorgan

Mr. Ieuan Roberts—Headteacher, Ysgol Croesatti, Flint, Clwyd

Mrs. Olwen Chapman—Headteacher, Llanefyl Church in Wales School, Powys

Mr. Ieuan Price—Principal, Carmarthen College of Technology and Art, Dyfed

Mr. Peter Winterburn—Lecturer in Biology, University of Wales College of Cardiff, South Glamorgan

Mrs. Beryl Brewer—Personnel Manager, Marks and Spencers, Cardiff, South Glamorgan.

The council was given its formal remit on 12 October and a copy of the remit has been placed in the Library of the House.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Legal Profession

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Attorney-General what representations he has received recently on the reform of the legal profession; and if he will make a statement.

The Solicitor-General: I have received three representations since 1 April 1988 and my noble and learned friend the Lord Chancellor has received 28 representations, from the same date, on such matters as rights of audience, fusion, legal education and training and entry to the profession.

Immigration Appeals

Mr. David Young: To ask the Attorney-General how many refusals of visitor visas have gone to immigration appeals; what were the outcomes of such appeals; and what is the total cost of such proceedings.

The Solicitor-General: Appeals against refusal of applications for visitor visas are not recorded separately, but are recorded together with appeals against refusal of applications by foreign students for temporary entrance clearance. In the period 1 January to 31 August 1988 a total of 3,277 separate appeals in this category were received by the adjudicators and 28 by the immigration appeal tribunal. Because of the way in which statistics are recorded by the appellate authorities, it is not possible to show the outcome of appeals received within any particular period. However, between 1 January and 31 August 1988, a total of 1,226 appeals against refusal of applications for visitors' visas and from foreign students were disposed of by the adjudicators of which 302 were allowed, 656 dismissed and 268 withdrawn; and 65 appeals were disposed of by the appeal tribunal of which 19 were allowed, 25 dismissed and 21 were considered to be outside the tribunal's jurisdiction.

It is not possible to distinguish accurately the total cost of dealing with particular categories of appeal. This information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. David Young: To ask the Attorney-General what is the average cost of holding an immigration appeal hearing.

The Solicitor-General: The Lord Chancellor is responsible for the administration of the immigration appellate authorities. It is not possible from current records to give a precise average cost for an immigration appeal hearing. However, in the calendar year 1987, a total of 9,943 appeals were dealt with by the immigration appellate authorities. The total cost of the appellate authorities in the financial year 1987-88 (the first full financial year in which the Lord Chancellor had responsibility for the IAAs' administration) was £2,411,088. From this information it would be possible to state as an informed, but not precise, estimate that the average cost of dealing with an appeal was of the order of £240.

It is estimated that in the same period hearings outnumbered appeals by approximately 20 per cent.

"Spycatcher"

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Attorney-General what has been the total cost to public funds from all efforts made by Her Majesty's Government to prevent the publication and reporting of the book, "Spycatcher".

The Solicitor-General: The total amount expended to date on legal costs both here and abroad in respect of litigation and advice, and on travelling and subsistence, is about £1,019,000.

PRIME MINISTER

European Parliament

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Prime Minister what steps have been taken or are planned by any institution of the European Economic Communities to implement the opinion of the European Council meeting at Hanover, that there was a need to associate the European Parliament more closely with its decisions; and for what reason she concurred with that opinion.

The Prime Minister: The conclusions of the Hanover European Council reflect our wish to encourage the continued constructive involvement of all the institutions, including the European Parliament, in the business of the Community. The co-operation procedure laid down in the Single European Act provides a further way of associating the European Parliament more closely in the decisions of the Council.

Social Services

Mr. Rathbone: To ask the Prime Minister whether responsibility for social services will rest with the Health Department and under the ministerial responsibility of the Secretary of State for Health.

The Prime Minister: Yes. Responsibility for personal social services is a matter for my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health.

Parliament Square (Access)

Mr. Bowen Wells: To ask the Prime Minister what central Government funds have been spent on proposals for improvements for Parliament square and the environs of the Palace of Westminster which benefit the public and make access easier for hon. Members; and when such proposals will be implemented.

The Prime Minister: The Government have committed some £186,000 to studies commissioned by Westminster city council into ways of improving the environment and traffic conditions in Parliament square. Westminster's consultants have recently reviewed options for long-term improvements. The Government will be considering the way forward with Westminster, the House authorities and other interested parties. The implementation date for improvements will depend on which scheme is selected.

European Union

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Prime Minister if any definition has been proposed by Her Majesty's Government of the phrase "European union", as contained in the preamble to the Single European Act; and if she will provide any appropriate references or text.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the speech of my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary on 23 April 1986, at column 325.

Separation of Powers

Mr. Allen: To ask the Prime Minister if she will bring forward legislation to ensure a constitutional separation of powers in order to enhance the powers of the elected representatives vis-a-vis those of Government.

The Prime Minister: No.

"Spycatcher"

Mr. Allen: To ask the Prime Minister what further representations she has received calling for an inquiry into allegations of illegality and domestic subversion made against the British secret services in the book "Spycatcher"; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: I have received no such representations and I have nothing to add to the statement issued by my right hon. Friend the Secretary for the Home Department on 13 October, immediately after the publication of the House of Lords judgement on the book "Spycatcher". A copy of this statement has been placed in the Library.

Interviews

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Prime Minister how many requests for British media interviews have been received by her during the past 12 months; and how many were granted.

The Prime Minister: I receive a considerable number of requests every year, but I am only able to accept a few owing to my many other commitments.

Ministerial Visits

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Prime Minister which towns in the United Kingdom she has visited during the past 12 months, showing if she had any discussions with elected civil leaders in each of the towns listed.

The Prime Minister: During the past 12 months I have visited numerous towns in the course of my official duties. They include:

Aberdeen	Greenock
Ashford	Halifax
Belfast	Inverness
Bilborough	Lisburn
Cambridge	Mablethorpe
Coleraine	Newhaven
Daventry	Nottingham
Drumahoe	Perth
Dundee	Plymouth
Edinburgh	Redditch
Enniskillen	Salford
Folkestone	Scunthorpe
Glasgow	Wellesbourne

With regard to discussions with civil leaders, I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Midlothian (Mr. Eadie) on 8 February 1988 at column *46*.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list the countries she has visited, together with dates, during 1988 to date.

The Prime Minister: The information is as follows:

Date	Country visited
4-8 January	Kenya, Nigeria
12-13 February	Belgium (EC)
17 February	Belgium (NATO)
2-3 March	Belgium (NATO)
6-8 April	Turkey
10 June	France
18-22 June	Canada
27-28 June	Germany
29 July-9 August	Bahrain, Oman, Singapore, Australia, Malaysia, Thailand, United Arab Emirates
20-23 September	Belgium, Luxembourg, Spain

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Prime Minister how many *(a)* Department of Health and Social Services offices and *(b)* jobcentres she has visited in the past 12 months.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave him on 15 April 1988 at column *245*.

Official Meetings

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Prime Minister (1) which trades union leaders she has met officially for discussions during the past 12 months;

(2) which local authority leaders she has met officially for discussions during the past 12 months.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Midlothian (Mr. Eadie) on 8 February 1988 at column *46*.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Prime Minister how many requests for official meetings have been received by her during the past 12 months; and how many were granted.

The Prime Minister: I receive a considerable number of requests for official meetings each year, and agree to a substantial number of these.

Australia (Visit)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Prime Minister what was the purpose of her visit to Australia in 1988.

The Prime Minister: I visited Australia at the invitation of the Australian Prime Minister, Mr. Hawke, to mark Australia's bicentenary, to open British day of Expo 88 and to hold discussions with members of the federal and state governments.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Prime Minister (1) what was the total cost for maintaining contact with the United Kingdom when she was visiting Australia and other countries in August 1988; and how many officials were involved at *(a)* home and *(b)* abroad;

(2) what was the total cost to public funds of her visit to Australia and other countries in August 1988; how many officials accompanied her; and what were their functions.

The Prime Minister: It is too soon after my visit to Australia and the middle and far east to be able to give detailed information on the cost to public funds. A provisional estimate of the total cost of the visit, including communications with the United Kingdom is £174,000.

I was accompanied on the visit by three officials and 11 support staff including two communications officers. A third communications officer was temporarily moved from Hong Kong to Canberra for five days to assist with the increase in messages. All other staff involved with communications handled telephone calls and messages as part of their normal duties.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Prime Minister how many journalists accompanied her in officially provided transport on her visit to Australia and other countries in August 1988; which organisations they represented; and what was the cost charged to each journalist.

The Prime Minister: There were places for 15 journalists in the official aircraft. All were taken by representatives of newspapers and radio and television organisations. Each journalist was charged £1,750 for the whole tour.

Cabinet Office (Staff)

Mr. Sean Hughes: To ask the Prime Minister what are the latest available figures for the Cabinet Office in the London pay area of the number of vacancies by grade and the proportion this is of the grade complement in London.

The Prime Minister: The position as at 1 October 1988 is as follows:

Grade	Vacancies	Complement
Grade 7	6·5	169·0
Senior Executive Officer	2·5	51·0
Higher Executive Officer	3·0	77·5
Executive Officer	5·0	134·0
Administrative Officer	10·5	179·0
Senior Personal Secretary	0·5	50·0
Personal Secretary	6·5	68·5
Typist	3·0	58·5
Support Manager 3	0·5	5·0
Support Grade Band 2	4·0	74·0
Senior Psychologist	1·0	4·0
Senior Occupational Health Nursing Adviser	1·0	3·0
Occupational Health Nursing Adviser	1·0	3·0
Sister	1·0	3·0
Graphics Officer	3·0	9·0

Mr. Sean Hughes: To ask the Prime Minister if she will provide the latest available figures for the Cabinet Office for *(a)* numbers of staff in receipt of local pay additions, by grade, *(b)* location of those offices awarding local pay additions and *(c)* annual cost.

The Prime Minister: The numbers of individuals in receipt of local pay additions in the Cabinet Office by grade and location are:

Grade	London	Sunningdale	Basingstoke
Administrative Assistants	38	1	52
Administrative Officers	169	27	81
Executive Officers	133	[1]—	[1]—
Typists	54	3	16
Typing Managers	6	0	2
Personal Secretaries	62	2	5
Senior Personal Secretaries	50	0	1

[1] LFAs not payable to these grades in these locations.

The figures are based on the number of staff-in-post as at 1 October 1988. The estimated annual cost is £365,700.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

ODA (Transfer)

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has for further transfer of the Overseas Development Administration from London; and what basis he uses as a critierion in this respect.

Mr. Chris Patten: The ODA now has some 500 posts in its East Kilbride office, and is in the process of moving some 390 posts to the former Royal Navy dockyard in Chatham; 680 posts remain in central London. The bulk of the ODA departments currently located in central London are planned to remain there, as close as possible to the rest of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. However, the requirement for accommodation in central London is kept under review by the ODA, in common with other Government Departments, to hold this to the minimum necessary bearing in mind the need to administer the aid programme cost-effectively.

Kampuchea

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the current policy of Her Majesty's Government in respect of aid to Kampuchea; and what criteria or conditions will influence or determine any decision of Her Majesty's Government to again provide official aid to that country.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what further plans there are for United Kingdom aid to the people of Kampuchea.

Mr. Chris Patten: We do not give official aid to Cambodia, and shall only be able to consider the provision of such aid when a government acceptable to the majority of Cambodians is in place. We are currently considering the provision of humanitarian aid via British non-governmental organisations working in Cambodia, and we contributed £100,000 to the World Food Programme/Food and Agriculture Organisation appeal launched in May.

Rhinos (Protection)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will give details of the assistance given to the Governments of Kenya, Zambia and Zimbabwe for the protection of rhinos in each of the past five years.

Mr. Chris Patten: Conservation of wildlife, including the rhinoceros, has been supported through the aid programme in both Kenya and Zimbabwe during the last five years, although precise figures are not readily available. We currently have three experts in Kenya, one of whom co-ordinates the Kenya rhino rescue project. We are ready to discuss with the Governments concerned what further assistance we might provide.

ENERGY

Power Stations (Safety)

Mr. Frank Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list the substantive documentation which demonstrates the safety of construction, operation and decommissioning of the pressurised water reactor power station now under construction at Sizewell.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The safety documentation on which the Health and Safety Executive granted the CEGB a site licence for Sizewell B is the pre-construction safety report together with its supporting reports. A copy of the PCSR is available in the Libraries of both Houses.

Mr. Frank Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether the Sizewell B pre-construction safety report is to apply, other than for site specific related changes, to the similar station proposed for Hinkley Point C.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Yes. The CEGB proposes that, other than for minor changes made, with the agreement of the HSE's nuclear installations inspectorate, to the Sizewell design after licensing and for changes to deal with site specific requirements, the Sizewell PCSR can be directly applied to Hinkley Point C.

Mr. Frank Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make the proprietary version of the pre-construction safety report available to hon. Members, members of the public and to objectors who have registered with the Hinkley Point C secretariat.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Copies of the Sizewell PCSR, together with CEGB documents covering the site-specific related changes for Hinkley Point C, are available in the Libraries of both Houses. They are also available for inspection by the public at several CEGB premises, and at the Hinkley Point C inquiry public office, and have been put before the Hinkley Point C inquiry inspector as inquiry documents.

Mr. Frank Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether all the references cited in the Sizewell B, pre-construction safety report, are available in unabridged form.

Mr. Michael Spicer: No. Commercially confidential information contained in the PCSR supporting documents is not publicly available. The NII has, of course, been supplied with unabridged versions of all safety documents.

Mr. Frank Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy for what reason each deletion and abridgement of the Sizewell B, pre-construction safety report, and supporting reference documents has been made; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Deletions of material in the PCSR supporting documents have been made for reasons of commercial confidentiality.

Mining Subsidence

Mr. Woodcock: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) following his understanding that British Coal has now taken steps to introduce the option that claimants may have subsidence damage repair work undertaken by a contractor of their choice, what steps have been taken to publicise this option in the last year; how many claimants have requested this option within the last year; and in how many cases British Coal has agreed to this option within the last year;

(2) within what period of time of the British Coal Corporation receiving a claim are claimants against the corporation for subsidence damage in active mining areas now being visited; and what percentage of claimants have not been visited within four weeks *(a)* in the last 12 months for which figures are available and *(b)* in the last three months for which figures are available;

(3) since the Government's response to the Waddilove report on subsidence damage, what percentage of claimants have chosen to have repairs carried out by a contractor of their choice; how many requests to have repairs carried out by independent contractors have been refused by the board; and how many references there have been to independent adjudication.

Mr. Michael Spicer: These are management matters for British Coal, and I have asked the chairman to write to my hon. Friend.

Mr. Woodcock: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy since publication of the Government's response to the Waddilove report on subsidence damage, how many requests have been received by the board for reference to independent adjudication; how many requests have not been referred because of lack of agreement by the board; and where references have been made to independent adjudication, in what proportion of cases British Coal has agreed to meet the costs of the adjudicator.

Mr. Michael Spicer: This is a management matter for British Coal, and I understand that the deputy chairman has already written to my hon. Friend on this subject.

Electricity Privatisation

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his estimate of the effect on the initial market value of a privatised electricity industry, of a requirement that at least 20 per cent. of generating capacity should now be non-fossil fuel based.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The market value of the electricity industry will depend on a wide range of factors including the profitability of the companies, their capital structures, their future prospects and the state of the market. It is impossible to say to what extent any particular factor will contribute to this.

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what proposals there are to require private companies operating nuclear power stations after the privatisation of the electricity industry to take out insurance against major nuclear accidents.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Meirionydd Nant Conwy (Dr. Thomas) on 3 March 1988, col. *649*.

South Africa (Oil Embargo)

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what proposals he has to help prevent the circumvention of the international oil embargo against South Africa.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I have made it clear to companies operating on the United Kingdom continental shelf that they must comply with the the export guidelines which state that North Sea oil shall only be exported to members of the European Community and the International Energy Agency or countries with whom there is already an existing pattern of trade.

DEFENCE

Irish Sea (Exercises)

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what naval vessels, maritime reconaissance aircraft or other defence equipment were involved in exercises in the Irish sea on 5 September; whether any incidents or collisions occurred; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: There was no exercise in the Irish Sea on 5 September and there were no incidents or collisions involving royal naval vessels.

Conservative Party Conference 1988

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what services were provided by members of the armed forces for purposes connected with the 1988 Conservative party conference; and what was the total cost involved.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: In response to requests from the chief constable, Sussex constabulary, small numbers of military personnel were deployed to assist the police in searching the conference area for explosive devices and in potential bomb disposal tasks. In addition, the mine-sweeper, HMS Nurton, was stationed off Brighton, and three rigid inflatable boats crewed by Royal Marines were provided to assist the police in patrolling inshore waters. In line with normal arrangements for such operations no charges for the small extra costs incurred by my Department for transport, accommodation, and so on, were made to the Sussex constabulary.

Australia (Prime Minister's Visit)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the total cost to his Department of the Prime Minister's visit to Australia and other countries in August 1988.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The Ministry of Defence made available an RAF VC10 aircraft and crew for the Prime Minister's visit to Australia and other countries in August 1988. A provisional estimate of the cost to be borne by the Management and Personnel Office is £195,000.

Armilla Patrol

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what has been the total cost to date of the Armilla patrol; and what is the current monthly cost.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Members for Halifax (Mrs. Mahon) and for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) on 5 November 1987 at column 888, by my hon. Friend the Member for Hertfordshire, North (Mr. Stewart).

Rhino Poaching (Kenya and Zimbabwe)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will offer the services of British combat

troops to the Governments of Kenya and Zimbabwe to assist in the campaign against the poaching of rhino; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: No. Such operations would not be appropriate tasks for the armed forces. The Government have, however, provided other forms of assistance to African Governments in their attempts to halt the illegal trade in endangered species, including staff and equipment to be used by wildlife departments. In addition, the United Kingdom is a party to the convention on international trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora, and has been in the forefront of those calling for even stricter controls on such trade.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

National Union of Students

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if *(a)* the National Union of Students and *(b)* the Federation of Conservative Students have been asked to submit evidence to the inquiry on voluntary membership of the National Union of Students.

Mr. Jackson: I refer to the answer given by my right hon. Friend to my hon. Friend the Member for Thurrock (Mr. Janman) on 18 April at column 292, in which he announced the intention to conduct a fact-finding survey of student services and the links between local student unions and the National Union of Students. He also indicated that he would be glad to receive any information or suggestions which interested parties might wish to put forward. Beyond that, no formal invitation to submit evidence has been issued to either body mentioned.

Under-fives

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list the total number of children under five, by education authority, at *(a)* nursery schools and *(b)* primary schools, for each year since 1983.

Mr. Butcher: The total numbers of pupils aged under five in maintained nursery and primary schools in each local education authority in England in January of each year since 1983 are given in the table. Many of these pupils in primary schools were in nursery classes.

Pupils under 5 in Maintained Nursery and Primary Schools

	1983		1984		1985		1986		1987	
	Nursery	Primary	Nursery	Primary	Nursery	Primary	Nursery	Primary	Nursery	Primary
Barking	0	2,284	0	2,630	0	2,607	0	2,587	0	2,174
Barnet	489	3,465	496	3,608	500	3,646	495	3,617	520	3,568
Bexley	175	1,067	174	1,223	175	1,204	175	1,180	175	1,257
Brent	277	3,755	281	3,946	271	4,021	268	4,074	278	4,035
Bromley	0	1,961	0	1,137	0	1,136	0	1,140	0	1,097
Croydon	384	2,489	426	2,659	410	2,696	411	2,740	404	2,728
Ealing	626	2,816	630	3,106	605	3,125	610	3,078	577	4,236
Enfield	0	3,066	0	3,349	0	3,487	0	3,399	0	3,321
Haringey	226	3,387	219	3,553	216	3,555	213	3,418	201	3,356
Harrow	0	1,482	0	1,466	0	1,562	0	1,555	0	1,414
Havering	0	1,854	0	2,058	0	2,088	0	1,987	0	1,967
Hillingdon	101	3,315	119	3,590	116	3,653	117	2,832	120	2,780
Hounslow	0	3,381	0	3,606	0	3,837	0	3,779	0	3,703
Kingston-upon-Thames	231	1,348	237	1,437	238	1,461	238	1,394	244	1,417
Merton	208	2,159	209	2,298	180	2,413	173	2,221	0	2,388
Newham	1,038	3,242	982	3,492	962	3,840	979	3,756	952	3,686
Redbridge	0	1,213	0	1,239	0	1,286	0	1,253	0	1,228
Richmond-upon-Thames	70	1,417	75	1,467	62	1,500	68	1,475	61	1,491
Sutton	232	426	233	439	233	489	240	490	240	466
Waltham Forest	431	2,843	373	2,938	339	2,998	292	2,799	329	2,693
Birmingham	2,092	10,483	1,973	14,319	2,187	15,065	2,245	15,332	2,302	15,634
Coventry	387	3,690	402	4,018	391	4,055	464	4,048	445	4,109
Dudley	475	2,272	472	2,449	481	2,782	471	2,753	398	3,040
Sandwell	157	5,037	159	5,403	155	5,616	208	5,730	203	5,867
Solihull	0	2,650	0	2,764	0	2,872	0	2,640	0	3,037
Walsall	848	5,109	790	5,517	753	5,481	770	5,296	727	5,369
Wolverhampton	823	3,669	831	3,994	824	4,054	810	3,937	830	3,956
Knowsley	0	2,372	0	2,608	0	2,873	0	3,254	0	3,350
Liverpool	565	8,500	528	8,999	555	9,198	548	9,636	550	9,433
St. Helens	74	2,399	75	2,532	70	2,613	76	2,825	73	2,916
Sefton	312	3,724	311	3,938	315	3,977	316	3,836	319	3,948
Wirral	240	3,658	263	3,875	221	4,012	219	3,938	226	4,094
Bolton	599	3,746	614	4,010	618	4,185	601	4,270	549	4,464
Bury	157	1,841	152	2,071	146	2,018	142	2,052	145	2,076
Manchester	386	7,009	425	7,378	512	7,666	540	7,782	540	8,425
Oldham	0	3,360	0	3,776	0	3,947	0	3,883	0	3,952
Rochdale	870	2,541	891	2,765	894	2,783	885	2,793	910	2,743
Salford	776	3,602	780	3,965	812	4,101	870	4,025	862	4,106
Stockport	736	2,277	759	2,524	773	2,553	779	2,370	771	2,537
Tameside	318	3,422	335	3,689	325	3,729	324	3,721	332	3,842
Trafford	80	795	0	929	0	1,016	0	991	0	992
Wigan	183	4,029	183	4,468	190	4,571	199	4,423	193	4,479
Barnsley	165	3,475	161	3,570	167	3,579	173	3,562	175	3,570
Doncaster	0	5,107	0	5,351	0	5,513	0	5,505	0	5,523
Rotherham	331	3,392	340	3,455	365	3,530	352	3,467	336	3,436
Sheffield	741	5,828	735	6,137	731	6,294	722	6,193	714	6,194
Bradford	571	6,284	565	6,860	592	7,437	510	7,311	515	7,206

	1983		1984		1985		1986		1987	
	Nursery	Primary	Nursery	Primary	Nursery	Primary	Nursery	Primary	Nursery	Primary
Calderdale	97	2,688	91	2,904	95	2,963	87	2,941	88	2,865
Kirklees	849	3,730	751	5,591	713	5,797	699	5,288	666	5,193
Leeds	272	8,184	265	8,759	273	9,214	275	9,383	274	9,341
Wakefield	478	4,248	500	4,596	472	4,949	484	4,883	464	4,968
Gateshead	59	3,084	59	3,274	58	3,274	64	3,097	52	3,256
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	592	3,785	593	4,202	579	4,202	586	4,306	621	4,264
North Tyneside	307	3,243	287	3,588	276	3,854	315	3,743	286	3,620
South Tyneside	806	2,242	807	2,482	797	2,483	688	2,486	695	2,431
Sunderland	905	4,345	927	4,742	933	4,754	927	4,626	964	4,616
Isles of Scilly	0	7	0	10	0	10	0	6	0	13
ILEA	4,015	22,881	4,075	24,384	4,208	24,892	4,152	25,210	4,150	25,296
Avon	1,477	7,536	1,465	8,072	1,465	8,958	1,461	8,600	1,459	8,677
Bedfordshire	1,358	3,600	1,366	3,799	1,387	3,632	1,320	4,050	1,356	3,966
Berkshire	1,740	2,554	1,809	2,705	1,941	3,005	1,938	3,052	2,015	3,157
Buckinghamshire	507	2,633	519	2,684	514	2,535	515	2,530	512	2,495
Cambridgeshire	647	5,416	633	5,829	631	6,166	635	5,951	655	5,964
Cheshire	796	7,440	810	7,986	816	8,102	819	8,172	828	11,422
Cleveland	445	10,011	360	10,704	279	10,996	156	10,969	156	11,196
Cornwall	103	4,209	96	4,492	91	4,880	94	4,517	92	4,303
Cumbria	681	4,785	705	5,114	701	5,353	694	5,325	738	5,220
Derbyshire	1,115	6,786	1,119	7,441	1,127	9,721	1,129	10,205	1,162	10,152
Devon	142	3,894	140	4,564	141	4,369	247	4,170	257	5,235
Dorset	0	1,464	0	1,615	0	1,765	0	1,797	0	1,727
Durham	2,206	7,044	2,303	7,917	2,272	7,951	2,266	7,809	2,405	7,570
East Sussex	272	4,019	274	4,545	290	4,689	296	4,692	285	4,714
Essex	248	6,375	255	6,496	259	6,879	249	6,739	254	7,664
Gloucestershire	0	3,493	0	3,883	0	4,136	0	3,807	0	4,007
Hampshire	257	6,876	256	7,122	259	7,599	260	7,479	258	7,396
Hereford and Worcester	0	1,904	0	2,327	0	2,724	0	2,402	0	2,584
Hertfordshire	1,720	9,532	1,728	9,960	1,734	10,145	1,701	10,044	1,663	9,916
Humberside	983	8,083	889	9,298	897	9,581	910	9,851	946	10,173
Isle of Wight	0	903	0	955	0	957	0	897	0	921
Kent	87	4,638	79	5,088	90	4,730	84	4,518	78	4,409
Lancashire	3,229	11,369	3,330	12,563	3,386	13,375	3,358	13,182	3,400	13,318
Leicestershire	48	6,280	50	6,526	49	6,871	50	7,072	50	7,012
Lincolnshire	358	2,835	393	3,078	335	3,215	284	3,287	282	3,259
Norfolk	365	4,576	363	4,871	375	4,792	393	4,754	382	4,512
North Yorkshire	311	4,493	320	5,048	322	5,971	315	6,213	314	6,199
Northamptonshire	494	5,590	499	6,063	504	6,698	503	6,528	502	6,694
Northumberland	155	3,379	156	3,822	131	3,886	136	3,890	134	3,957
Nottinghamshire	513	11,435	560	12,210	557	12,351	536	12,537	580	12,302
Oxfordshire	794	1,570	539	1,796	494	1,865	502	1,815	496	1,806
Salop	157	2,531	188	2,779	160	2,758	160	2,933	160	2,782
Somerset	28	2,518	0	3,287	0	3,525	0	3,436	0	3,358
Staffordshire	1,838	8,594	1,879	9,392	1,836	9,962	1,844	9,321	1,843	9,440
Suffolk	144	3,516	172	4,069	157	4,151	167	4,173	162	4,295
Surrey	502	4,001	497	4,211	506	4,287	404	4,234	420	4,162
Warwickshire	623	3,905	649	4,228	665	4,281	726	4,773	730	4,761
West Sussex	454	854	452	953	454	926	451	897	452	904
Wiltshire	0	2,527	0	2,983	0	2,649	0	2,303	0	2,467

Pupils under 5 in maintained nursery and primary schools

	1988	
	Nursery	Primary
Barking	0	2,455
Barnet	500	3,561
Bexley	174	1,250
Brent	274	3,867
Bromley	0	1,071
Croydon	400	2,569
Ealing	535	4,338
Enfield	0	3,414
Haringey	246	3,358
Harrow	0	2,231
Havering	0	1,970
Hillingdon	120	2,816
Hounslow	0	3,804
Kingston Upon Thames	236	1,442
Merton	0	2,464
Newham	972	3,001
Redbridge	0	1,336
Richmond Upon Thames	64	1,538
Sutton	240	595
Waltham Forest	329	2,828
Birmingham	2,317	16,235
Coventry	443	4,130
Dudley	401	3,080
Sandwell	209	6,030
Solihull	0	3,024
Walsall	755	5,440
Wolverhampton	843	3,924
Knowsley	0	3,466
Liverpool	560	9,568
St. Helens	66	2,851
Sefton	315	3,995
Wirral	262	4,050
Bolton	553	4,501
Bury	161	2,331
Manchester	535	8,577
Oldham	0	4,041
Rochdale	910	2,899
Salford	845	4,119
Stockport	766	2,511
Tameside	322	3,955
Trafford	0	1,175
Wigan	186	4,582
Barnsley	181	3,563

	1988	
	Nursery	*Primary*
Doncaster	0	5,677
Rotherham	355	3,486
Sheffield	738	6,470
Bradford	502	7,454
Calderdale	88	2,972
Kirklees	651	5,392
Leeds	254	9,487
Wakefield	463	5,103
Gateshead	50	3,132
Newcastle Upon Tyne	623	4,255
North Tyneside	291	3,642
South Tyneside	713	2,430
Sunderland	949	4,652
Isles of Scilly	0	17
Inner London	4,232	25,731
Avon	1,420	8,923
Bedfordshire	1,329	3,957
Berkshire	2,021	3,175
Buckinghamshire	512	2,502
Cambridgeshire	637	6,158
Cheshire	838	11,949
Cleveland	153	11,374
Cornwall	101	4,429
Cumbria	758	5,447
Derbyshire	1,217	10,754
Devon	255	5,484
Dorset	0	4,658
Durham	2,463	7,570
East Sussex	284	5,007
Essex	252	7,522
Gloucestershire	0	3,923
Hampshire	260	7,474
Hereford and Worcester	0	2,505
Hertfordshire	1,733	10,146
Humberside	963	10,434
Isle of Wight	0	994
Kent	81	4,287
Lancashire	3,399	14,005
Leicestershire	50	8,442
Lincolnshire	286	3,361
Norfolk	399	4,556
North Yorkshire	308	6,440
Northamptonshire	525	6,752
Northumberland	137	3,999
Nottinghamshire	575	13,044
Oxfordshire	499	1,896
Shropshire	166	3,063
Somerset	0	3,419
Staffordshire	1,824	9,653
Suffolk	95	4,496
Surrey	416	5,094
Warwickshire	755	5,064
West Sussex	446	811
Wiltshire	0	2,525

Docklands

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received from the London borough of Newham concerning the future capital investment in education in docklands; and what timetable he expects to pursue in order to meet the needs of the area for new school places.

Mr. Butcher: I have received the London borough of Newham's education capital plans for 1989-90 and future years. In addition, officials from my Department have discussed capital needs in the dockland area with representatives of Newham.

Newham is responsible for providing sufficient school places in their area. Its capital plans are currently under consideration and capital allocations for 1989-90 are expected to be announced before the end of the year. In formulating allocations priority will continue to be given to the establishment of new or enlarged schools to meet population growth.

City Technology Colleges

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what consultations he has had and what preliminary conclusions he has reached concerning the establishment of a city technology college in the London borough of Newham.

Mrs. Rumbold: Newham was listed in our booklet "A New Choice of School" as a suitable location for a city technology college, and my officials have had discussions with a number of potential sponsors about the establishment of one there. No formal proposals have yet been made to us, but we shall be delighted to consider any that are.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what level of financial contribution has been made by Marks and Spencer towards the cost of the proposed city technology college in Nottingham; what proportion this represents of the total cost; and what other indications he has received of Marks and Spencer's degree of commitment to this project.

Mrs. Rumbold: I can confirm that Marks and Spencer is one of the sponsors of the Nottingham CTC. It is for sponsors itselves to decide whether or not to announce the degree of its sponsorship.

Schoolchildren (Nottingham)

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what action his Department is taking to ensure continued health care for schoolchildren within the Nottingham district health authority area in the light of the district health authority's reduction of 20 whole-time nursing posts, including five in the schools health service.

Mr. Butcher: The responsibility for school health service matters lies with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health.

Museums, Colleges and Institutions (Funding)

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list the museums, adult education colleges and other institutions presently funded by the Inner London education authority which the Government intend to support after 1 April 1990; if he will give an estimate of the financial support involved; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: The Department of Education and Science circular 6/88 listed the museums and adult education colleges for which the Government were willing to consider a measure of central funding. The detailed arrangements are now under discussion with the institutions, the Inner London education authority and other bodies as appropriate. A copy of the circular has been placed in the Library of the House.

University College and Middlesex School of Dentistry

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the future of the University college and Middlesex school of dentistry and its associated dental hospital, and the consequences of closure for staff.

Mr. Jackson: The Government have accepted the University Grants Committee's recommendations for the rationalisation of dental education in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and their implications for health service provision. In line with the agreed need to reduce the current over-provision of dental graduates, there will be a net intake reduction of 55 places in October 1989, principally through the withdrawal of funding from the University college and Middlesex school of dentistry. The consequences for the staff of that school will be for the college to decide, in consultation with London university and the University Grants Committee. Arrangements will be made for students on courses, including those currently registering, to complete their studies.

As regards Scotland, the health service implications of the University Grants Committee's recommendations are more complex. Consequently, my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland has established a small working party whose remit is to recommend changes in the current provision of dental education in Scotland which best safeguard services to NHS patients. The intention is to secure necessary changes in provision from October 1990.

School Examinations and Assessment Council

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the establishment of the School Examinations and Assessment Council.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: The School Examinations and Assessment Council, set up in shadow form earlier this year, was formally established under section 14 of the Education Reform Act 1988 on 15 August with a full complement of 15 members. The council's chairman is Mr. Philip Halsey, CB, LVO, who will also act as the council's chief executive. The council has been designated the body responsible for approving syllabuses and syllabus criteria under section 5 of the Act. I have placed in the Libraries of both Houses a copy of my letter to Mr. Halsey of 28 September about the work of the council.

National Curriculum Council

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the establishment of the National Curriculum Council.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: The National Curriculum Council, which was set up in shadow form earlier this year, was formally established under section 14 of the Education Reform Act 1988 on 15 August, under the chairmanship of Mr. Duncan Graham CBE who will also act as the council's chief executive. The council currently has 13 members, including its chairman. I intend to make two further appointments to bring the membership up to the full complement of 15 provided for in the Act.

I have approved the council's proposal to locate its main offices in York.

I wrote to Mr. Graham on 26 August about the work of the council. Its initial tasks include conducting statutory consultations on my proposals for attainment targets and programmes of study in mathematics and science for pupils aged five to 16 which I sent to the council on its establishment. Copies of my letter and of the proposals have been deposited in the Libraries of both Houses.

EMPLOYMENT

Community Programme

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the future of community projects currently operated by the community programme in Nottingham and elsewhere.

Mr. Nicholls: Local officials of the Training Agency held a series of presentations with all community programme agents and sponsors to ensure, wherever possible, the satisfactory transition of community programme projects into employment training. Project-based places have an important role within employment training and substantial provision has been made for this in the new programme.

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what representations he has had regarding redundancies in community task force.

Mr. Nicholls: In July 1988 community task force sought advice from the Training Agency about the issue of redundancy notices to CTF employees whose services would not be required from 5 September 1988.

In response, in August, the Training Agency outlined the procedures, which included details of financial help available to CP agents/sponsors, including CTF.

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many employees of the community task

force have had redundancy notices sent to them as a result of replacing the community programme and the jobs training scheme with the adult training programme.

Mr. Nicholls: A total of 235 employees were issued with redundancy notices by community task force as a result of the change to employment training.

All of those concerned had the opportunity to apply for alternative posts in employment training and in the event 138 people actually left.

Wages

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish a table showing *(a)* on a national basis and *(b)* on a regional basis the average weekly wage for (i) full-time male employees, (ii) part-time male employees, (iii) full-time female employees and (iv) part-time female employees in both cash terms and real terms based on 1987-88 prices for each year since 1979.

Mr. Lee: I am sending the hon. Member the available information, a copy of which has also been placed in the Library.

YTS

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people were on YTS schemes in the constituencies of *(a)* Burnley, *(b)* Pendle, *(c)* Rossendale/Darwen and *(d)* Hyndburn on 31 August.

Mr. Cope: The information is shown in the table:

Number of young people on YTS at 31 August 1988

Local authority district[1,2]	*Number*
Burnley	343
Pendle	900
Rossendale and Blackburn[3]	1,311
Hyndburn	1,169

[1] Young people do not necessarily train in the local authority district in which they live.

[2] The Training Agency's computerised management information system does not collect information by constituency. Figures have been given for local authority districts (LADs).

[3] Statistics for Darwen are not available, but are included in Blackburn LAD.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the number of people living in *(a)* Lancashire, *(b)* greater Manchester, *(c)* Merseyside and *(d)* Cheshire who have never worked since leaving school; and if he will indicate how many people under the age of 18 are in this situation in each area.

Mr. Lee: The following information is in the Library. The table shows the number of unemployed claimants in the requested counties who had not entered employment since leaving full-time education along with those aged under 18 in this group on 8 September 1988. These figures include some temporary over-recording.

Unemployed school-leavers, 8 September 1988

	Total	*Aged under 18*
Lancashire	3,542	526
Greater Manchester	11,632	1,845
Merseyside	12,943	2,034
Cheshire	3,456	511

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the number of unemployed people in *(a)* Burnley and *(b)* Pendle who have been unemployed (i) for more than one year and (ii) for more than two years.

Mr. Lee: The following information is in the Library. The table shows the number of unemployed claimants for the requested durations in Pendle travel-to-work area and Burnley travel-to-work area on 14 July 1988.

Travel-to-work	*Unemployed claimants—14 July 1988*	
	One year and over	*two years and over*
Burnley	1,537	1,070
Pendle	949	614

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the number of vacancies which exist by industrial classification in *(a)* the north-west, *(b)* Lancashire, *(c)* the Burnley constituency, *(d)* the Pendle constituency, *(e)* the Rossendale and Darwen constituency and *(f)* the Hyndburn constituency: and if he will list other vacancies according to whatever similar criteria his Department uses for the same areas.

Mr. Lee: Following is the available information, which is also in the Library. The tables show the number of unfilled vacancies analysed by industry at jobcentres in the north-west region, the county of Lancashire and at jobcentres covering areas closely corresponding to the requested parliamentary constituency areas on 5 August 1988, the latest available date.

Recent research has confirmed that, nationally, about a third of vacancies are notified to jobcentres. Estimates arenot available disaggregated by local area or industry.

Unfilled vacancies analysed by industry—5 August 1988

Industrial classification	*North-west region*	*Lancashire County*	*Jobcentres covering Burnley constituency*	*Jobcentres covering Pendle constituency*	*Jobcentres covering Rossendale & Darwen constituency*	*Jobcentres covering Hyndburn constituency*
Agriculture forestry and fishing	96	28	2	1	0	1
Coal extraction	5	0	0	0	0	0
Mineral oil and natural gas extraction	1	1	0	0	0	0
Mineral oil processing	7	0	0	0	0	0
Nuclear fuel production	2	0	0	0	0	0
Gas, electricity and water	105	21	0	0	0	2
Extraction of other minerals and ores	9	2	0	0	0	0
Metal manufacture	29	7	1	3	0	1
Manufacture of non-metallic products	83	21	2	6	4	2
Chemical industry	201	58	8	6	31	0
Production of man-made fibres	1	1	0	0	0	1

Industrial classification	North-west region	Lancashire County	Jobcentres covering Burnley constituency	Jobcentres covering Pendle constituency	Jobcentres covering Rossendale & Darwen constituency	Jobcentres covering Hyndburn constituency
Manufacture of metal goods	305	99	23	22	13	6
Mechanical engineering	747	188	31	14	15	22
Manufacture: office machinery/D.P. equipment	55	3	0	0	1	0
Electrical and electronic engineering	366	87	11	4	3	9
Manufacture of motor vehicles	127	35	3	1	2	1
Shipbuilding and repairing	7	0	0	0	0	0
Manufacture: aerospace/transport equipment	191	150	4	11	1	0
Instrument engineering	35	8	0	0	1	0
Food, drink and tobacco	338	98	4	1	1	12
Textiles	323	88	2	32	15	5
Leather, footwear and clothing	785	202	25	14	44	16
Timber and furniture	328	79	16	13	17	4
Paper, printing and publishing	271	87	8	1	11	12
Other manufacturing	326	100	18	11	8	4
Construction	1,460	364	22	17	25	29
Wholesale and distribution	711	147	4	8	9	6
Retail distribution	3,639	1,009	39	138	36	37
Hotels and catering	3,384	1,267	37	43	29	41
Repair of consumer goods and vehicles	253	42	3	1	1	9
Transport	868	155	9	4	30	15
Telecommunications	142	19	0	0	0	0
Insurance, banking etc., business services	2,041	399	32	18	22	23
Public administration and defence	2,476	746	45	41	33	17
Medical and other health services	1287	372	19	8	27	3
Other services—N.E.S.	2,292	730	44	37	28	62
Speculative placings/transfers/inputs	0	0	0	0	0	0

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many unemployed building workers there are in the north-west.

Mr. Lee: Information from the labour force survey indicates that in spring 1987 there were an estimated 13,000 people in the north-west who were currently unemployed and whose last employment (within the previous three years) was in building work in the construction industry. An occupational analysis of the Department's monthly claimant unemployment count is not available.

Wages Council Inspectors

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many wages council inspectors are currently in post in the north-west region; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: There are currently 12 wages inspectors in post in the north-west division of the inspectorate.

Wages Councils (Prosecutions)

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many prosecutions there were in the north-west region in 1987 and to date in 1988 under wages council legislation.

Mr. Nicholls: There were two prosecutions of employers in the north-west division in 1987. In 1988, there has been one to date.

Accident Statistics

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the distribution by locality of fatal accidents at work in each of the last five years.

Mr. Nicholls: The number of fatal injuries to employees reported to the Health and Safety Executive's factory inspectorate in each of its areas are shown in the table.

Health and Safety Executive Area	1982	1983	1984	1985	Q1 1986	[1]1986-87
South West	14	16	16	12	3	17
South	7	11	9	11	1	11
South East	17	17	19	21	3	14
Greater London	33	32	29	34	5	26
East Anglia	11	13	14	16	3	13
Northern Home Counties	9	8	14	10	—	10
East Midlands	14	9	8	12	5	11
West Midlands	16	18	11	11	2	7
Wales	23	13	23	19	4	21
Marches	11	12	11	7	2	6
North Midlands	16	16	10	12	5	8
South Yorks and Humberside	14	14	14	13	3	15
West plus North Yorkshire	18	21	19	17	4	19
Greater Manchester	13	11	14	14	1	13
Merseyside	9	11	16	16	8	9
North West	13	17	7	4	2	8
North East	21	9	17	15	5	15
Scotland East	21	28	22	17	1	22
Scotland West	26	11	17	13	8	8

Health and Safety Executive Area	1982	1983	1984	1985	Q1 1986	[1]1986-87
Total reported to HM Factory Inspectorate	306	287	290	274	65	253
Total reported to other HSE Inspectorates and HSC Agencies[2]	131	108	110	102	23	76
Total reported to Local Authorities[3]	32	48	37	22	10	26
Grand Total	469	443	437	398	98	355

[1]Data for the year commencing 1 April 1986.
[2]Figures on an area basis could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.
[3]From 1982 to 1985 the figures include some self-employed and from 1982 to 1983 they may also include some members of the public.

Commissioner for the Rights of Trade Unionists

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list those persons who have been offered the post of Commissioner for the Rights of Trade Unionists; and what was their response.

Mr. Nicholls: No.

Employment Training

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many of the 270,000 employment training places agreed with prospective training managers will be provided by *(a)* employers, *(b)* voluntary or community corporations, *(c)* local authorities, and *(d)* other bodies.

Mr. Nicholls: On 9 September, around 291,000 employment training places had been agreed. Of those, 96,500 are provided by employers (including private sector training organisations); 88,000 by voluntary bodies; 61,000 by local authorities; and 45,000 by other bodies.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Sugar

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will tabulate in the *Official Report* in tonnes of white sugar equivalents, or raw unrefined sugar where appropriate, the quantities of sugar in the sugar year 1987-88 which were *(a)* imported into the United Kingdom from African, Caribbean and Pacific states of European Economic Community, *(b)* imported as raw or white sugar, stating their main country of origin, *(c)* produced from sugar beet grown in the United Kingdom, *(d)* exported as raw or refined sugar to member states of the European Economic Community or other countries, respectively and *(e)* absorbed by retail and bulk domestic sugar markets, respectively, together with any other relevant information, including stocks in hand and carried over, related to the above figures.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The information requested is as follows:

1987-88 (October-September)

	'000 tonnes[1]
United Kingdom Imports (provisional figures)	
From EC	
Ireland	47·5
Denmark	43·9
France	21·7
Other	1·9
Total	113·5
From ACP	
Mauritius	466·7
Fiji	199·7
Jamaica	129·6
Guyana	142·6
Swaziland	71·6
Barbados	66·2
Other	155·4
Total	1,231·9
Other Sources	0·5
Total	1,345·9
United Kingdom production from Home Grown Beet (including carry forward from 1986-87)	1,328·3
Carry forward to 1988-89	102·3
'C' sugar to be exported from 1987-88 production	82·0
Exports to EC (provisional)	72·0
Exports to third countries (excluding C sugar) (provisional)	160·0
Deliveries to retail market (provisional)	587·0
Deliveries to industrial market (provisional)	1,538·0
[2]Stocks (as at 31 August 1988)	311·1

[1]All figures in '000 tonnes white sugar equivalent—figures may not sum due to rounding.
[2]Figure comprises sugar held by producers and merchants in the EC sugar storage scheme plus preferential sugar held in store by cane refiners.

Bovine Somatotropin

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what recent representations he has had regarding the commercial licensing of bovine somatotropin and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I have received a considerable number of letters from individuals and organisations expressing opposition and some in support to the licensing of bovine somatotropin.

Pesticides

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what recent representations he has received regarding the five-year delay in enforcing maximum residue limits for pesticides on fruit and vegetables; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ryder: I have received several representations following reports in the media. Over 800 maximum residue levels for pesicides on fruit and vegetables have in fact been introduced under the Pesticides (Maximum Residue Levels in Food) Regulations 1988. All these limits come into effect on 31 December 1988.

There are, however, six individual commodity/pesticide combinations which were included in our second consultation document but for which MRLs have not yet been set. It was recognised in our proposal that approved uses in this country can sometimes lead to residues above the various international MRLs. It was therefore proposed in the consultation document that these MRLs should come into effect in five years time, so as to allow time for good agricultural practice to be adapted. However, I was advised that it was not normal practice to set limits so far in advance of implementation. I have asked for residue data relating to these six MRLs to be reconsidered by the Advisory Committee on Pesticides. MRLs which reflect the advice of the ACP and current international standards will be introduced as soon as possible. However, in setting a timetable, I will be bound to take account of any necessary adjustments to agricultural practice which may have to be set in train.

Coastal Defence

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what principles he has adopted in his policy for coastal defence; what proposals he has for future defence works; and what bodies may be in future responsible for their adoption.

Mr. Ryder: The Ministry in providing grant aid for coastal defence, gives highest priority to schemes which provide protection to people and property. To qualify for grant, schemes must be technically appropriate, economically justified and environmentally sympathetic. Coastal and drainage authorities regularly provide information on their programmes of work which assist the Ministry in planning future grant expenditure.

In parallel with our proposals to privatise water and sewerage utilities, it is intended that water authorities' responsibilities for coastal defence should be transferred to the proposed National Rivers Authority, together with other river management and regulatory functions. Otherwise present arrangements, whereby works programmes are decided by regional or local land drainage committees and financed by precept in constituent county councils, will continue.

Milk

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what proposals he has to comply with the ruling by the European Court of Justice that European Community legislation for milk quotas was deficient in that it did not take into account those who had ceased milk production under a Community-financed scheme in 1984; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The Commission has now put forward proposals to deal with this problem, and we are giving these careful consideration. It is for the Council of Ministers to make decisions on these proposals.

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received from the Milk Marketing Board concerning his practice of permitting certain drugs to be injected into cows markedly to increase yields; what action he intends to take; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The chairman of the Milk Marketing Board has told me of the concern of many milk producers about the possible impact if BST were to become generally available. He also reported that many wanted an EC ban on its use.

Applications for licences for the product are being considered by the European Commission's Committee for Veterinary Medicinal Products, which is required to provide an opinion before licence applications are determined nationally. Any decision in the United Kingdom will take account of our obligations under the Medicines Act 1968 and the relevant EC directives.

Soft Drink Regulations

Mr. Shersby: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received following publication of his proposals for revision of the soft drink regulations; what steps he proposes to maintain quality standards; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ryder: I have received numerous comments on the draft soft drinks regulations and will give them careful consideration before deciding on how best to proceed. It is my intention to ensure that the new regulations enable consumers to make an informed choice when purchasing soft drinks and at the same time allow innovation by manufacturers.

Food Labelling

Mr. Shersby: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what information he has concerning proposals for nutritional labelling being prepared by the European Commission; what representations he has made to the Commission concerning any change in the information at present provised to consumers in Britain; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ryder: I understand that the European Commission has just tabled its proposals on voluntary nutrition labelling, although we have not yet received the formal document. Earlier drafts indicate that the proposals are similar to the full nutrition labelling declarations (category III) as contained in the Ministry's guidelines, a revised version of which was issued to the industry in January. As expected, the proposals are for voluntary nutrition labelling but that where nutrition information is given it should be in a mandatory form. As soon as we receive the formal proposals from the European Commission they will as usual be circulated to industry and other interested parties for comment.

Mr. Shersby: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what consideration is being given by the Food Advisory Committee to the use of graphical representations to accompany numerical nutrition declarations; if he will make it his policy to ensure that all sections of the food industry are consulted before any decision is made; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ryder: The Food Advisory Committee has looked into the possible use of graphical representations to accompany numerical nutrition information and has concluded that further work is required particularly regarding consumer expectations before the various options can be considered further. It is my policy to ensure that all sections of the food industry and other interests are fully consulted about any proposals which may affect them, including, of course, any on the graphical representation of nutrition information.

EC (Surplus Produce)

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what organisations were licensed to distribute the current issue of European Economic Community surplus produce; what criteria were used to select these organisations; what regulations or advice has been given to those charged with distribution of this food; what quantity is being distributed in England, Wales and in each local authority area; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ryder: My right hon. Friend the Member for Suffolk Coastal (Mr. Gummer) announced to the House that 127 organisations had been designated to distribute surplus produce to the most needy. A list of those organisations was placed in the Library on that day. To qualify for designation, charitable and non-profit making organisations were required to demonstrate that they could comply with the conditions of the scheme and in particular: (i) that they were capable of arranging for the produce to be withdrawn from intervention stores (preferably in quantities of no less than 1 tonne on any one occasion), to be processed into an appropriate form for final consumption, and to be distributed to the most needy; (ii) that they were capable of carrying out the operations mentioned in sub-paragraph (i) with due safeguards against abuse and against risks to health; (iii) that the quantity of butter and/or beef received under these arrangements would be additional to quantities (if any) which the organisation normally acquires from commercial sources or from concessionary sales; and that such quantities continue to be acquired; (iv) that they would maintain adequate and satisfactory books and records and would undertake to make these available as required to the Intervention Board for Agricultural Produce or its agents for verification purposes.

Written instructions on how the scheme should be operated have been issued to all designated organisations. The Intervention Board for Agricultural Produce arranged for a series of seminars for organisations operating the scheme, to be held throughout the United Kingdom. The board provides any additional advice necessary on a daily basis.

The quantities of produce that designated organisations have been authorised to withdraw from intervention stores in 1988 can be broken down as follows:

Organisations based in:	*Butter (tonnes)*	*Beef (tonnes)*
England	1,677	570
Wales	176	332
Scotland	80	550
Northern Ireland	530	320

Figures are not available for local authority areas.

Council of Agriculture Ministers

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the outcome of the Agriculture Council in Luxembourg on 17 and 18 October; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. MacGregor: At this meeting, at which I represented the United Kingdom, the Council again discussed the Commission's proposal for an optional scheme of direct income aid to low-income farmers, with a Community contribution towards the cost. I repeated my considerable doubts about the cost-effectiveness and appropriateness of the proposal, and these doubts are now being shared by a number of other members of the Council.

The Council also discussed for the second time the Commission's proposal for giving effect to the judgment of the European Court about the position of farmers who, because they had taken part in the earlier Community schemes for the abandonment of milk production or conversion of dairy herds, were not assigned a quota for milk production when the quota system was introduced in 1984. The main issues in the debate were the circumstances in which such farmers should now be considered for a milk quota, the conditions to be attached, how the extra quota should be found and how the cost should be offset. The matter is to be considered further, but considerable support was given to the views I have strongly expressed on both occasions that the quotas of existing producers should not be affected and that the conditions for beneficiaries under the judgment need to be restrictively drawn, in particular to ensure that only those clearly intending to go back into milk production should be included and that windfall gains should be excluded.

The Commission gave an oral presentation of its proposals for changes in the support arrangements for beef and for sheep as well as the results of its discussions with the New Zealand Government about future imports of butter and sheepmeat from that country. Members of the Council were only able to give very brief preliminary reactions, and these subjects will be taken up at later meetings.

After some discussion, the Council eventually decided on a reduction in the consumption aid for olive oil to apply during the 1988-89 marketing year, with a saving of 102 million ecu to the CAP budget.

Along with a number of my colleagues in the Council, I expressed serious doubts about the Commission's ideas for detailed implementation of the extensification scheme, particularly in relation to control and verification, the risk of fraud and other practical difficulties. The Commission undertook to reconsider.

There was also a discussion of the state of the pigmeat market, in which I again expressed the case for the early abolition of monetary compensatory amounts in that sector.

THE ARTS

Property in Lieu of Tax

Mr. Faulds: To ask the Minister for the Arts when he expects to lay before the House the statement referred to in his written answer of 29 June to the hon. Member for Warley, East, *Official Report*, column *259*; and whether he will make it his policy that in future years such statements in conformity with section 9 (6) of the National Heritage Act 1980, are laid before the House within three months of the close of the financial year covered by them.

Mr. Luce: The statement to which the hon. Member refers was laid before the House on 28 July. It is my intention that in future years the statement of disposals or transfers of property accepted in lieu of tax should, whenever possible, be laid within three months of the close of the financial year.

Investment

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Minister for the Arts whether, in the light of the publication of the PSI Myerscough report on the economic importance of the arts in Britain, a copy of which has been sent to him, he will make it his policy to increase investment in the arts and entertainment industry.

Mr. Luce: The PSI report is a valuable contribution to understanding the role of the arts within the economy. It illustrates how useful developments can be funded by a partnership between public and private interests. It is one of the objectives of the three-year funding programme which I announced last year to stimulate such plural funding of the arts.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Sean Hughes: To ask the Minister for the Arts, what are the latest available figures for his office in the London pay area of the number of vacancies by grade and the proportion this is of the grade complement in London.

Mr. Luce: The Office of Arts and Libraries is located in central London and currently has the following vacancies for permanent staff:

	Number
Executive Officer	1
Administrative Officer	1
Administrative Assistant	2

These posts constitute 7 per cent. of the total complement.

Mr. Sean Hughes: To ask the Minister of the Arts if he will provide the latest available figures for his office for *(a)* numbers of staff in receipt of local pay additions, by grade, *(b)* location of those offices awarding local pay additions and *(c)* annual cost.

Mr. Luce: The number of staff expected to receive local pay additions in the Office of Arts and Libraries in a full year is as follows:

	Number
Administrative Assistants	3
Administrative Officers	6
Executive Officers	10
Senior Personal Secretaries	1
Personal Secretaries	3
Typists	1
Total	24

They are located at Horse Guards road and at Sumner street, London SE1.

The annual cost is estimated at £14,400.

British Library

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Minister for the Arts what has been the total cost to date of the Urquhart wing at the British Library's document supply centre, Boston Spa.

Mr. Luce *[holding answer 4 July 1988]:* The three phases of the Urquhart wing at the British Library's document supply centre, Boston Spa, cost a total of £11,235,027 including VAT.

Club Theatres

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will make a statement on regulations for club theatres.

Mr. John Patten *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* I have been asked to reply.

Public performances of plays are subject to the licensing requirements of the Theatres Act 1968. Premises licensed under the Act will be subject to local authority fire and safety regulations. Local authorities have no power to regulate the content of plays but the 1968 Act prohibits the presentation of obscene performances, whether in public or private, subject to certain defences. Performances of plays in clubs will not be subject to the licensing provisions of the Act if the public are not admitted.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Strip Searches

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many category A prisoners are at present held on remand at Risley detention centre; to how many strip searches they have been subjected in July, August and September, respectively, giving the number of persons involved, number of times each person was searched and if any prison contraband, smuggled item or illegal correspondence was discovered in any search, indicating which items; in how many cases prisoners refused to be searched and had to be restrained while a search was being conducted; and what were the reasons for the search under each of the following headings *(a)* making a remand appearance at court, *(b)* attending a trial, *(c)* inter-prison visit and *(d)* other reasons.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: On 17 October there were eight inmates on remand at Risley remand centre who had been placed in category A. Comprehensive records of strip searches are kept only in respect of category A women prisoners, of whom there was one in Risley during July, August and September. Information from Risley indicates that this prisoner was strip-searched once in July at the time of a cell change and twice in September, at the time of a cell change and on transfer to another establishment. No unauthorised articles were discovered on any of these occasions. On no occasion did the prisoner refuse to be strip-searched.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many category A women prisoners there were in Her Majesty's prison, Durham, in July, August and September, respectively, and how many strip searches were made on prisoners in those months, indicating strip searches before and after consultation with legal advisers, after visits and after cell changes, wing searches and cell searches, and listing the reasons for searches; and illegal contraband or smuggled items found.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: During July, August and September, there were three category A women prisoners in Durham prison. The number of occasions on which each was strip-searched during each month is shown in the table:

	Inmate A			Inmate B			Inmate C		
	July	August	September	July	August	September	July	August	September
After legal visits	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
After other visits	—	3	2	—	—	4	—	1	1
At the time of cell changes, and wing and cell searches	—	2	—	1	2	1	—	2	1
Others	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	2

No unauthorised article was found on any of the three women. I set out the reasons for such searches in my reply to a question from the hon. Member on 15 January at column *446*.

Prisoners (Statistics)

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons originally from *(a)* Northern Ireland and *(b)* the Irish Republic, were in prison in (i) England and (ii) Wales, at the latest date for which figures are available.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Citizens of Northern Ireland are not separately identified from other citizens of the United Kingdom. However, on 31 August 1988, about 310 prisoners in prison service establishments in England who were citizens of the United Kingdom or whose citizenship was unknown were known to have been born in Northern Ireland. A further three were held in establishments in Wales.

The recording of nationality on the records held centrally for citizens of the Republic of Ireland is not completely reliable because it depends upon the information provided by the prisoner. On 31 August, about 470 prisoners in establishments in England were recorded as citizens of or born in the Republic of Ireland. None was held in establishments in Wales.

Guildford Pub Bombings

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many times each of the four people convicted of the Guildford bombing have been subject to *(a)* prison moves and *(b)* prison disciplinary proceedings since 1974.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I will write to the hon. Member.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish the report of the Somerset constabulary on the case of the four people convicted of the Guildford bombing.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: No. It is not the practice to publish the reports of police investigations.

Disabled People's March (Police Deployment)

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to how many Metropolitan police officers, and at what rank, were deployed on 28 July at the march of people with disabilities from Kennington Park to Elephant and Castle.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that one chief inspector, five inspectors, nine sergeants and 80 constables were deployed on the march.

Firearms (Amendment) Bill

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any plans to extend the Firearms (Amendment) Bill to firearms rendered incapable of firing live ammunition, but which will accept blank ammunition; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Firearms (Amendment) Bill does not amend the definition of a firearm in section 57(1) of the Firearms Act 1968 and there are no plans to do so.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what discussions his Department has held with historical re-enactment groups concerning the Firearms (Amendment) Bill; if he will list those groups; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what assistance his Department has sought from historical re-enactment groups concerning the Firearms (Amendment) Bill; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: We have considered carefully representations from the Sealed Knot, the English Civil War Society, the Great War Society an the World War II Battle Re-enactment Society. I am satisfied that the Bill will not impose an unreasonable burden on their activities. Most of the guns they use will still be able to be held either on a firearm or a shotgun certificate.

Football League Clubs, London (Police Costs)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to how much was *(a)* charged and *(b)* paid by each Football League club in London for police services in the 1987-88 season and 1988-89 season to date.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that the information is as follows:

Club	Season 1987-88		Season 1988-89 (to 18 October)	
	Charged £	Paid £	Charged £	Paid £
Arsenal	161,875·96	161,875·96	15,955·96	5,810·28
Brentford	34,078·68	34,078·68	9,645·95	6,790·68
Charlton	49,273·65	49,273·65	9,960·01	9,441·27
Chelsea	168,257·86	168,257·86	47,318·96	30,783·20
Crystal Palace	37,173·59	37,173·59	10,176·56	4,203·23
Fulham	26,526·79	26,526·79	5,093·81	1,326·96
Leyton Orient	17,509·17	17,509·17	3,924·49	1,100·62

Club	*Season 1987-88*		*Season 1988-89 (to 18 October)*	
	Charged £	*Paid £*	*Charged £*	*Paid £*
Millwall	57,693·28	57,693·28	16,975·52	12,329·84
Queen's Park Rangers	129,564·28	129,564·28	28,004·20	16,233·40
Tottenham Hotspur	153,785·36	153,785·36	12,413·06	Nil
West Ham United	176,303·08	176,303·08	30,433·09	12,452·08
Wimbledon	81,354·26	81,354·26	16,897·37	11,077·49
Total	1,093,395·96	1,093,395·96	206,798·98	111,549·05

Traffic Wardens (Newham)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many traffic wardens were on duty in the London borough of Newham over the weekend of 8-9 October 1988.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the Commissioner that on Saturday 8 October, one traffic warden controller, six traffic warden supervisors and 34 traffic wardens were on duty and on Sunday 9 October one traffic warden controller, six supervisors and 27 traffic wardens.

Telephone Interceptions

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what sums of money were charged to Government by British Telecom or other telephone companies for interception services in the last financial year; and what was the average cost per interception;

(2) how many telephone lines in total were intercepted by authorised warrant in 1987;

(3) for all telephone interceptions in 1987, what proportion were authorised for *(a)* criminal investigation and *(b)* domestic surveillance for security purposes;

(4) what has been the average duration of an authorised interception warrant during the past two years; who monitors them; and to whom the monitoring information is reported;

(5) how many requests have been received from the police to have telephone lines monitored for traffic frequency in the past 12 months;

(6) how many individual telephone lines have been intercepted on average per authorised warrant in the last two years.

Mr. Hurd: The Interception of Communications Act 1985 sets out the purposes for which a warrant may be issued and makes provision for the monitoring of interception under the Act by an independent judicial figure, the right hon. Lord Justice Lloyd. The commissioner's annual reports, presented to parliament by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, comment on the results of that monitoring.

The figures for the number of interceptions warrants issued by the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Scotland in force on 31 December 1987 were given in an annex to the report of the commissioner, which was presented to Parliament in March 1988 (Cmnd. 351). I do not intend to publish statistics additional to those in the commissioner's reports. Nor would it be consistent with the practice of successive Governments to give information about the costs relating to interception warrants.

Police Manpower (Newham)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers were on duty in the London Borough of Newham over the weekend of 8-9 October 1988; and what was the total cost involved.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that there were 2,607 police officers on duty on 8 October and 2,578 on 9 October. The total additional cost was £206,959.

Airport Police Officers (Sidearms)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when it became routine for police officers at *(a)* Heathrow and *(b)* Gatwick publicly to display sidearms; why this was considered necessary; and who authorised this practice.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Armed police officers at Heathrow Airport have carried unconcealed sidearms while dressed in shirt sleeve order for several years, and, since 14 December 1987, while dressed in full uniform. At Gatwick airport sidearms have been carried unconcealed by officers in shirt sleeve order since 16 October 1987. In each case the decision was taken by the chief officer of police (the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis and the chief constable of Sussex constabulary respectively) in accordance with his responsibility for all operational matters, for the greater comfort of the officers concerned, and in order to render their sidearms more accessible in an emergency.

Party Conferences (Policing Costs)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has regarding the policing costs associated with the 1988 annual conference of *(a)* the SDP, *(b)* the Liberal-Democrats, *(c)* the Labour party, *(d)* the Conservative party and *(e)* any other political party in respect of which additional policing costs arose.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the chief constables of Devon and Cornwall and of Lancashire that there were no additional policing costs associated with the 1988 annual conference of the Social Democratic party and that the estimated additional costs of policing the Social and Liberal Democrats' conference and the Labour party conference were £400 and £61,000 respectively.

I also understand from the chief constable of Sussex that it is anticipated that the additional costs of policing the 1988 Conservative party conference will be £1·4 million, subject to the finalising of the accounts.

There is no information held centrally to suggest that any significant additional policing costs are incurred for other political party conferences in England and Wales.

"Dispensing with the Services of a Police Officer"

Sir Eldon Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what consultations he had with the Police Federation before the document, "Dispensing with the Services of a Police Officer", was made public.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The document to which my hon. Friend refers was not produced or made public by my Department.

Prisoners (Food)

Mr. Latham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will set out in tabular form, for the latest convenient date, the expenditure per head for inmates in each of Her Majesty's prisons in respect of food per week; and how this relates to the actual budget.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The quantity of food for inmates is determined by reference not to cash budgets but to dietary scales designed to meet agreed nutritional requirements. Ingredients are supplied primarily from centrally negotiated contracts and from prison farms and gardens. The notional cost per inmate per week totalled £6·45 in the year ended 31 March 1988.

Neighbourhood Watch

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list, for each south Yorkshire police division *(a)* the date on which the first neighbourhood watch schemes were established, *(b)* the crime rate on that date and *(c)* the crime rate on the most recent available date.

Mr. John Patten: I understand the first neighbourhood watch schemes were established in each South Yorkshire police division are as follows:

Division	*Date*	*Location*
Rotherham	January 1984	Firbeck Village
West Bar (Central Sheffield)	August 1984	Arbourthorne Estate
Barnsley	April 1985	Greenmoor Village
Doncaster	June 1985	Clayton Village
South Sheffield	October 1985	Alderson Place
North Sheffield	June 1986	Phenistone Road

I regret that information about crime rates on particular dates cannot be provided.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many neighbourhood watch schemes there are in each South Yorkshire police division; and by what percentage the crime rate has fallen or risen since these schemes began.

Mr. John Patten *[pursuant to his reply, 20 July 1988 c. 642]:* I regret that my answer was incomplete. The full text of the reply is as follows:

I understand from the chief constable of South Yorkshire that the first neighbourhood watch schemes in his police force area was established in January 1984 and that by the end of June 1988 the total number of schemes had increased to 718. The following table shows the number of schemes in each police division:—

Division	*Number of Neighbourhood Watch Schemes*
Doncaster	152
Barnsley	76
Rotherham	63
West Bar	44
South Sheffield	241
North Sheffield	142
Total	718

Each of these schemes was established at different times between January 1984 and 1988 and it is not possible to state by what percentage the crime rate has fallen or risen since each scheme began.

However, we welcome the fact that total recorded crime in the South Yorkshire police force area in the first six months of this year has fallen by 4·8 per cent. and residential burglaries by 10·2 per cent. compared with the same period in 1987.

Departmental Programmes

Mr. George: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much has been spent by his Department in each of the past five years on the evaluation of departmental programmes; and what proportion this constitutes of *(a)* the amount allocated for evaluation and *(b)* the Department's total budget.

Mr. Hurd *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* It is not possible to identify separately the resources involved in the evaluation of my Department's programmes.

Entry Clearance

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications for entry clearance from *(a)* wives, *(b)* husbands, *(c)* fiancés and *(d)* fiancées made at British posts on (1) New Delhi, (2) Bombay, (3) Calcutta, (4) Madras, (5) Dhaka, (6) Islamabad, (7) Karachi and (8) Colombo for each quarter since January 1987 were (A) received, (B) granted and (C) refused; how many refusals at each post were (i) wholly and (ii) partly because the visa officer was not satisfied that the primary purpose of the marriage was not immigration; how many refusals at each post were (I) wholly and (II) partly because the visa officer was not satisfied that the couple could support and accommodate themselves without recourse to public funds; what was the refusal rate at each post; and what percentage of those refusals were (y) wholly and (z) partly on primary purpose grounds.

Mr. Renton *[holding answer 20 July 1988]:* Information for the Indian sub-continent for the whole of 1987 and, where available, for the first quarter of 1988 is given in the tables. Where the numbers are small, the figures for individual posts have been combined. In order to keep down the cost, only annual data for 1987 have been given. In any case, information on refusals which takes account of successful appeals is not compiled for periods shorter than 12 months. Corresponding information for Colombo is not available.

Table 1 Husbands, fiances, wives and fiancees in the Indian sub-continent applying for entry clearance for settlement in the United Kingdom
Number of persons or percentage

Post	Husbands		Fiances		Wives		Fiancees	
	1987	1988 1st quarter	1987	1988 1st quarter	1987	1988 1st quarter	1987	1988 1st quarter
New Delhi (including Calcutta)								
Applications received[3]	220	60	340	70	500	180	330	60
Applications granted[4]	150	40	130	40	480	130	170	60
Applications refused initially	130	20	230	50	10	[1]	90	30
Refusal rate (percentage)[5]	43	..	59	..	2	..	34	..
Bombay (including Madras)								
Applications received[3]	320	70	340	80	1,150	320	260	70
Applications granted[4]	210	60	180	30	1,050	280	140	40
Applications refused initially	160	40	200	60	20	[1]	50	[1]
Refusal rate (percentage)[5]	37	..	46	..	2	..	25	..
Dhaka								
Applications received[3]	250	90	20	10	1,430	380	20	[1]
Applications granted[4]	100	20	[1]	[1]	1,070	360	10	10
Applications refused initially	70	20	10	[1]	160	80	10	[1]
Refusal rate (percentage)[5]	36	..	[2]78	..	[1]	..	[2]50	..
Islamabad (including Karachi)								
Applications received[3]	1,240	390	1,050	250	2,620	790	450	70
Applications granted[4]	280	100	360	80	2,130	600	290	70
Applications refused initially	320	130	450	150	120	30	40	10
Refusal rate (percentage)[5]	49	..	47	..	4	..	11	..

[1] 5 or fewer, or ½ per cent. or less.
[2] Refusal rate based on fewer than 15 applications.
[3] Including applications subsequently withdrawn or lapsed.
[4] Granted initially or on appeal.
[5] Applications refused, after taking account of successful appeals, as a percentage of applications decided.
.. = not available.

Table 2 Husbands, fiances, wives and fiancees in the Indian sub-continent refused entry clearance to the United Kingdom in 1987
Number of persons or percentages

	New Delhi (including Calcutta)				Bombay (including Madras)				Dhaka				Islamabad (including Karachi)				Total Indian sub-continent			
	Husbands	Fiances	Wives	Fiancees	Husbands	Fiances	Wives	Fiancees	Husbands	Fiances	Wives	Fiancees	Husbands	Fiances	Wives	Fiancees	Husbands	Fiances	Wives	Fiancees
Number refused because couple could not accommodate and/or maintain themselves without recourse to public funds:																				
Solely for these reasons	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—	—	[2]—	[2]—	—	[2]—	—	10	—	[2]—	—	[2]—	—	10	[2]—	20	[2]—
Partly for these reasons	10	[2]—	—	[2]—	—	[2]—	—	—	10	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—	70	50	—	[2]—	80	60	[2]—	10
Number refused because primary purpose of the marriage was to obtain admission to United Kingdom:																				
Solely for this reason	100	170	[2]—	10	120	160	10	20	30	—	—	—	200	250	[2]—	10	450	580	20	40
Partly for this reason	10	20	—	30	—	[2]—	—	[2]—	10	[2]—	—	—	60	80	[2]—	10	450	580	20	40
Primary purposes refusals as a percentage of all refusals:																				
Solely on primary purpose grounds	90	88	[3]56	13	96	94	65	38	48	—	—	—	74	76	3	40	80	83	19	25
Partly on primary purpose grounds	6	9	—	29	—	3	—	4	15	[3]57	—	—	23	24	—	9	14	15	—	17

[1] After taking account of successful appeals.
[2] Five or fewer, or ½ per cent. or less.
[3] Refused rate based on fewer than 15 applications.
— Nil.

Public Expenditure

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish a table in the *Official Report*, in the same format as his written reply of 25 July, on receipts to his programme classified as charges in respect of his programme expenditure over the years 1982-83 to 1990-91, and consistent with the answer of 27 May, *Official Report*, columns *375-76*, indicating the receips in respect of running costs expenditure, together with a supplementary analysis indicating, separately, the amounts of receipts in respect of programme expenditure and of running costs expenditure estimated to have been met from other public expenditure programmes.

Mr. Hurd *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* The following figures, which are consistent with those given by my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury on 29 July at columns *747-48*, relate to receipts which offset running cost expenditure for which the Home Ofice is responsible. The Home Office receives no receipts classified as being paid from other public expenditure programmes in respect of running costs. Figures for receipts in respect of programme expenditure paid from other public expenditure programmes could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Social Science Research

Mr. George: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much has been spent by his Department in each of the past five years on social science research; what percentage this constitutes of total departmental expenditure and of his Department's research budget; and

how much of the research has been undertaken *(a)* within his Department, *(b)* by universities and polytechnics and *(c)* by independent research organisations.

Mr. Hurd *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* The information is not available in the form requested. That available and given in the table relates to expenditure not only on social science research but on research on humanities. It also includes research performed elsewhere in central Government. Expenditure on social science and humanities research is expressed as a percentage of total cash-limited Home Office expenditure.

Year	*Expenditure on social science and humanities research (£m)*	*Percentage total expenditure*	*Percentage research budget (social science and humanities, science and technology)*	*Percentage undertaken (1) within Department*	*(2) by Universities and polytechnics*	*(3) by independent[1] research organisations*
1982-83	3·1	0·45	25·6	51·6	12·9	11·9
1983-84	3·0	0·38	24·6	56·7	13·3	2·7
1984-85	2·9	0·34	22·0	62·0	17·2	4·8
1985-86	2·8	0·31	20·4	64·3	21·4	1·8
1986-87	2·3	0·23	17·3	56·5	21·7	1·3

[1] Industrial research associations, non-industrial research institutes.

Adoption

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has as to how many babies were brought into the United Kingdom for adoption by British couples during 1987; and if he will list the countries of origin.

Mr. Renton *[holding answer 29 July 1988]:* Information is not available in the form requested, as the statistics collected on passenger admissions do not separately identify children who come to the United Kingdom for adoption. The available information—which may not be entirely complete—is that 52 children were granted settlement in the United Kingdom in 1987 on the basis of their adoption by a person already settled here. The nationalities are shown in the table:

Acceptances for settlement by reason of adoption

Nationality	*Number of children of each nationality*
India, Pakistan	7
Canada, Korea, Philippines, Sudan, Sweden, Thailand, USA	2
Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Egypt, El Salvador, German Federal Republic, Ghana, Guyana, Jamaica, Kenya, Mauritius, Morocco, New Zealand, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Trinidad and Tobago, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zimbabwe, Other	1
	[1]52

[1] Includes one child whose nationality is not recorded.

General Practitioners (Misuse of Drugs)

Mr. Rathbone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cases there have been of general practitioners being brought before the misuse of drugs tribunal; and how many of those have been found guilty for each of the most recent five years for which records are available.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 29 July 1988]:* The number of cases of general practitioners considered by the misuse of drugs tribunal for each of the years 1983-87 is as follows:

Year	*Number of cases*
1983	3
1984	3
1985	1
1986	3
1987	3

In all but one of these cases my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary made, in th light of the tribunal's findings, a direction under section 13 of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, prohibiting the practitioner from prescribing certain controlled drugs. In the remaining case, representations by the practitioner against a proposed direction are shortly to be considered by the misuse of drugs advisory body.

Passports

Mr. Franks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will give the number of employees at the passport office and the number of passports issued in 1979, 1981, 1983, 1985 and 1987.

Mr. Renton *[pursuant to his reply, 23 June 1988, c. 679]:* I regret that my answer contained incorrect information. The answer as it should have appeared is as follows:

The information, covering the six United Kingdom passsport offices, is as follows:

Year	*Number of passports issued*	*Highest number of staff in post in any month[1]*	
		Permanent staff	*Casual staff*
1979	1,809,091	901	182
1981	1,768,538	996	119
1983	1,979,740	949	167
1985	1,799,043	938	111
1987	2,041,220	961	232

[1] Includes headquarters staff

Child Abuse

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what are the figures for each of the last five years, broken down by sex, of persons convicted of child abuse; and of the sentences given by the courts, in England and Wales.

Mr. John Patten *[pursuant to his reply, 28 July 1988, c. 420]*: I am now able to provide some data for 1986. Comparable information for earlier years could be provided only at disproportionate cost, while figures for 1987 are not yet available.

The tables bring together the readily available information on the number of defendants found guilty of certain sexual offences and offences of violence against children. For other types of offence it is not possible from the results of court proceedings held centrally to distinguish the age of the victim. As the hon. Member will see, nearly half of the persons convicted of sexual offences received sentences of immediate custody.

Table 1: Persons found guilty and sentenced at all courts for sexual offences where the victim is known to have been of 16 years of age or under

England and Wales 1986 — *Number of persons*

Offence description	*Sex*	*Total found guilty*	*Total for sentence*	*Absolute/ conditional discharge*	*Probation/ supervision order*	*Fine*	*Community service order*	*Fully suspended sentence*	*Immediate custody*	*Otherwise dealt with*
Buggery with a boy under the age of 16 or with a woman or an animal	M	147	147	5	21	2	1	5	108	5
Attempts to commit buggery with a boy under the age of 16 or with a woman or an animal	M	20	20	3	1	—	1	3	12	—
Indecent assault on male person under 16	M	398	401	30	121	33	2	46	156	13
	F	12	12	1	6	1	—	2	2	—
Indecent assault on female person under 16	M	1,318	1,327	103	350	110	26	164	518	56
	F	9	9	3	1	—	—	2	3	—
Unlawful sexual intercourse with girl under 13	M	100	100	1	12	7	2	6	70	2
Unlawful sexual intercourse with girl under 16	M	339	337	50	50	70	21	45	94	7
	F	2	2	1	—	—	—	1	—	—
Incest with girl under 13	M	75	75	—	4	—	—	2	65	4
	F	2	2	—	1	1	—	—	—	—
Inciting girl under 16 to have incestuous sexual intercourse	M	3	3	—	—	1	—	—	2	—
Householder permitting unlawful sexual intercourse with girl under 16	M	1	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
	F	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Person responsible for girl under 16 causing or encouraging her prostitution etc.	M	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
	F	2	2	—	1	—	—	—	1	—
Abduction of unmarried girl under 16	M	11	11	1	2	—	1	3	3	1
	F	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Gross indecency	M	236	235	19	63	34	3	27	81	8
	F	7	7	—	3	—	—	2	2	—
Total	M	2,649	2,658	212	624	257	57	302	1,110	96
	F	36	36	5	12	2	—	7	10	—

Table 2: Persons found guilty and sentenced at all courts for offences of violence against the person where the victim is known to have been of 16 years of age or under

England and Wales 1986 — *Number of persons*

Offence description	*Sex*	*Total found guilty*	*Total for sentence*	*Absolute/ conditional discharge*	*Probation/ supervision order*	*Fine*	*Community service order*	*Fully suspended sentence*	*Immediate custody*	*Otherwise dealt with*
Murder of infant under 1 year	M	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	2	—
Infanticide	F	9	9	—	9	—	—	—	—	—
Cruelty to a child	M	58	57	14	7	1	1	12	20	2
	F	65	65	13	27	2	1	12	10	—
Summary offences										
Cruelty to, or neglect of, children	M	1	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
	F	3	3	1	2	—	—	—	—	—

SOCIAL SECURITY

Transitional Arrangements

Mrs. Wise: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many local offices of his Department suspended the normal visits undertaken to review claims (LO2 visits) during the transitional period of the introduction of the new social security arrangements.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The table gives the number of local offices suspending one visit or more during each of the four-week periods of the exercise to convert supplementary benefit cases to income support:

	Four-week period ending				
	15/12/87	*12/1/88*	*9/2/88*	*8/3/88*	*[1]8/4/88*
Number of offices suspending routine visits	41	51	52	48	32
Number of offices suspending out of course visits	271	264	284	291	289

[1]This period is slightly longer than four weeks in order to coincide with the end of the supplementary benefit scheme.
(Note: The same office may appear in both categories of visit and in each four-week period.)
(Source: Internal management information returns.)

Conductive Education

Mr. Nellist: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will make a statement on the visit to the Peto institute in Hungary, by the Minister of State, the hon. Member for Chelsea (Mr. Scott), in mid-September; whether the visit resulted in administrative easement of benefit transferral for the United Kingdom families concerned; and what proposals he now has for further support and development of conductive education in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Scott: I visited the Peto institute during a short visit to Hungary from 18-21 September, and I was very impressed by the skill and dedication of Dr. Hari and her staff. I met some of the United Kingdom families whose children were attending the Peto institute, and listened to their concerns. I also saw two examples of the use of conductors in Hungarian hospitals and had discussions with Hungarian Government Ministers.

Following an earlier visit by officials, we had already made special arrangements for co-ordinating the handling of claims by the United Kingdom families for attendance allowance, invalid care allowance and mobility allowance. The arrangements are intended to reduce the need for inquiries and to enable benefits to continue in payment abroad without interruption. Additionally, information already obtained for attendance allowance purposes will be used, wherever possible, for deciding claims for mobility allowance for children reaching the age of five, to avoid the requirement to return to the United Kingdom for medical examination.

I have seen many examples of excellent practice in this country by health and education professionals working with disabled children. I welcome the work of the Birmingham Foundation for Conductive Education, in piloting the training of United Kingdom conductors, in association with the Peto institute. I shall await with great interest the findings of the associated research project, to which Government have contributed substantial funding. I also welcome the interest shown by health and education professionals in this country in aspects of conductive education and I hope that my visit will lead to more exchanges of good practice between the United Kingdom and Hungary. All these developments have the potential of adding to the range of options open to parents of motor-disordered children in the United Kingdom.

Benefits

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will publish a table showing the numbers of unemployed people in Burnley by entitlement to benefit for the years 1981, 1984, 1986 and 1987 and distinguishing between the following *(a)* unemployment benefit only, *(b)* supplementary and unemployment benefit, *(c)* supplementary benefit only, and *(d)* no benefit.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The numbers of people registered as unemployed in Burnley by entitlement to benefit for the years [1]1982, 1984, 1986 and 1987 were:

	Unemployment benefit only	*Supplementary benefit and unemployment benefit*	*Supplementary benefit only*	*No benefit[2]*
February 1982	2,158	472	2,192	759
February 1984	1,490	428	3,220	848
November 1986	1,400	371	2,897	961
November 1987	870	195	2,422	807

Notes:
[1] Data are normally obtained as at November of each year. However as a result of industrial action during 1981 and 1984 it has not been possible to give data for those dates. Instead figures as at February 1982 and 1984 have been provided.
[2] The only figures available are for those who are "signing" at the unemployment benefit office to receive National Insurance credits.

Multiple Sclerosis

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will list in the *Official Report*, for the past five years for which figures are available, the number of applications for mobility allowance received by medical appeal tribunals in the United Kingdom from applicants who suffered from multiple sclerosis, as a percentage of the total applications heard by the tribunals in the same period, together with the percentage of applications from multiple sclerosis applicants during the same period whose appeals were upheld.

Mr. Scott: I regret that it is not possible to provide information about the number of claims received from people suffering from specific diagnostic conditions.

Social Security Payments

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) what was the total value of *(a)* grants, and *(b)* loans, given by social security offices to persons living within the Fife North-East area over the last six months; and what was the total value of single payments made by those offices to persons living within the Fife, North-East area over the same period in 1987;

(2) what was the number of applications received by social security offices from persons within the Fife North-East area for a grant or loan from the social fund during the last six months and the proportion of these for which a grant or loan was given;

(3) what was the number of applications for single payments from persons in the Fife North-East area over the six months period from April 1987; and what was the proportion of these for which a payment was granted.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Fife North-East constituency is covered by the Department's offices at Dundee East, Leven and Perth, but their boundaries are not conterminous. Information about social fund applications and awards from the social fund since 11 April 1988 is held in the Library.

Information about single payment expenditure is not available monthly. However, the available information for the 24-week period ending on 22 September 1987 is shown in the table.

Local Office	*Number of SP claims*	*Number of SP awards*	*Percentage successful awards*	*Total payments £*
Dundee East	8,919	4,538	50·88	346,712
Leven	3,368	1,622	48·16	119,946
Perth	2,824	1,532	54·25	120,934

Pensions

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will propose Community legislation to oblige member states to introduce equality in respect of the ages at which men and women became entitled either to state or occupational pensions; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The current draft directive on equal treatment would require equal pension ages for men and women within both state and occupational pension schemes. Negotiations on this draft directive are continuing.

Disabled People (OPCS Report)

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security on what date he received from the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys the report on the financial situation of people with disabilities; on what date he intends to publish the report; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: The complete text of the OPCS report on the financial circumstances of disabled adults living in private households was received by the Department at the end of August. On the date of publication of the report I refer the right hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) on 7 June at column *575*.

Family Credit

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he has any plans to seek to improve the workings of the family credit system with regard to the requirement to submit audited accounts; what representations he has received concerning the need to modify current regulations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: There is no requirement for self-employed persons to submit any accounts in support of a claim for family credit. The relevant information about business receipts and expenses may be provided by completing a form supplied by my Department or by submitting accounts, as the person wishes. The legislation provides that, for accounts to be acceptable for this purpose, they have to be maintained and audited by a qualified auditor. Representations have been received from claimants and their financial advisers that this latter condition is unduly restrictive.

We intend, shortly, to lay amending regulations to relax the rules on the acceptability of accounts, though without changing the present basis of assessing earnings from the business by reference to gross receipts and expenses allowable under family credit legislation.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many families were in receipt of family credit payments during the period April to June, inclusive; and how many of thesed were paid on the basis of submitted audited accounts.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The number of families in receipt of family credit was:

194,000 at the end of April
215,000 at the end of May
236,000 at the end of June

None of these was being paid on the basis of submitted audited accounts.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many families were in receipt of family income supplement in March; and how many families were in receipt of family credit in September.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Around 205,000 families were receiving family income supplement in March. Around 242,000 families were receiving family credit at the end of September, but at that stage the situation was distorted by the effects of the postal dispute which had held up the receipt and clearance of claims. Otherwise, on the basis of claims subsequently received, the figure could have been expected to be higher than at the end of August when over 255,000 families were receiving family credit.

Income Support

Dr. Michael Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether he has any plans to change the arrangements for paying income support to homeless people.

Mr. Scott: As a result of monitoring the operation of the new social security scheme, we have concluded that there is scope for improving the arrangements for helping homeless people. We are therefore taking the following steps.

First, we are issuing further guidance to local offices to ensure that claimants are paid their full income support entitlement as soon as possible after the start of a claim. This will draw attention, in particular, to the power to pay some benefit in the first week of a claim, including a full week's board and lodging payment if this falls due during the period covered.

Secondly, we will be expanding the guidance in the social fund manual to ensure that officers dealing with crisis loan applications are aware of the potential risks to health and safety that may be faced by the homeless. Crisis loans may be available in advance of the normal income support pay day to meet accommodation charges, including the payment of rent in advance.

Finally, we are extending the direct payment arrangements. Existing provisions allow for the accommodation charge within income support to be paid direct to a hostel from the start of a claim if the hostel is akin to a resettlement unit or provides facilities for alcoholics or drug addicts. We will be extending these arrangements to cover all hostels. This should help more claimants to secure accommodation.

We continue to believe that payment of income support in arrears is the most sensible arrangement for the majority of people below pension age. This is in line with the way wages and other benefits are normally paid.

In addition, landlords providing board and lodging accommodation were informed of the new payment arrangements before income support was introduced and our information shows that, in practice, most are accepting payment of accommodation charges in arrears. Claimants planning to stay in this type of accommodation are provided with a letter for the landlord confirming that a claim for benefit has been made.

We are, of course, continuing to monitor the effects of the new scheme.

Dorsal Column Stimulators

Mrs. Wise: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services in the area of which regional health authorities dorsal column stimulators for pain relief have been fitted in the most recent period for which figures are available.

Mrs. Currie: I have been asked to reply.

We do not hold this information centrally.

NHS Laundry and Cleaning (Accidents)

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what has been the rate of (i) fatal accidents, (ii) serious, non-fatal accidents, and (iii) minor accidents in *(a)* National Health Service laundries, *(b)* National Health Service cleaning, *(c)* privatised laundries, and *(d)* privatised cleaning in the last two years.

Mr. Mellor: We do not collect this information centrally.

Details of injuries are maintained by the Health and Safety Executive under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1985.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Clay: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his latest estimate of the increase in the number of claimants and the level of expenditure on housing benefit which will result from the introduction of the community charge.

Mr. Scott *[holding answer 17 June 1988]:* The information requested is given in the table.

Caseload and costs of the community charge benefit scheme—latest estimates

	Community charge benefit			*Rate rebates*	
	caseload thousands	*(individuals) thousands*	*Cost £ million*	*caseload thousands*	*cost £ million*
England	6,860	(9,380)	1,525	5,115	1,265
Scotland	780	(1,040)	165	600	160
Wales	440	(600)	60	295	45
Great Britain	8,080	(11,020)	1,750	6,015	1,470

Notes:

1. The caseload figures in columns one and four are take-up estimates of numbers of claimants. They thus treat both partners in a married or unmarried couple as one. Column two gives the estimated number of individuals who would receive community charge benefit.
2. The rate rebate figures are estimates for 1988-89.
3. The community charge benefit figures are based on a maximum benefit of 80 per cent. of liability and a prescribed taper of 15 per cent. The current housing benefit rules for assessing the levels of the applicable amounts, the treatment of capital and income and a minimum benefit of 50p per week per claim have been used throughout. The figures are based on the most recent illustrative estimates of what community charges would have been in 1988-89 had they been in operation.

HEALTH

Speech Therapy

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish the results of the recent study commissioned by the Department of Health and Social Security on the incidence and prevalence of communications and language handicaps and the need for speech therapy.

Mr. Mellor: I expect the report to be published by the researcher when it is complete.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures he is taking to ensure that the current National Health Service structure for speech therapists is retained if local education authorities are providing funding for speech therapy.

Mr. Mellor: We do not believe that the provision of funds for speech therapy by local education authorities

would undermine the current National Health Services structure for speech therapists. Health authorities remain responsible for the provision of speech therapy services and there is in general good co-operation between health authorities and local educational authorities in the provision of services for children.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the district health authorities which have a specialist speech therapist in post.

Mr. Mellor: We do not hold this information centrally, but under the new flexible pay and grading structure introduced on 1 January this yar, it is possible for speech therapists in most grades to be employed in a specialist field.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to provide central funds for the provision of speech therapy services.

Mr. Mellor: None.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what are the respective duties of *(a)* education authorities and *(b)* health authorities to provide funds for speech therapy services.

Mr. Mellor: Speech therapy is one of the services which it is the duty of health authorities to provide under the National Health Service Act 1977. Local education authorities have no duty to provide funds for speech therapy services, but will have the power to do so when a recent amendment to the Education Act 1981 comes into effect on 1 November 1988.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures he intends to take to increase the number of specialist speech therapists who work with deaf children and adults.

Mr. Mellor: This is a matter for individual health authorities and speech therapy managers.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures he intends to take to increase the minimum and maximum salary levels of speech therapists following the claim submitted on 1 April.

Mr. Mellor: Pay is a matter for negotiation in the appropriate Whitley council. I understand that at a joint meeting on 27 June National Health Service management made an offer of 5·5 per cent. increase on all points of all scales. This offer, which includes salaries ranging from £8,704 to £20,263, has been rejected. Negotiations are continuing on the offer and a further meeting is to be arranged.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many specialist speech therapists in the United Kingdom work with deaf children and adults;

(2) how many children had speech therapy identified as a special need on special educational statements; and if he will list the number of these children that receive therapy at the level required.

Mr. Mellor: This information is not available centrally.

NHS (Expenditure)

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will provide a breakdown of estimates given in his reply to the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) on 9 March, *Official Report*, columns *254-56*, showing spending by age separately on *(a)* the hospital service and *(b)* community health services.

Mr. Mellor: This information is not available.

Mentally Ill People

Ms Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what progress has been made in meeting the 1991 targets for provision for mentally ill people outlined in Command 6233, "Better Services for the Mentally Ill"; and what changes he expects to occur in the next three years;

(2) what progress has been made to meet the 1991 targets for provision for mentally ill people, by health and social services authority, outlined in Command 6233, "Better Services for the Mentally Ill"; and what changes he expects to occur in the next three years.

Mrs. Currie: The Command Paper "Better Services for the Mentally Ill", published in 1975 by the then Labour Government, did not set illustrative targets.

Over the next three years we expect to see a continuing development of services, though the pace of change will depend on local needs and opportunities.

Mentally Handicapped People

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what progress has been made in meeting the 1991 targets for provision for mentally handicapped people outlined in Command 4683, "Better Services for the Mentally Handicapped"; and what changes he expects to occur in the next three years;

(2) what progress has been made in meeting the 1991 targets, by health and social services authority, for provision for mentally handicapped people outlined in Command 4683, "Better Services for the Mentally Handicapped"; and what changes he expects to occur in the next three years.

Mrs. Currie: The "targets" set in the 1971 White Paper were intended to be guidelines to the statutory authorities on the scale of provision necessary to provide better services for mentally handicapped people. The movement to community care and changes in thinking on the best form of provision have now made the guidelines less useful.

Substantial progress has been made in expanding provision for mentally handicapped people, including support to the majority of mentally handicapped people who live at home, and increased residential provision for those who cannot, while the numbers living in NHS hospitals continue to fall. The provision of local authority day services has also increased. We expect this progress to continue.

Between 1976 and 1986 there was a decrease of 14,800 in the number of NHS resident patients from 49,000 in 1976 to 34,200 in 1986. During the same period there was an increase of 12,600 places in residential homes from 11,800 to 24,400 and of 13,800 places in adult training centres and special needs units from 36,600 to 50,400.

Relevant figures are available in the Department's various statistical publications on health and personal social services, the most recent of which is the "Statistical Bulletin on Personal Social Services Mental Handicap Provision," copies of which are in the Library.

Home Helps

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimates his Department has about the distribution of the work of home helps between their various client groups; and if he will indicate whether this has changed over the last 10 years.

Mr. Mellor: This information is no longer collected centrally. However, information collected by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and published in "Personal Social Services Statistics, 1986-87 Actuals" contains details of the home help service for the week beginning 10 November 1986. Information for the year ending 31 March 1977 was published in "Health and Personal Social Services Statistics for England, 1978". Copies are available in the Library.

The available information indicates that in both 1977 and 1986 the large majority of people receiving home help were aged 65 years and over, but it is not possible to deduce detailed trends.

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the number of home helps in England in each local authority; and what this figure represents per 1,000 persons aged 65 plus years and per 1,000 persons aged 75 plus years, in the latest available year.

Mr. Mellor: The latest available information for each local authority in England is given in the table. The figures do not indicate the volume of service actually provided to people in these age groups. The exact proportion of the service which goes to particular age groups is not known.

Number of home helps (expressed as whole time equivalents) and rate per thousand population aged 65 years and over and per thousand population aged 75 years and over, by local authority, England, 1986

	Number (wte)	*Rate per thousand population*	
		Aged 65 years and over	*Aged 75 years and over*
Cleveland	620	8·8	22·8
Cumbria	553	6·9	16·4
Durham	752	8·3	20·8
Northumberland	450	9·5	23·0
Gateshead	358	11·1	27·6
Newcastle upon Tyne	682	14·7	34·0
North Tyneside	304	9·6	24·0
South Tyneside	242	9·5	23·9
Sunderland	622	15·7	39·7
Humberside	1,191	9·2	22·3
North Yorkshire	728	6·2	13·9
Barnsley	382	11·6	29·6
Doncaster	451	11·4	28·8
Rotherham	422	12·5	32·1
Sheffield	1,147	12·5	29·3
Bradford	716	10·7	24·7
Calderdale	316	10·0	23·1
Kirklees	524	9·5	22·3
Leeds	1,148	10·3	23·9
Wakefield	367	8·5	21·6
Cheshire	863	6·6	16·3
Lancashire	1,614	7·0	16·3
Bolton	353	9·3	22·3
Bury	235	9·1	21·4
Manchester	926	13·4	31·9
Oldham	352	10·9	26·2
Rochdale	354	12·5	29·9
Salford	357	9·2	21·9
Stockport	360	8·4	19·8
Tameside	407	12·4	30·4
Trafford	291	8·8	20·7
Wigan	514	12·3	30·9
Knowsley	199	10·6	28·2
Liverpool	685	8·8	20·6
Sefton	319	6·5	15·0

	Number (wte)	Rate per thousand population	
		Aged 65 years and over	Aged 75 years and over
St. Helens	405	15·8	39·7
Wirral	331	6·0	14·0
Hereford and Worcester	617	6·4	15·5
Shropshire	253	4·4	10·7
Staffordshire	958	6·9	17·6
Warwickshire	520	7·7	19·1
Birmingham	1,459	9·8	23·9
Coventry	380	8·4	21·6
Dudley	307	7·3	18·4
Sandwell	327	7·0	17·3
Solihull	127	4·9	12·7
Walsall	252	7·2	19·3
Wolverhampton	343	9·1	22·8
Derbyshire	1,639	11·6	28·2
Leicestershire	730	5·9	14·0
Lincolnshire	518	5·6	13·7
Northamptonshire	331	4·2	10·0
Nottinghamshire	1,279	8·7	21·2
Bedfordshire	430	6·9	16·9
Berkshire	[illegible]	[illegible]	17·0
Buckinghamshire	[illegible]	7·3	17·7
Cambridgeshire	627	7·3	17·3
Essex	1,377	6·0	14·3
Hertfordshire	664	4·9	12·0
Norfolk	724	5·5	12·8
Oxfordshire	250	3·3	7·8
Suffolk	499	4·8	11·1
Camden	410	14·9	32·5
Greenwich	459	14·2	33·7
Hackney	414	16·2	36·9
Hammersmith and Fulham	269	11·6	25·5
Islington	282	11·9	27·0
Kensington and Chelsea	121	6·5	13·8
Lambeth	493	14·4	32·3
Lewisham	560	15·1	34·8
Southwark	396	11·5	27·1
Tower Hamlets	215	10·0	23·0
Wandsworth	434	11·0	24·6
Westminster	332	11·1	24·3
City of London	11	20·2	48·3
Barking and Dagenham	210	8·1	19·6
Barnet	220	4·5	10·1
Bexley	260	8·2	19·3
Brent	454	13·4	31·3
Bromley	252	5·2	12·3
Croydon	257	5·9	13·4
Ealing	229	5·7	13·1
Enfield	274	6·5	14·3
Haringey	425	16·1	35·3
Harrow	233	7·3	15·7
Havering	223	6·4	16·9
Hillingdon	272	7·8	18·4
Hounslow	156	5·5	12·4
Kingston upon Thames	73	3·2	7·0
Merton	199	7·0	15·1
Newham	357	12·8	30·1
Redbridge	159	4·2	9·5
Richmond upon Thames	162	5·6	12·1
Sutton	110	4·0	8·6
Waltham Forest	399	11·5	24·8
Dorset	568	4·1	8·9
Hampshire	994	4·5	10·5
Isle of Wight	133	4·8	10·6
Kent	994	4·1	9·5
Surrey	454	2·8	6·5
East Sussex	678	4·2	8·6
West Sussex	593	4·1	8·9
Wiltshire	400	5·0	11·8
Avon	1,141	7·5	17·1
Cornwall	385	4·6	10·6
Devon	888	4·5	9·9
Gloucestershire	438	5·2	12·2
Somerset	429	5·4	12·3
England	53,706	7·4	17·3

Notes:

[1] Figures exclude home help organisers and assistant and trainee home help organisers.

[2] Figures for Isles of Scilly are included with Cornwall.

[3] Figures are provisional.

Residential Homes for the Elderly

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what was the ratio of places in residential homes for the elderly to the population aged 65 plus years in England and in each local authority in 1979 and the latest available year;

(2) what was the number of places in voluntary, local authority and private homes for the elderly in England for each of the last 10 years; and how these relate to the population aged 65 plus years and 75 plus years.

Mr. Mellor: Information available centrally prior to 1985 does not separately identify residential homes solely for elderly people. The information given in the tables relates to places in homes for elderly and younger physically handicapped people. Information collected on places does not identify provision for specific age groups.

Number of places in local authority, voluntary and private residential homes for elderly and younger physically handicapped people in England, by local authority, 1979 and 1986, and rates per 1,000 population aged 65 and over

	1979		1986[1]	
	Places in homes	Rates per 1,000 population aged 65+	Places in homes	Rates per 1,000 population aged 65+
England	179,502	26·1	244,214	34·0
Northern Region				
Cleveland	1,499	22·8	1,904	27·8
Cumbria	1,822	24·2	2,786	35·3
Durham	1,867	21·8	2,382	26·8
Northumberland	1,164	25·9	1,518	32·2
Gateshead	671	21·8	769	24·2
Newcastle upon Tyne	1,295	28·0	1,576	34·2
North Tyneside	804	27·3	1,221	39·3
South Tyneside	488	20·5	674	27·2
Sunderland	969	25·5	1,222	31·5
Regional Total	10,579	24·0	14,052	30·8

	1979		1986[1]	
	Places in homes	Rates per 1,000 population aged 65+	Places in homes	Rates per 1,000 population aged 65+
Yorkshire and Humberside Region				
Humberside	2,939	24·2	4,622	36·3
North Yorkshire	3,535	31·8	5,186	44·3
Barnsley	609	20·0	871	27·0
Doncaster	809	22·5	1,118	28·8
Rotherham	528	17·4	766	23·1
Sheffield	2,060	23·2	2,086	22·8
Bradford	2,053	30·2	2,984	45·1
Calderdale	863	27·1	1,056	34·0
Kirklees	1,507	26·9	1,665	30·3
Leeds	2,558	23·5	3,152	28·6
Wakefield	867	21·6	1,024	24·2
Regional Total	18,328	25·4	24,530	32·9
North Western Region				
Cheshire	2,633	22·2	3,753	29·4
Lancashire	5,948	25·4	10,531	46·0
Bolton	811	21·4	1,068	28·5
Bury	762	29·2	1,041	40·7
Manchester	2,546	35·0	2,763	39·9
Oldham	778	24·0	1,126	35·1
Rochdale	638	22·7	912	32·5
Salford	903	23·5	1,122	29·1
Stockport	849	20·7	1,226	29·0
Tameside	512	16·1	792	24·4
Trafford	679	21·2	1,134	34·6
Wigan	740	18·1	940	22·9
Knowsley	246	14·5	285	15·4
Liverpool	2,513	30·9	2,579	33·3
Sefton	1,600	34·5	3,216	66·7
St. Helens	475	19·4	487	19·6
Wirral	1,419	26·6	1,959	36·1
Regional Total	24,052	25·1	34,934	36·4
West Midlands Region				
Hereford and Worcester	2,227	25·6	3,521	37·4
Shropshire	1,257	24·5	2,295	41·1
Staffordshire	2,486	19·9	3,936	29·3
Warwickshire	1,679	28·1	2,121	32·2
Birmingham	3,262	22·6	4,287	29·1
Coventry	782	19·0	1,175	26·4
Dudley	612	16·1	1,147	27·8
Sandwell	884	20·6	964	21·1
Solihull	408	19·3	571	22·9
Walsall	584	18·7	865	25·3
Wolverhampton	789	23·1	1,057	28·9
Regional Total	14,970	22·1	21,939	30·3
East Midlands Region				
Derbyshire	2,734	20·6	4,110	29·6
Leicestershire	2,604	22·9	3,448	28·6
Lincolnshire	1,864	22·8	3,042	33·8
Northamptonshire	1,595	22·3	2,462	32·3
Nottinghamshire	2,811	21·0	3,524	24·6
Regional Total	11,608	21·8	16,586	29·2
Thames Anglia Region				
Bedfordshire	1,410	25·5	1,880	30·8
Berkshire	1,860	23·8	2,770	32·4
Buckinghamshire	1,906	30·2	2,308	32·8
Cambridgeshire	1,716	22·5	2,319	27·7
Essex	4,997	24·4	7,731	34·2
Hertfordshire	2,743	23·9	3,379	25·5
Norfolk	3,062	26·2	5,033	39·3
Oxfordshire	1,801	27·0	1,999	27·1
Suffolk	2,448	26·1	3,393	33·1
Regional Total	21,943	25·2	30,812	32·0
Inner London Region				
Camden	867	29·5	892	32·3
Greenwich	835	27·2	943	29·7
Hackney	816	29·0	664	25·6
Hammersmith	609	23·4	592	25·2
Islington	719	29·7	797	33·5

	1979		1986[1]	
	Places in homes	Rates per 1,000 population aged 65+	Places in homes	Rates per 1,000 population aged 65+
Kensington	1,402	65·5	1,065	57·9
Lambeth	1,218	31·3	1,154	33·5
Lewisham	795	20·8	1,058	28·7
Southwark	1,015	28·4	1,004	29·4
Tower Hamlets	614	27·0	538	25·0
Wandsworth	1,705	39·5	1,730	43·6
Westminster	793	23·9	574	19·3
City of London	0	0·0	0	0·0
Regional Total	11,388	30·6	11,011	31·6
Outer London region				
Barking	378	14·9	417	16·3
Barnet	1,587	33·0	1,990	41·2
Bexley	401	13·8	479	15·4
Brent	710	20·2	665	19·6
Bromley	1,216	27·8	1,488	31·3
Croydon	1,659	37·4	1,672	38·6
Ealing	1,298	31·1	1,320	33·1
Enfield	1,016	24·4	993	23·7
Haringey	1,018	32·3	989	37·0
Harrow	782	25·0	921	28·8
Havering	433	14·7	775	23·2
Hillingdon	671	21·6	687	20·0
Hounslow	565	19·6	585	20·8
Kingston upon Thames	470	20·8	470	20·3
Merton	520	18·1	575	20·3
Newham	740	23·6	800	28·5
Redbridge	803	21·8	894	24·0
Richmond upon Thames	920	31·5	876	30·4
Sutton	707	25·3	806	29·4
Waltham Forest	444	12·1	613	17·6
Regional total	16,338	24·2	18,015	26·7
Southern Region				
Dorset	3,712	29·3	5,934	43·1
Hampshire	5,402	27·1	8,946	41·4
Isle of Wight	774	30·4	1,538	55·5
[illegible]	6,083	26·6	6,537	27·6
Surrey	4,453	30·4	5,993	38·1
East Sussex	6,708	41·5	8,621	53·1
West Sussex	4,596	34·5	6,742	47·5
Wiltshire	1,428	20·2	2,522	32·2
Regional total	33,156	30·4	46,833	40·4
South Western Region				
Avon	4,176	29·4	5,638	37·7
Cornwall	1,945	25·1	3,652	44·1
Devon	6,975	37·6	11,049	57·0
Gloucestershire	2,094	28·0	2,560	31·3
Somerset	1,950	27·1	2,603	33·1
Regional total	17,140	31·1	25,502	43·5

[1] Latest available year.

Number of places in local authority, voluntary and private homes for elderly and younger physically handicapped people in England, 1976 to 1986, and rates per 1,000 population aged 65 and over, and 75 and over

Places (000's)	*1976*	*1977*	*1978*	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*[1]1986*
All homes	170·0	173·8	176·9	179·5	184·8	191·1	196·6	205·3	217·7	233·6	244·2
Local authority	110·8	112·6	113·6	113·6	114·1	114·9	115·5	115·9	116·4	116·1	115·6
Voluntary	32·8	33·0	33·3	33·9	35·0	36·9	36·7	37·6	38·2	37·5	36·0
Private	26·4	28·1	30·1	32·0	35·8	39·3	44·3	51·8	63·1	80·0	92·6
Rates per 1,000 population											
Aged 65 and over											
All homes	25·7	25·9	26·0	26·1	26·5	27·0	27·7	28·9	30·8	33·2	34·0
Local authority	16·7	16·8	16·7	16·5	16·4	16·3	16·2	16·3	16·5	16·5	16·1
Voluntary	5·0	4·9	4·9	4·9	5·0	5·2	5·2	5·3	5·4	5·3	5·0
Private	4·0	4·2	4·4	4·6	5·1	5·6	6·2	7·3	8·9	11·4	12·9

Places (000's)	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	[1]1986
Aged 75 and over											
All homes	71·5	71·5	71·0	70·2	70·6	70·9	71·2	72·5	74·9	78·2	80·0
Local authority	46·6	46·3	45·6	44·4	43·6	42·7	41·8	40·9	40·0	38·9	37·9
Voluntary	13·8	13·6	13·4	13·3	13·3	13·7	13·3	13·3	13·1	12·5	11·8
Private	11·1	11·6	12·1	12·5	13·7	14·6	16·1	18·3	21·7	26·8	30·3

[1] Latest available year.

Meals Service

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the number of meals provided, for each of the last 10 years, by the meals service; how many were provided at home and how many elsewhere; and if he will relate these figures to the population aged 65 plus years and 75 plus years in each year.

Mr. Mellor: The information is given in the table. The figures do not indicate the actual provision to people in these age groups. The exact proportion of meals provided to each age group is not known.

Meals service—England
Number of meals served (millions) and rates per 1,000 population (over 65 and over 75 years)

Year ended 31 March	Total	Rate (Over 65)	Rate (Over 75)	At home	Rate (Over 65)	Rate (Over 75)	Elsewhere e.g. day centres	Rate (Over 65)	Rate (Over 75)
1976	40·5	6,122	17,041	24·3	3,676	10,233	16·2	2,446	6,808
1977	41·2	6,141	16,937	24·6	3,670	10,123	16·6	2,471	6,815
1978	41·1	6,046	15,493	25·3	3,717	10,139	15·8	2,329	6,353
1979	40·9	5,943	16,018	26·2	3,800	10,241	14·8	2,144	5,777
1980	41·7	5,981	15,935	27·0	3,874	10,320	14·7	2,108	5,615
1981	41·5	5,866	15,393	27·0	3,822	10,031	14·4	2,043	5,362
1982	40·3	5,672	14,602	27·1	3,813	9,817	13·2	1,858	4,784
1983	41·0	5,763	14,464	27·8	3,914	9,824	13·1	1,849	4,640
1984	42·4	6,001	14,570	28·8	4,085	9,917	13·5	1,916	4,653
1985	42·9	6,103	14,377	29·9	4,247	10,005	13·1	1,856	4,372
1986	44·1	6,140	14,454	30·9	4,305	10,135	13·2	1,835	4,319

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion the income from sales and fees and charges for meals provided by the meals service represents of expenditure thereon for the last 10 years.

Mr. Mellor: The available information is shown in the table. The latest available data year is 1986-87.

Meals service—England

Year	Gross expenditure £ million	Fees and charges £ million	Fees and charges as Percentage of Expenditure
1977-78	22·447	6·000	26·73
1978-79	26·373	7·221	27·38
1979-80	31·828	8·975	28·20
1980-81	36·266	11·319	31·21
1981-82	38·742	13·176	34·01
1982-83	43·836	15·568	35·51
1983-84	47·728	17·439	36·54
1984-85	51·447	19·051	37·03
1985-86	54·805	20·634	37·65
1986-87	59·661	22·834	38·27

Notes:

1. Local authorities have discretion whether, and to what extent, to charge for meals. The Government's view is that they should seek to recover the economic cost of providing meals where this does not cause hardship. Where someone represents to their local authority that they cannot afford the charge, the local authority has a duty to reduce it to the amount that they consider it reasonable for the recipient to pay.
2. Gross expenditure is wage costs, supplies and administrative expenses minus other income (eg. health authority contributions to jointly financed schemes).
3. Data relate to meals on wheels and meals served in day centres for elderly people. Data are not collected centrally about meals which may be provided at other types of day centre.

Meals on wheels service—England £ million (Cash)

	Gross expenditure	Fees and charges	Fees and charges as percentage of expenditure
1977-78	16·170	4·219	26·09
1978-79	18·773	5·244	27·93
1979-80	23·093	6·537	28·31
1980-81	26·423	8·342	31·57
1981-82	28·587	9·648	33·75
1982-83	32·103	11·370	35·42
1983-84	35·405	12·995	36·70
1984-85	38·714	14·534	37·54
1985-86	42·085	16·079	38·21
1986-87	46·360	18·036	38·90

Meals in day centres for elderly—England £ million (Cash)

	Gross expenditure	Fees and charges	Fees and charges as percentage of expenditure
1977-78	6·277	1·781	28·37
1978-79	7·600	1·977	26·01
1979-80	8·735	2·438	27·91
1980-81	9·843	2·977	30·24
1981-82	10·155	3·528	34·74
1982-83	11·733	4·198	35·78
1983-84	12·323	4·444	36·06
1984-85	12·733	4·517	35·47

	Gross expenditure	Fees and charges	Fees and charges as percentage of expenditure
1985-86	12·720	4·555	35·81
1986-87	13·301	4·798	36·07

Community Health Councils

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what funding his Department has made available to community health councils in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

Mr. Mellor: The Department does not separately fund community health councils, the expenses of which are met from the overall allocations made to health authorities.

Following are figures of revenue expenditure incurred by community health councils and derived from the summarised annual accounts of health authorities in England for the latest available five years:

Year	£000
1982-83	5,787
1983-84	6,099
1984-85	6,341
1985-86	6,784
1986-87	7,165

Nurses (Back Injuries)

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information he has, for each of the last five years for which figures are available, as to how many nurses have suffered back injuries sustained at work; and how many of those have needed surgery as a result.

Mr. Mellor: None.

Drug Prescribing

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what arrangements are made for a registered medical practitioner to participate on a named patient basis.

Mr. Mellor: Under the Medicines Act 1968, doctors are free to be supplied with and to prescribe any unlicensed drug on a named patient basis if they judge it to be in the patient's best interest.

Medical Accidents

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health under what circumstances other than as a result of litigation a health authority compensates the victims of a medical accident.

Mrs. Currie: There are two situations, other than as a result of litigation, in which a health authority may compensate the victim of a medical accident. Firstly, where an authority is potentially legally obliged to do so. This would occur where an authority is advised by its solicitors that, in the particular circumstances of a case, civil proceedings, if issued, would be indefensible and that liability should be admitted and a basis for compensation agreed or, alternatively, that payment should be offered "without prejudice" but in full satisfaction of the potential claim. Secondly, in cases where, although under no legal obligation to do so, an authority nevertheless considers that, in the circumstances of the case, compensation should be offered on an ex gratia basis.

Nurses and Midwives (Pay Award)

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will estimate the full year cost for 1989-90 of the nurses and midwifery staff pay award.

Mr. Mellor: We estimate the cost of this year's pay award to nurses in the hospital and community health services in England will be £731 million. The extra £110 million my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State announced on 13 October together with the additional funding provided in April means we have met the cost of the award in full.

Physiotherapists

Mr. McCrindle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many physiotherapists have been trained in each of the past five years at Guys' and St. Thomas' schools of physiotherapy; how many physiotherapists will be trained at these schools in each of the next three years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: The intake of student physiotherapists to the two schools is set out in the table:

	Guys'	St. Thomas'
1984	38	24
1985	30	24
1986	30	24
1987	30	24
1988	30	24

The South East Thames regional health authority, which is responsible for managing physiotherapy training arrangements in the region, plans to cease intakes to these schools as from 1989, when new courses will begin at King's college, University of London and Brighton polytechnic.

Mr. McCrindle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will estimate the number of unfilled physiotherapy posts in each regional health authority in each of the past five years; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will estimate the number of unfilled physiotherapy posts in the four London regional health authorities over the past five years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: We do not have information on the number of physiotherapy posts vacant against funded establishments on a regional basis. However, the results of the most recent sample surveys of health authorities suggest that nationally about 3·6 per cent. of funded posts for physiotherapists are unfilled after three months.

Mr. McCrindle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what projections he has of the availability of physiotherapists in the London area over the next five and next 10 years; if these take into account the effect of the development of a new school in Eastbourne and subsequently at Brighton polytechnic; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: We await the report of a joint working party recently set up by the Manpower Planning Advisory

Group (which advises regional chairmen and the National Health Service management board) and the chartered Society of Physiotherapy which is urgently undertaking a reveiw of the short-term manpower situation in the profession. The results will be available by early next year. In spring 1989 we shall be issuing guidance on a supply strategy for the next five to 10 years. This work will take account of any particular supply problems of the London area and of proposals for new schools such as that proposed at Brighton polytechnic. Officials are in close touch with the region concerned on the details of this proposal.

Resource Management Initiative

Mr. Anthony Coombs: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he has any plans to extend the resource management initiative.

Mr. Mellor: The resource management initiative is a NHS management board and a joint consultants committee jointly sponsored initiative. The pilot projects will be subject to an interim evaluation this October and a formal evaluation in October 1989. The pilots have already demonstrated that certain elements—for example, the introduction of nurse management information systems and the feeding back to managers and clinicians of existing information—are areas that the majority of acute hospitals could usefully begin to introduce. We are considering how best to programme an extension of the initiative over the country as a whole.

Eyesight Tests

Mr. Jim Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will review current proposals to introduce charges for eyesight tests.

Mr. Mellor: I have nothing to add to the reply given to the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services on 22 July 1988, at column *896*.

Child Care

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the total number of children, by local authority area in *(a)* local authority day nurseries and *(b)* with child minders, for each year since 1983.

Mrs. Currie: We do not have the information in the form requested. Figures for children on the registers of day nurseries provided by local authorities and places available with registered child minders in each local authority in England are published annually in "Children's Day Care Facilities" (A/F/6), copies of which are in the Library.

Hospital Beds and Facilities

Dr. Glyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action he proposes to take to assist doctors in the London area endeavouring to follow the policy of trying to get beds and facilities for their patients outside their own catchment area, who are being resisted by hospital administrators; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: General practitioners are free to refer their patients to any consultant whom they consider is best able to treat them. Equally, consultants have the right to refuse to accept such a referral for any reason. Over the years this right has been extended to include consultants who agree with authorities locally that certain types of patients, usually in the non-acute services—for example, mental illness—will benefit if they are treated within certain catchment areas, normally that within which the patient lives. Consultants may also agree that they will accept referrals from GPs in other districts/regions only if the patients concerned have particular need of their specialist skills.

Health Education Service (Nottingham)

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if his Department will assist the Nottingham district health authority to prevent further reductions in the health education service to schools.

Mrs. Currie: The allocation of funds to Nottingham health authority is a matter for Trent regional health authority. The district must itself decide how best to allocate the resources available to it.

Departmental Services

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the answer of 29 July, *Official Report*, column *779*, which proposed changes to services his Department treats as requiring formal public consultation.

Mrs. Currie: The requirements for public consultation are laid down in the Community Health Councils Regulations 1985 (SI 1985 No. 304). These require that when a health authority proposes to make any substantial development of the service it provides, or variation in its service, it must formally consult the relevant community health council. A departmental circular (HSC IS 207) provides that where the community health council objects to proposals which relate to a closure or change of use of hospitals, the matter should be referred to the regional health authority. If the region supports the original proposal, the matter is referred for final decision by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State.

Parliamentary Constituencies

Mr. Grocott: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the parliamentary constituencies in *(a)* England, *(b)* Scotland, *(c)* Wales and *(d)* Northern Ireland, in descending order of size, showing in each case the extent to which they are either above or below the quota.

Mrs. Currie: The information requested is contained in "Electoral Statistics, 1988" (HMSO), a copy of which is available in the Library.

Population Statistics

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list those local authorities in whose area a population decline of 5 per cent. or over was noted between the census of 1961 and 1981; and what information he has with regard to population decline since the last official census.

Mrs. Currie: The information requested is given in the tables. Table 1 lists local authorities in England and Wales whose resident populations declined by 5 per cent. or more between 1961 and 1981. Table 2 contains a list of authorities not included on table 1 whose populations have fallen by 5 per cent. or more between 1981 and 1987 (the last year for which estimates are available).

Table 1

County district/ London borough	*Estimated mid-year populations—thousands*			*Percentage changes*	
	1961	*1981*	*1987*	*1961-81*	*1981-87*
Islington	260·0	166·1	168·7	−36·1	1·5
Kensington and Chelsea	219·0	140·1	133·1	−36·0	−5·0
Hammersmith and Fulham	221·0	151·3	151·1	−31·5	−0·1
Westminster, City of	271·0	188·2	173·4	−30·6	−7·8
Liverpool	741·0	516·7	476·0	−30·3	−7·9
Southwark	312·0	218·3	216·8	−30·0	−0·7
Manchester	657·0	462·8	450·1	−29·6	−2·7
Tower Hamlets	204·0	145·2	159·0	−28·8	9·5
Hackney	257·0	185·1	187·4	−28·0	1·3
Camden	245·0	179·1	184·9	−26·9	3·2
Lambeth	340·0	253·0	243·2	−25·6	−3·9
Wandsworth	334·0	262·0	258·1	−21·6	−1·5
Haringey	259·0	207·2	193·7	−20·0	−6·5
Newham	264·0	212·8	206·5	−19·4	−2·9
Lewisham	290·0	236·4	231·6	−18·5	−2·0
Rhondda	100·0	82·6	77·1	−17·4	−6·6
Salford	293·0	247·0	237·7	−15·7	−3·8
Blaenau Gwent	95·0	80·1	77·3	−15·7	−3·5
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	336·0	284·1	282·7	−15·4	−0·5
Portsmouth	225·0	191·4	186·8	−14·9	−2·4
Barking and Dagenham	176·0	151·6	147·8	−13·9	−2·5
Brent	295·0	254·2	256·6	−13·8	1·0
Birmingham	1,179·0	1,020·8	998·2	−13·4	−2·2
South Tyneside	185·0	162·0	156·3	−12·4	−3·5
Waltham Forest	247·0	217·5	214·5	−11·9	−1·4
Richmond upon Thames	182·0	161·8	163·0	−11·1	0·8
Preston	142·0	126·4	126·7	−11·0	0·2
Wear Valley	72·0	84·1	84·7	−11·0	0·9
Merton	188·0	167·6	184·0	−10·9	−2·2
Derwentside	99·0	88·4	86·3	−10·7	−2·3
Nottingham	311·0	278·2	276·8	−10·5	−0·5
Meirionnydd	35·0	31·4	31·3	−10·3	−0·2
Port Talbot	61·0	54·8	49·9	−10·2	−9·0
Kingston upon Hull	302·0	273·7	252·7	−9·4	−7·7
Merthyr Tydfil	67·0	60·8	58·5	−9·3	−3·8
Stoke-on-Trent	276·0	252·3	246·7	−8·6	−2·2
Sandwell	338·0	309·8	298·4	−8·3	−3·7
Middlesbrough	164·0	150·6	143·3	−8·2	−4·9
Teesdale	27·0	24·8	24·9	−8·1	0·5
Kingston upon Thames	146·0	134·3	132·2	−8·0	−1·5
Bristol	436·0	401·3	384·4	−8·0	−4·2
Redbridge	249·0	229·2	230·1	−8·0	0·4
Easington	110·0	101·4	95·7	−7·8	−5·6
Brighton	162·0	149·4	140·9	−7·8	−5·7
Barnet	318·0	295·2	305·9	−7·2	3·6
Cynon Valley	73·0	67·8	64·9	−7·1	−4·3
Greenwich	231·0	215·6	216·6	−6·7	0·4
Berwick upon Tweed	28·0	26·2	27·1	−6·4	3·4
Wansbeck	67·0	62·7	59·6	−6·4	−4·9
York	109·0	102·1	101·5	−6·3	−0·6
Ealing	301·0	282·2	296·9	−6·2	5·2
Sheffield	581·0	547·6	532·3	−5·7	−2·8
Harrow	211·0	199·0	200·1	−5·7	0·5
North Tyneside	210·0	198·6	192·9	−5·4	−2·9
Bolsover	75·0	71·0	69·4	−5·3	−2·2

Table 2

County District/London Borough	*Estimated mid-year populations—thousands*			*Percentage changes*	
	1961	*1981*	*1987*	*1961-81*	*1981-87*
City of London	5·0	5·4	4·7	8·0	−13·2
Burnley	99·0	94·2	85·0	−4·8	−9·7
Harlow	54·0	79·5	72·9	47·2	−8·3
Scunthorpe	67·0	66·3	61·5	−1·0	−7·3
Knowsley	152·0	174·0	161·5	14·5	−7·2
Spelthorne	84·0	92·8	87·0	10·5	−6·2
Norwich	121·0	126·1	118·6	4·2	−5·9
Hartlepool	97·0	94·9	89·8	−2·2	−5·4
Sedgefield	82·0	93·5	88·4	14·0	−5·4
Southampton	205·0	209·9	199·1	2·4	−5·2

Source:
1961 populations: The Registrar General's Revised Estimates of the Population 1961-1971; 1981 & 1987 populations: OPCS Monitor PPI 88/1.

Population estimates for 1961 and 1981 are based upon the Censuses held in those years. A number of adjustments have been made to Census results so that the figures relate to usually resident populations at mid year. Mid 1987 estimates have been obtained by updating census-based 1981 figures to take account of subsequent births, deaths and migration. No adjustments have been made to remove any effects of changes in boundaries since the local government reorganisation of 1974.

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will set out in the *Official Report* the number of infant deaths attributed to sudden infant death syndrome in England each month in 1986.

Mrs. Currie: The table shows the number of deaths (registered in England and Wales, but usually resident in England) under one year of age with any mention of sudden infant death syndrome, cot death or similar term on the death certificate, irrespective of whether it did or did not appear as the underlying cause of death by month of occurrence for 1986. Infant deaths which may have been sudden and unexpected, but where no mention of "sudden" or "cot" death or similar term was made on the death certificate, cannot be separately identified reliably.

Number of deaths under one year of age with any mention of sudden infant death syndrome by month of occurrence. Usual residents of England

1986 Provisional

Month of occurrence	*Number*
January	159
February	178
March	140
April	117
May	114
June	71
July	67
August	67
September	74
October	112
November	140
December	183

Sugar

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what reports on the health implications of sugar consumption have been received by his Department in the past five years;

(2) when he expects to receive the report on sugar from the Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: In recent years two scientific reports on sugar and health have been received in the Department:

1. "The Evaluation of Health Aspects of Sugars" from the United States Food and Drug Administration (1986),
2. "Report on Sugars and Syrups" from the British Nutrition Foundation (1987).

In addition, the Chief Medical Officer's Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy (COMA) panel on sugars in the diet has received some 20 submissions from interested individuals and organisations. We expect the panel's report in the course of next year.

Child Health

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps he is taking to ensure that parents throughout the country possess a standardised health record for each of their children; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: The Government believe that as a matter of principle people should have the right to know what is recorded about them. We have said in debate that we want progress on developing draft guidelines for general access to medical records and we hope this will be achieved later this year. We think it is in the interests of everyone, especially the health and welfare of patients, that progress is made quickly.

With regard to parent-held child health records, we must give recognition to the fact that parents are the primary health carers of their own children. This is reflected in the Department's overall policy to encourage increased parent participation in clinical and social decisions affecting the care of their children.

We support in principle the introduction of parent-held child health records to record details of routine screening checks on their children such as hearing, eyesight, height and weight, childhood illnesses and immunisations. Because of the number of different professionals involved in child health surveillance there are obvious advantages when parents hold such information all on one record and take it with them to each appointment. However, the decision on whether to give parents these records is a matter of professional judgment.

There obviously needs to be a full consensus of professional opinion before a "standardised" record can be introduced throughout the country. Some of the professional bodies involved have already established a joint working party chaired by Dr. David Hall to look at and make recommendations on the content and timing of child health surveillance. The report is expected early next year.

Several health authorities have already successfully introduced parent-held child health records on an experimental basis. We are watching closely the outcome of this work and, in the light of experience and the joint working party report, we will take any action necessary.

Resource Management

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will make a statement on the future of the resource management pilot project at Arrowe Park hospital;

(2) if he will make a statement on the future of the National Health Service resource management initiative.

Mrs. Currie: The resource management initiative's overriding aim is to ensure that health authorities' resources are used efficiently and effectively to the maximum benefit of patients. The main components are:

(a) to develop new management systems that provide a central role for doctors, nurses and other professional staff in the management process;

(b) to develop new computerised hospital management information systems; and

(c) to equip staff for their new roles and responsibilities.

A key feature of resource management is the active co-operation of the medical profession; the resource management initiative is jointly sponsored by the joint consultants' committee and the NHS management board, and its ultimate success will depend on the continuing commitment of clinicians.

The initiative is being piloted at six acute sites and progress at five of the six sites is both good and on schedule. More specifically, developments at two sites (the Freeman hospital, Newcastle, and the royal infirmary, Huddersfield) have reached a point where all the main new information systems will shortly become operational.

Developments at three of the other four sites (the Pilgrim hospital, Boston, Guy's, and the royal Hampshire county hospital, Winchester) are expected to reach a broadly similar stage next spring.

Developments at Arrowe Park hospital have to date been slower than at the other sites, although some useful work has been undertaken in developing management structures. The project plan for the hospital is currently being revised and discussed with the district and region. The NHS management board is keen that Arrowe Park remains part of the initiative.

Progress at the sites will be evaluated, with an interim report expected in October 1988. A fuller evaluation is scheduled for completion in October 1989, and will be based on 12 months operational experience at two sites and six months operational experience at three other sites. Decisions on extending the initiative to other sites will be taken in the light both of the 1989 evaluation and of the outcome of the current review of the NHS.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Savings (Taxation)

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what action has been taken or what steps have been proposed to implement the conclusion of the European Council meeting at Hanover that there should be proposals for eliminating fraud, linked to the delivery of national systems for the taxation of savings and for controlling the application of these systems.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The capital movements directive agreed in June requires the Commission to make such proposals by the end of this year. No proposals have yet been made.

Earnings (Unemployment)

Mr. Butler: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the contribution to reducing unemployment of each 1 per cent. annual decrease in average earnings.

Mr. Major: A decrease in the level of pay settlements which brought them more closely into line with increases in productivity would have an important effect in reducing unemployment. This is now on a firm downward trend, and greater wage restraint would help to keep it there.

Tax Cuts

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the effects of the tax cuts announced in the Budget on the levels of consumer expenditure.

Mr. Major: The Budget left the overall burden of taxation unchanged, and I therefore do not expect any significant immediate effects on total consumers' expenditure. In the longer run, by improving incentives and encouraging an enterprise economy, it will have boosted output, employment and exports, and allow a higher level of consumers' expenditure than would otherwise have been possible.

Taxes (Western Isles)

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the cost of creating a Western Isles division of the general commissioners of taxes.

Mr. Norman Lamont: In the region of £30,000 per annum.

Civil Service Pensions

Mr. Stott: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people employed by the Civil Service, prior to 1949 on permanently unestablished grades, are still in employment or are in receipt of pensions; and what is the estimated cost of counting in full their unestablished service prior to 1949 for pension purposes.

Mr. Brooke: I regret that this information can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Taxation

Mr. Grocott: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of Exchequer revenues from direct taxation came from each quintile of income groups *(a)* before the 1988 Budget and *(b)* after the 1988 Budget.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Estimates of the percentage distribution of income tax liability in recent years including 1987-88 (pre-1988 Budget) and 1988-89 (post-1988 Budget) were given in my reply to the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) on 28 July at column *488*. Estimates covering revenue from all direct taxation are not available.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for those above and those below age 65 years the estimated number of tax units and their tax liability in the current financial year in each range of total income up to a lower limit of £100,000 divided into single persons and one-earner and two-earner married couples; and if he will include the number of females within each category and their tax liability;

(2) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* tables showing for those above and for those below pensionable age, the estimated number of tax units paying income tax and their income tax liability as a proportion of their total income in a full year at 1988-89 rates, by range of total income up to a lower limit of £100,000, distinguishing between single persons, one-earner and two-earner married couples; and if he will add figures showing the likely effect of his proposals for the separate taxation of husbands and wives on the numbers of tax units and the proportion paid in tax.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Available estimates are given in the tables. All estimates are based on a projection of the 1985-86 survey of personal incomes and are provisional. Under the present system a married woman's income is treated as her husband's and taxed as if it belonged to him. Separate estimates for single females are provided in the tables. Comparable estimates after the introduction of independent taxation of husbands and wives are not

available. However estimates of gains in 1990-91 are published in the Inland Revenue Budget press release "Independent Taxation of Husband and Wife".

Number of tax units paying income tax and tax liability by range of total income, 1988-89
Single Males

Total income (lower limit) £ per annum	Taxpayers under 65: Number of units liable to pay tax ('000s)	Taxpayers under 65: Tax liability (£ million)	Taxpayers under 65: Tax liability as a proportion of total income (Percentage)	Taxpayers aged 65 and over: Number of units liable to pay tax ('000s)	Taxpayers aged 65 and over: Tax liability (£ million)	Taxpayers aged 65 and over: Tax liability as a proportion of total income (Percentage)
2,000	170	10	1·7	—	—	—
3,000	360	80	6·2	60	10	2·9
4,000	360	160	10·0	70	20	6·9
5,000	430	290	12·5	50	30	10·5
6,000	470	430	14·1	30	20	12·7
7,000	450	500	14·7	20	20	14·4
8,000	390	510	15·6	10	20	15·3
9,000	440	690	16·7	20	20	16·0
10,000	600	1,100	16·7	30	60	18·1
12,000	510	1,180	17·3	10	40	20·2
15,000	290	900	18·3	20	70	20·8
20,000	160	730	19·9	20	100	23·6
30,000	50	450	25·4	10	80	28·5
50,000	20	510	32·3	[1]—	100	36·1

[1] Less than 5,000.

Number of tax units paying income tax and tax liability by range of total income, 1988-89
Single Females

Total income (lower limit) £ per annum	Taxpayers under 65: Number of units liable to pay tax ('000s)	Taxpayers under 65: Tax liability (£ million)	Taxpayers under 65: Tax liability as a proportion of total income per cent.	Taxpayers aged 65 and over: Number of units liable to pay tax ('000s)	Taxpayers aged 65 and over: Tax liability (£ million)	Taxpayers aged 65 and over: Tax liability as a proportion of total income per cent.
2,000	180	10	1·5	—	—	—
3,000	440	90	6·1	170	20	2·7
4,000	450	190	9·5	190	60	7·1
5,000	560	360	11·9	100	50	9·5
6,000	520	450	13·3	80	60	12·5
7,000	370	390	14·4	60	70	14·1
8,000	310	410	15·5	30	40	15·3
9,000	230	350	16·2	40	60	16·0
10,000	290	530	16·9	50	110	17·9
12,000	250	570	17·4	40	110	19·7
15,000	120	370	18·7	40	140	21·0
20,000	80	390	21·2	30	170	23·6
30,000	20	190	27·2	10	150	29·2
50,000	10	130	31·9	10	490	37·4

Number of tax units paying income tax and tax liability by range of total income, 1988-89
Married couples without wife's earned income

Total income (lower limit) £ per annum	Taxpayers under 65: Number of units liable to pay tax ('000s)	Taxpayers under 65: Tax liability (£ million)	Taxpayers under 65: Tax liability as a proportion of total income per cent.	Taxpayers aged 65 and over: Number of units liable to pay tax ('000s)	Taxpayers aged 65 and over: Tax liability (£ million)	Taxpayers aged 65 and over: Tax liability as a proportion of total income per cent.
2,000	—	—	—	—	—	—
3,000	[1]—	[2]—	3·2	—	—	—
4,000	110	10	2·3	—	—	—
5,000	150	50	5·8	120	20	2·2
6,000	230	120	8·0	130	50	5·7
7,000	260	180	9·5	70	40	8·1
8,000	330	290	10·5	80	70	9·5
9,000	320	360	11·7	40	40	11·5
10,000	720	1,020	12·9	50	80	14·2
12,000	770	1,520	14·7	50	100	16·6
15,000	610	1,700	16·1	50	160	18·4
20,000	440	1,870	18·3	30	140	21·4
30,000	160	1,460	24·2	30	250	26·8
50,000	70	1,730	31·0	10	330	34·3

[1] Less than 5,000
[2] Less than £5 million

Number of tax units paying income tax and tax liability by range of total income, 1988-89
Married couples with wife's earned income

Total income (lower limit) £ per annum	Taxpayers under 65: Number of units liable to pay tax (000's)	Taxpayers under 65: Tax liability (£ million)	Taxpayers under 65: Tax liability as a proportion of total income per cent.	Taxpayers aged 65 and over: Number of units liable to pay tax (000's)	Taxpayers aged 65 and over: Tax liability (£ million)	Taxpayers aged 65 and over: Tax liability as a proportion of total income per cent.
2,000	—	—	—	—	—	—
3,000	—	—	—	—	—	—
4,000	10	—[1]	1·4	—	—	—
5,000	20	10	4·2	20	—[1]	1·5
6,000	70	10	3·3	20	10	3·6
7,000	110	40	4·8	40	10	5·1
8,000	170	90	6·5	50	30	5·6
9,000	190	150	7·9	40	30	7·8
10,000	590	580	8·9	80	80	9·6
12,000	1,060	1,590	11·1	70	140	13·9
15,000	1,660	3,780	13·1	110	270	15·6
20,000	1,470	5,460	15·6	70	290	18·2
30,000	480	3,460	20·1	20	200	23·9
50,000	100	2,300	28·1	10	350	31·1

[1] Less than £5 million

British Library

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether consideration has been or is being or will be given to the possibility of levying charges on those who will use the new British library building under construction in Euston road, London NW1.

Mr. Luce: I have been asked to reply.

The British library board plans to maintain the free provision of its basic services. At the same time, consideration will continue to be given as needed to supplementing the grant-in-aid with charges for the provision of value-added or premium services as is done at present. This applies both to the library's present accommodation and to the new building at St. Pancras.

Farm Incomes

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table giving for the most recent financial year the information on farm incomes for tax purposes given in his written reply dated 14 March 1985, *Official Report*, column 246.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 29 July 1988]*: The latest available information is for 1985-86 and is given in the tables.

Table 1: *Companies*
Accounting periods ending in the financial year to 31 March 1986

	Number/Amount
Number with gross trading profit for tax purposes	8,000
Gross trading profit for tax purposes	£390 million
All taxable income after reliefs (profits chargeable to Corporation Tax)	£190 million

Notes:
1. The companies included are those whose main activity is in agriculture or horticulture. Their trading profits may include profits from non-agricultural and non-horticultural activities.
2. Companies with a trading loss in 1985-86 are excluded.

Table 2: Individuals (summary)
Income tax year 1985-86

	Number/Amount
Number of cases	324,000
Gross profit for tax purposes	£2,510 million
Taxable profit	£1,800 million

Notes to Table 2, 3 and 4:
1. The number of cases is the number of married men and single people whose "main source" (usually but not always the largest source) of earned income is from self-employment in agriculture and horticulture; plus the number of married women whose largest source of self-employment income is from agriculture and horticulture.
2. Gross profit includes balancing charges. It also includes any non agricultural/horticultural profits of individuals concerned. Taxable profit is gross profit less losses and capital allowances so far as allowed for the income tax year.
3. Individual items may not sum to total due to rounding.
4. Nil or negative includes losses.

Table 3: Individuals—gross profit, 1985-86 tax year

Range of gross profits (Lower limit)	Number of cases: Husband's plus single people (thousands)	Number of cases: Wive's (thousands)	Number of cases: All individuals (thousands)	Amount of gross profit: Husband's plus single people (£ million)	Amount of gross profit: Wive's (£ million)	Amount of gross profit: All individuals (£ million)
Nil or negative	27	11	38	28	0	28
1	25	5	30	41	2	43
1,000	12	3	15	20	3	23
1,500	10	3	13	32	5	37
2,000	15	8	22	44	17	60
2,500	16	2	18	63	7	70
3,000	18	2	20	79	7	86
3,500	13	4	16	75	15	89
4,000	13	3	16	75	12	88
4,500	13	2	15	84	10	94
5,000	14	2	17	106	13	119

Range of gross profits (Lower limit)	Number of cases: Husband's plus single people (thousands)	Wive's (thousands)	All individuals (thousands)	Amount of gross profit: Husband's plus single people (£ million)	Wive's (£ million)	All individuals (£ million)
6,000	13	2	15	117	13	130
7,000	10	7	17	98	−53	151
8,000	13	3	17	185	30	215
10,000	8	3	11	111	28	139
12,000	13	2	15	217	33	250
15,000	10	2	13	241	37	278
20,000	12	4	17	474	132	606
Total	256	68	324	2,090	417	2,510

Table 4: *Individuals—taxable profit, 1985-86 tax year*

Taxable Profit (lower limit)	Husbands plus single people: Number of cases (thousands)	Amount (£ million)	Wives: Number of cases (thousands)	Amount (£ million)	All Individuals: Amount of Cases (thousands)	Amount (£ million)
Nil or negative	27	−8	14	−2	40	−10
1	25	12	5	2	30	14
1,000	12	14	3	4	15	19
1,500	10	18	6	12	17	29
2,000	15	33	8	17	23	49
2,500	16	44	4	11	20	55
3,000	18	57	3	9	20	66
3,500	13	46	2	8	15	55
4,000	13	57	2	7	15	64
4,500	13	59	2	11	15	71
5,000	14	77	1	7	16	84
6,000	13	84	3	17	16	100
7,000	10	76	6	46	16	122
8,000	13	119	3	27	16	146
10,000	8	90	1	12	10	102
12,000	13	168	1	15	14	182
15,000	10	177	3	45	13	222
20,000	12	378	2	47	14	424
	256	1,500	68	294	324	1,800

Income Tax

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* tables showing for those above and for those below pensionable age, the estimated number of tax units paying income tax and their income tax liability in a full year at 1988-89 rates by range of total income up to a lower limit of £100,000, distinguishing between single persons, one-earner and two-earner married couples; and if he will provide corresponding information on the basis of the following rates of tax *(a)* single persons, £3,000 taxed at nil rate, £1,500 at 15 per cent., £1,500 at 20 per cent., £7,500 at 25 per cent., and five successive bands of £5,000 at an incremental rate of 5 percentage points to a maximum of 60 per cent., *(b)* all married persons, £3,000 exempt, £3,000 nil rate, £3,000 at 15 per cent., £3,000 at 20 per cent., £9,000 at 25 per cent., and four successive bands of £8,000 at an incremental rate of 5 percentage points to a maximum of 55 per cent., *(c)* the nil rate band to be reduced by one-half of the amount by which total income exceeds £7,500 and £15,000 in the case of single and married persons, respectively, on the same basis as the present age allowance and *(d)* all other allowances and reliefs to be abolished.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 29 July 1988]:* Provisional estimates for the 1988-89 tax regime, based on a projection of the 1985-86 survey of personal income, are given in the table. Estimates for the alternative tax regime could be produced only at disproportionate costs.

Number of tax units paying income tax and tax liability by range of total income 1988-89

Total income (lower limit) £ per annum	Singles: Number of units paying tax '000s	Tax yield £ million	Married couple with wife's earnings: Number of units paying tax '000s	Tax yield £ million	Married couple without wife's earnings: Number of units paying tax '000s	Tax yield £ million
Taxpayers under 65						
2,000	350	20	—	—	—	—
3,000	800	170	—	—	—	—
4,000	810	350	10	—	110	10
5,000	990	650	20	10	150	50
6,000	990	880	70	10	230	120
7,000	820	890	110	40	260	180
8,000	700	920	170	90	330	290
9,000	670	1,040	190	150	320	360

Total income (lower limit) £ per annum	Singles: Number of units paying tax '000s	Singles: Tax yield £ million	Married couple with wife's earnings: Number of units paying tax '000s	Married couple with wife's earnings: Tax yield £ million	Married couple without wife's earnings: Number of units paying tax '000s	Married couple without wife's earnings: Tax yield £ million
10,000	890	1,630	590	580	720	1,020
12,000	760	1,750	1,060	1,590	770	1,520
15,000	400	1,270	1,660	3,780	610	1,700
20,000	230	1,120	1,470	5,460	440	1,870
30,000	70	640	480	3,460	160	1,460
50,000	20	640	100	2,300	70	1,730
Taxpayers aged 65 and over						
2,000	—	—	—	—	—	—
3,000	230	30	—	—	—	—
4,000	260	80	—	—	—	—
5,000	150	80	20	[1]	120	20
6,000	110	80	20	10	130	50
7,000	80	90	40	10	70	40
8,000	50	60	50	30	80	70
9,000	50	80	40	30	40	40
10,000	80	170	80	80	50	80
12,000	60	150	70	140	50	100
15,000	60	210	110	270	50	160
20,000	50	270	70	290	30	140
30,000	20	230	20	200	30	250
50,000	10	590	10	350	10	330

[1] Less than £5 million or 5,000.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* tables showing for women above and for those below pensionable age, the estimated number of tax units paying income tax in 1988-89 directly or indirectly and the estimated amount of tax payable in a full year at the marginal rate, dividing the figures to show the amounts by range of total income up to a lower limit of £100,000 and distinguishing between single persons, one-earner and two-earner married couples; and if he will include tables showing his estimate of the amount of tax which would be payable by such tax units in 1988-89 on the basis of separate taxation for husbands and wives as proposed for 1990.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 29 July 1988]:* Estimates for single women are given in the tables. They are based on a projection of the 1985-86 survey of personal incomes and are provisional.

Under the present tax system a married women's income is treated as her husband's and taxed as if it belonged to him. The estimates requested of the tax liability on the income of married women under the present tax system and under independent taxation could be produced only at disproportionate cost.

Number of single females paying income tax and tax liability by range of total income 1988-89

Total income (lower limit) £ per annum	Aged 65 and over: Number ('000)	Aged 65 and over: Tax liability total (£ million)	Aged 65 and over: Tax liability of higher rate taxpayers (£ million)	Aged under 65: Number ('000)	Aged under 65: Tax liability total (£ million)	Aged under 65: Tax liability of higher rate taxpayers (£ million)
2,000	—	—	—	180	10	—
3,000	170	20	—	440	90	—
4,000	190	60	—	450	190	—
5,000	100	50	—	560	360	—
6,000	80	60	—	520	450	—
7,000	60	70	—	370	390	—
8,000	30	40	—	310	410	—
9,000	40	60	—	230	350	—
10,000	50	110	—	290	530	—
12,000	40	110	—	250	570	
15,000	40	140	—	120	370	—
20,000	30	170	140	80	390	210
30,000	10	150	150	20	190	190
50,000	10	490	490	10	130	130
Total	850	1,530	780	3,830	4,430	530

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* tables showing for one-earner and two-earner married couples under 65 years of age and married couples over 65 years of age the number of tax units paying less and the number paying more tax in each income band up to a lower limit of £100,000 at 1988-89 rates of tax in the event of the proposed allowances for separate taxation of husbands and wives being replaced by a transferable allowance of £3,000 for each spouse; and if he will include figures of the consequential changes in tax yield.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 29 July 1988]:* I regret that the estimates requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, further to his written reply of 2 October comparing income taxation in the United Kingdom and Germany, he will give a breakdown of the 22 to 56 per cent. range of tax showing the actual rate charged on incomes of single, one-earner and two-earner couples at intervals of DM10,000 together with the corresponding rate chargeable in the United Kingdom in terms of the gross income and the taxable income, assuming the minimum allowances in both cases; and if he will add details of the corresponding social security contribution and if child benefit is payable.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 29 July 1988]:* Such information as can be produced without incurring undue cost is given in the tables, which are supplemented by explanatory notes.

Table 1
Germany

Taxable income		Income tax rate per cent.	
DM	£	Single	Married couple
18,000	4,390	22	21
28,000	6,829	32	21
38,000	9,268	39	23
48.000	11,707	45	29
58,000	14,146	48	33
68,000	16,585	51	37
78,000	19,024	52	41
88,000	21,463	53	44
98,000	23,902	54	45
108,000	26,341	54	47
118,000	28,780	55	49
128,000	31,219	56	50

Notes:
1. The figures relate to 1987 to ensure compatibility with the figures given in the written answer of 22 October 1987.
2. Conversions to sterling have been made on the basis of OECD estimates of purchasing power parity.
3. The tax rates have been rounded.
4. The same rates apply for both one- and two-earner married couples.
5. Social security contributions, deductible in arriving at taxable income, are as follows:—
Old age insurance—9·35 per cent. of gross earnings, maximum deduction DM 6,395 (£1,560) pa.
Unemployment insurance—2·15 per cent. of gross earnings, maximum deduction DM 1,470 (£358) pa.
Health insurance—6·3 per cent. of gross earnings, maximum deduction DM 3,231 (£788) pa.
6. Child benefit, not included in computing taxable income, is payable as follows:—
50 DM (£12.20) per month for the first child
100 DM (£24·39) per month for the second child
220 DM (£53·66) per month for the third child
240 DM (£58·54) per month for each subsequent child

Table 2
United Kingdom

Taxable income	Marginal rate of income tax	Income tax as a percentage of gross income			Income tax and National Insurance contributions as a percentage of gross income		
£	Per cent.	Single	One-earner married couple	Two-earner married couple	Single	One-earner married couple	Two-earner married couple
4,390	27	17·4	14·5	11·2	26·4	14·3	12·3
6,829	27	19·9	17·4	14·1	28·9	19·3	16·7
9,268	27	21·4	19·2	16·2	30·4	22·4	19·8
11,707	27	22·4	20·4	17·6	31·4	24·4	22·0
14,146	27	23·0	21·3	18·8	31·4	24·8	23·2
16,585	27	23·6	22·0	19·6	30·8	25·1	23·6
19,024	40	24·6	23·2	20·9	31·1	25·9	24·5
21,463	45	26·4	25·0	22·8	32·2	27·5	26·1
23,902	45	28·1	26·8	24·6	33·4	29·0	27·6
26,341	50	29·7	28·4	26·3	34·5	30·5	29·1
28,780	50	31·3	30·0	27·9	35·7	31·9	30·5
31,219	50	32·7	31·4	29·4	36·8	33·1	31·8

Notes:
1. The figures relate to 1987-88 to ensure compatibility with Table 1.
2. The calculations assume that all income is earned income, there are no reliefs other than the appropriate personal allowance and that in two-earner married couples no wife's earnings election has been made but the wife makes full use of the wife's earned income allowance. National Insurance Contributions are at the standard Class 1 rate for employees contracted-in to the state additional (earnings related) pension scheme. In the calculations for income tax and national insurance contributions the assumption is made that married couples have two children; child benefit is deducted accordingly, to take into account cash benefits for children.

Investment Income

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* tables showing for those above and for those below pensionable age, the estimated number of tax units with an investment income in 1988-89 by range of total income up to a lower limit of £100,000, distinguishing between single persons, one-earner and two-earner married couples together with aggregate and the average investment income in each case; and if he will provide separate figures for those with an investment income of more than £200; (2) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* tables showing for women above and for those below pensionable age, the estimated number of tax units with an investment income in 1988-89 by range of total income up to a lower limit of £100,000, distinguishing between single persons, one-earner and two-earner married couples, together with the average investment income in each case; and if he will provide separate figures for those with an investment income of more than £200.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 29 July 1988]:* Available estimates are in the tables. All estimates are provisional and subject to a wide margin of error because

they are based on a projection of the 1985-86 survey of personal incomes and the coverage of investment income in the survey is incomplete. In some cases, investment income on which basic rate liability is satisfied by deduction at source is not reported. No reliable estimates can be given for single people and married couples with total income of less than £5,000.

Table 1

Single people and married couples with investment income 1988-89

Total income (lower limit) £ per annum	Single people			Married couples: without wife's earned income			Married couples: with wife's earned income		
	Number	Investment income		Number	Investment income		Number	Investment income	
		total	average		total	average		total	average
	000s	£ million	£	000s	£ million	£	000s	£ million	£
Aged under 65									
5,000	2,700	1,500	540	1,100	580	530	520	270	520
10,000	1,600	1,200	760	2,000	1,200	600	2,900	1,800	620
20,000	170	430	2,590	350	390	1,110	1,300	1,200	920
30,000	50	340	6,960	140	440	3,130	460	960	2,080
50,000	20	330	21,000	60	730	11,900	100	930	9,120
All	4,540	3,800	840	3,650	3,340	920	5,280	5,160	980
Aged 65 and over									
5,000	480	930	1,950	460	620	1,350	220	250	1,120
10,000	150	890	5,840	150	580	3,900	270	730	2,700
20,000	40	510	14,600	20	200	8,500	50	350	6,600
30,000	20	380	25,500	20	360	17,600	20	290	12,400
50,000	10	490	58,600	10	330	42,100	10	450	35,100
All	700	3,200	4,570	660	2,090	3,170	570	2,070	3,630

Table 2

Single people and married couples with investment income of more than £200 1988-89

Total income (lower limit) £ per annum	Single people			Married couples: without wife's earned income			Married couples: with wife's earned income		
	Number	Investment income		Number	Investment income		Number	Investment income	
		total	average		total	average		total	average
	000s	£ million	£	000s	£ million	£	000s	£ million	£
Aged under 65									
5,000	2,000	1,400	680	760	550	720	330	250	760
10,000	1,300	1,200	940	1,500	1,100	750	2,200	1,700	780
20,000	130	420	3,390	250	380	1,510	970	1,200	1,220
30,000	40	340	8,050	110	430	3,950	370	950	2,560
50,000	10	330	24,800	50	730	13,800	90	920	10,000
All	3,480	3,690	1,060	2,670	3,190	1,190	3,960	5,020	1,270
Aged 65 and over									
5,000	430	920	2,130	440	620	1,420	200	240	1,230
10,000	150	890	5,900	140	570	4,150	260	730	2,850
20,000	40	510	14,700	20	200	8,530	50	350	6,750
30,000	20	380	25,700	20	360	17,700	20	290	12,600
50,000	10	490	58,600	10	330	42,100	10	450	35,100
All	650	3,190	4,910	630	2,080	3,300	540	2,060	3,810

Table 3

Single Females with investment income and married couples where the wife has investment income 1988-89

Total income (lower limit) £ per annum	Single females			Married couples: without wife's earned income			Married couples: with wife's earned income		
	Number	Investment income		Number	Investment income		Number	Investment income	
		total	average		total	average		total	average
	000s	£ million	£	000s	£ million	£	000s	£ million	£
Aged under 65									
5,000	1,500	850	580	770	200	260	340	90	270
10,000	530	570	1,080	1,300	380	280	2,200	640	300
20,000	40	220	5,120	210	80	390	980	330	340
30,000	10	190	14,200	90	70	790	360	200	560
50,000	—	130	52,500	40	90	2,060	80	200	2,640
All	2,080	1,960	940	2,410	820	340	3,960	1,460	370
Aged 65 and over									
5,000	360	750	2,070	310	180	580	140	70	540
10,000	110	640	5,860	100	130	1,290	200	200	990
20,000	20	320	16,600	20	50	2,730	40	90	2,300
30,000	10	290	28,400	20	100	6,750	20	100	4,730
50,000	10	390	61,700	10	80	11,900	10	130	11,000
All	510	2,390	4,690	460	540	1,170	410	590	1,440

Table 4

Single Females with investment income and married couples where the wife has investment income of more than £200 1988-89

Total income (lower limit) £ per annum	Single females			Married couples without wife's earned income			Married couples with wife's earned income		
	Number	Investment income		Number	Investment income		Number	Investment income	
		total	average		total	average		total	average
	000s	£ million	£	000s	£ million	£	000s	£ million	£
Aged under 65									
5,000	1,100	800	740	400	160	400	170	70	430
10,000	410	560	1,360	790	310	390	1,300	550	410
20,000	30	220	6,440	90	70	800	490	280	580
30,000	10	190	15,000	30	70	2,030	170	180	1,070
50,000	—	130	52,600	20	90	4,550	40	190	4,330
All	1,550	1,900	1,230	1,330	700		2,170	1,270	590
Aged 65 and over									
5,000	330	740	1,230	260	170	670	100	70	680
10,000	110	640	5,890	90	130	1,540	180	200	1,110
20,000	20	320	16,700	20	50	2,840	40	90	1,420
30,000	10	290	28,400	20	100	7,040	20	100	4,970
50,000	480	390	61,700	10	80	13,000	10	130	11,600
All	700	2,380	4,960	400	530	1,330	350	590	1,690

Tax Relief

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* his estimate of the cost to the Exchequer of an increase of £100 in each of the allowances and reliefs for income tax at 1988-89 income and tax levels; and if he will provide corresponding figures on the basis of the proposed 1990 regime for the independent taxation of husbands and wives.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 29 July 1988]:* Provisional estimates for the main income tax allowances based on a projection of the 1985-86 survey of personal incomes are in the table. Estimates for increases in allowances under independent taxation are available only at 1990-91 income levels.

Direct revenue cost of increasing allowances by £100 in a full year

£ million

Allowance	at 1988-89 incomes
Single and wives earned income	340
Married man's[2]	265
Additional personal and widow's bereavement	15
Single age	25
Married age[2]	20

Allowance	at 1990-91 incomes with Independent Taxation[1]
Personal allowances:—	
single and wives	340
husbands[2]	270
Additional personal and widow's bereavement	15
Aged personal	
single and wives	30
husbands[2]	25

[1] Assuming allowances are indexed from 1988-89 to 1990-91.

[2] To provide an appropriate comparison between the present system of allowances and Independent Taxation, the personal allowances under Independent Taxation are shown separately for single people and wives and for husbands. If the married couple's allowance were also increased by £100, it would cost approximately a further £270 million for the non-aged and £25 million for the aged.

Note:

The additional personal and widow's bereavement allowances are defined under present legislation as the difference between the married allowance and the single allowance. It follows that all the allowances could not be increased by £100 at the same time.

Wife's Earnings Election

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for wives with earned income the estimated distribution of the number of such wives in 1988-89 by wife's total income and the couples' joint total incomes together with the estimated revenue loss from wife's earnings elections and the estimated further loss on the 1990 basis of separate taxation of husbands and wives;

(2) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the estimated number and direct revenue cost of wife's earnings elections in a full year by range of incomes at 1988-89 income and tax levels together with tables for *(a)* husbands and *(b)* wives showing (i) the numbers separately assessed by range of total income of the relevant spouse and (ii) the aggregate total income of each spouse and the aggregate investment income of each spouse; and if he will add a table showing the additional direct revenue cost on the basis of the 1990 proposals for the separate taxation of husbands and wives.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 29 July 1988]:* Available estimates are in the tables. They are based on a projection of the 1985-86 survey of personal incomes and are therefore provisional. Further estimates for investment income and separate taxation could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Distribution of wives[1] earned income 1988-89

Income (lower limit) £ per annum	Number of wives with earned income in range ('000)	Number of married couples (with wives earnings) with joint total income[2] in range ('000)
1	2,280	60
2,000	1,970	170
4,000	1,110	340
6,000	950	430
8,000	500	520
10,000	270	730

Income (lower limit) £ per annum	Number of wives with earned income in range ('000)	Number of married couples (with wives earnings) with joint total income[2] in range ('000)
12,000	240	1,190
15,000	100	1,880
20,000	40	1,520
30,000	20	640
All ranges	7,480	7,480

[1] Excluding some wives with earnings below the PAYE reporting limit and self-employed wives making a net loss.
[2] Combined income of husband and wife.

Wives earnings election 1988-89

Income (lower limit) £ per annum	By range of joint total income of married couple: number '000	By range of joint total income of married couple: cost £ million	By range of wives earned income: number '000	By range of wives earned income: cost £ million	By range of husbands total income[1]: number '000	By range of husbands total income[1]: cost £ million
1	—	—	—	—	—	—
6,000	—	—	70	15	[2]	—
10,000	—	—	125	70	5	5
15,000	—	—	55	60	45	15
20,000	10	[2]	35	70	155	110
30,000	290	245	15	30	95	115
All ranges	300	245	300	245	300	245

[1] Husband's earned income plus husband and wife's investment income.
[2] Less than £1 million or 1,000.

Elderly Taxpayers

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing his estimate of the number of single persons and married couples aged 65 to 79 and the numbers aged 80 and over, the distribution by income of those subject to tax, and the numbers benefiting from age relief in whole or in part and at what cost to the Exchequer; and if he will provide a similar estimate for 1990-91.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 29 July 1988]:* Estimates of the numbers of single persons and married couples aged 65 and over in 1988-89 and the distribution of income for those liable to income tax are given in the tables. In 1988-89, about 2·5 million single persons and married couples, including half a million non-taxpayers, benefit from the age allowances at a cost to the Exchequer of about £400 million. Costs in 1990-91 will depend on the levels of the age allowances.

Number of single people and married couples aged 65 and over in 1988-89

Thousands

Age	Single persons	[1]Married couples
65-79	3,300	2,400
80 and over	1,700	500
Total aged 65 and over	5,000	2,900

[1] Based on the age of the husband or the wife, whichever is the elder.

Taxpayers[1] aged 65 and over[2] by range of total income 1988-89[3]

Total income (lower limit) £ per annum	Thousands
3,000	230
4,000	300
5,000	330
6,000	280
7,000	260
8,000	210
9,000	160
10,000	240
12,000	170
15,000	210
20,000	80
25,000	40
30,000	90
All	2,600

[1] Single person or a married couple.
[2] Either husband or wife is aged 65 or over.
[3] Estimates are based on a projection of the 1985-86 survey of personal incomes and are provisional.

Incomes

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for *(a)* two-earner families with a wife's earnings election and *(b)* other higher-rate taxpayers by tax category, his estimate of the number and distribution of incomes, together with the average unearned income and average amount of mortgage interest relief in each income band in each category in the current financial year; and if he will add a table showing the gains and losses to the Exchequer from the application of separate taxation of husbands and wives as proposed for 1990.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 29 July 1988]:* Provisional estimates for 1988-89 based on a projection of the 1985-86 survey of personal incomes are given in the table. Estimates of the effects of the introduction of independent taxation in 1990-91 were given in the Inland Revenue press release on independent taxation issued on 15 March 1988.

Higher rate taxpayers[1] with wife's earnings election 1988-89

Total income (lower limit)	Number	with investment income		with mortgage interest relief	
		Number	Average amount	Number	Average amount
£ p.a.	000s	000s	£ p.a.	000s	£ p.a.
20,000	—	—	—	—	—
25,000	—	—	—	—	—
30,000	13	12	2,200	8	1,400
35,000	35	34	2,500	24	2,300
40,000	44	42	2,700	32	2,700
50,000	69	66	9,800	48	2,800
All	161	154	5,700	112	2,600

[1] Married couples and single people.

Higher rate taxpayers—single people 1988-89

Total income (lower limit)	Number	with investment income		with mortgage interest relief	
		Number	Average amount	Number	Average amount
£ p.a.	000s	000s	£ p.a.	000s	£ p.a.
20,000	32	30	8,200	4	1,100
25,000	63	52	7,700	26	2,400
30,000	35	30	10,000	17	2,500
35,000	20	16	10,900	8	3,000
40,000	19	16	14,600	9	2,800
50,000	32	24	34,200	12	2,900
All	200	168	13,000	75	2,500

Higher rate taxpayers—Married couples with wife's earnings and no earnings election 1988-89

Total income (lower limit)	Number	with investment income		with mortgage interest relief	
		Number	Average amount	Number	Average amount
£ p.a.	000s	000s	£ p.a.	000s	£ p.a.
20,000	1	1	5,100	—	—
25,000	140	128	2,500	75	1,300
30,000	169	157	2,300	142	2,600
35,000	62	58	3,500	51	2,800
40,000	45	43	5,600	32	2,800
50,000	49	48	15,100	34	3,000
All	466	435	4,300	334	2,400

Higher rate taxpayers—Married couples without wife's earnings 1988-89

Total Income (lower limit)	Number	with investment income		with mortgage interest relief	
		Number	Average Amount	Number	Average Amount
£ p.a.	000s	000s	£ p.a.	000s	£ p.a.
20,000	12	11	4,400	3	500
25,000	84	68	3,100	48	2,200
30,000	72	58	3,500	51	2,600
35,000	54	49	5,200	41	2,800
40,000	56	50	6,600	38	2,700
50,000	76	70	15,300	51	3,000
All	353	307	6,900	233	2,600

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* tables showing by range of total income up to a lower limit of £100,000, for those above and those below pensionable age and distinguishing between single persons, one-earner and two-earner married couples, the estimated saving to the Exchequer of abolishing all allowances and reliefs other than the basic single and married allowances; and if he will provide similar tables on the 1990 basis of separate taxation of husbands and wives.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[pursuant to his reply, 28 July 1988, c. 506]:* The total direct revenue yield from abolishing all income tax allowances (other than the basic single and married allowances) and reliefs cannot be estimated reliably. Available estimates of the direct revenue yield in a full year at 1988-89 income levels of abolishing some specified tax reliefs and allowances other than the single, married man's, and wife's earned income allowancess are in the table. Estimates are based on a projection of the 1985-86 survey of personal incomes and are therefore provisional. Estimates do not allow for any behavioural changes that might occur.

The introduction of independent taxation of husband and wife will not affect the estimates for single taxpayers. Changes to the figures for married couples cannot be estimated reliably.

Direct revenue yield at 1988-89 income levels of abolishing income tax reliefs and allowances[1]

Income (lower limit)	*Under 65 years*			*65 years and over*			*All*
		Married couples			*Married couples*		
	Single	*Without wife's earnings*	*With wife's earnings*	*Single*	*Without wife's earnings*	*With wife's earnings*	
£'000	*£ million*	*£ million*	*£ million*	*£ million*	*£ million*	*£ million*	*£ million*
0	60	10	—	100	10	—	180
5	450	200	100	80	120	70	1,020
10	550	540	520	15	15	20	1,660
15	180	340	760			10	1,290
20	110	180	600	5	5	5	900
25	60	120	370			5	560
30	80	220	610		10	10	940
50	60	190	290	10	10	10	560
All	1,550	1,800	3,250	210	170	130	7,110

[1] Estimates assume that tax reliefs for the following are abolished: mortgage interest, retirement annuity premiums, employees superannuation contributions, the business expansion scheme and donations to charities; and that all tax allowances other than the basic single allowance, the basic married man's allowance, and the wife's earned income allowance are also abolished.

Composite Rate Interest

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* tables showing for those above and for those below pensionable age, the estimated number of tax units in receipt of more than £200 gross in composite rate interest in 1986-87 and the average amount received, together with his estimates for 1988-89; and if he will divide the figures to show the amounts for those above and those below pensionable age by range of total income up to a lower limit of £100,000 and distinguishing between single persons, one-earner and two-earner married couples.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 29 July 1988]:* The latest information available relates to 1985-86 and derives from the survey of personal incomes. Some of these estimates are based on small samples: where this means that the actual number may be more than about one third higher or lower than shown in the tables, the figures are shown in brackets. The coverage of investment income in the survey is incomplete. In some cases investment income on which basic rate liability is satisfied at source is not reported. Composite rate interest is reported net of tax in the survey.

Lower Limit of total income	*Aged 65 and over with composite rate interest over £200 net*		*Aged under 65 with composite rate interest over £200 net*	
	Number	*Average Amount*	*Number*	*Average Amount*
£		*£*		*£*
Single People				
2,200	368,000	1,090	249,000	915
10,000	85,600	2,560	139,000	1,360
20,000	25,900	4,130	49,200	(2,400)
50,000	(2,000)	(6,800)	4,100	(3,000)
100,000	(400)	(18,600)	(900)	(6,800)
Married Couples without wives earned income				
2,200	202,000	960	144,000	(800)
10,000	63,200	2,370	116,000	1,150
20,000	28,600	3,040	115,000	(2,220)
50,000	2,160	(5,900)	15,400	(2,240)
100,000	(500)	(11,100)	3,550	4,900
Married Couples with wives earned income				
2,200	141,000	830	128,200	880
10,000	140,000	2,170	422,000	950
20,000	36,500	3,180	348,000	1,270
50,000	(5,600)	(12,200)	28,700	2,910
100,000	(900)	(18,600)	4,910	5,110

Property Income

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* tables showing for those above and for those below pensionable age, the estimated number of tax units in receipt of more than £200 gross in lettings and other incomes from property and the average amount received, together with his estimates for 1988-89; and if he will divide the figures to show the amounts for those above and those below pensionable age by range of total income up to a lower limit of £100,000 and distinguishing between single persons, one-earner and two-earner married couples.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 29 July 1988]:* The latest information available relates to 1985-86 and derives from the survey of personal incomes. Some of these estimates are based on small samples: where this means

that the actual number or amount may be more than about one third higher or lower than shown in the tables, the figures are shown in brackets.

Lower limit of total income £	*Aged 65 and over with over £200 before tax from lettings* *Number*	*Average rental* £	*Aged under 65 with over £200 before tax from lettings* *Number*	*Average rental* £
Single people				
2,200	41,100	1,400	(29,700)	(1,900)
10,000	(10,900)	(2,900)	(17,400)	(2,600)
20,000	8,040	(8,100)	7,500	(4,400)
50,000	(600)	(10,700)	(900)	(9,000)
100,000	(100)	(12,200)	(400)	(14,400)
Married couples without wives earned income				
2,200	(26,400)	(1,400)	(19,600)	(400)
10,000	(12,300)	(2,600)	(12,300)	(1,400)
20,000	(6,900)	(3,900)	14,300	2,670
50,000	(500)	(6,800)	2,420	(4,800)
100,000	(100)	(24,000)	(800)	(11,800)
Married couples with wives earned income				
2,200	(7,100)	(1,400)	(17,600)	(1,800)
10,000	(4,400)	(3,100)	(39,600)	(2,100)
20,000	8,720	4,040	42,700	2,770
50,000	(2,800)	(5,800)	7,800	6,240
100,000	(700)	(14,200)	1,700	(10,900)

Tax Allowances

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, further to his reply of 22 October, *Official Report*, columns *858-60*, on income tax allowances and rates in the United Kingdom and Germany, he will publish in the *Official Report* comparable figures for France and Italy.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 29 July 1988]:* The information requested is given in the tables, which are supplemented by explanatory notes.

Table 1
Allowances and reliefs

	£
France	
a. Basic exemption (zero rate band)	
Single person	1,305
One-earner married couple	1,305
Two-earner married couple	1,305
b. Employment income relief: a percentage of gross pay less social security contributions	
Single person	[1]
plus	[2]
One-earner couple	[3]
Two-earner couple	[4]
Italy	
a. Employment income relief (tax credit)	
Single person	206·80
One-earner married couple	206·80
Two-earner married couple	413·60
b. Married person's relief (tax credit)	
One-earner couple	176·54
Two-earner couple where employment income of spouse does not exceed £1,261	176·54
c. Low income relief (tax credit, given where person's employment income—and that of any spouse—does not exceed £4,623·70)	
Single person	65·57
One-earner married couple	65·57
Two-earner married couple	131·14
d. Deduction for social security contributions and (subject to a maximum of £1,056·86) life and accident insurance premiums and various other expenses	

[1] 10 per cent. (maximum relief 4,822).
[2] 20 per cent. of balance (maximum 8,731).
[3] As for single person.
[4] For each partner: as for single person.

Notes:

1. The figures relate to 1987 to ensure comparability with the figures for Germany and the United Kingdom given in the written answer of 22 October 1987 referred to in the question.
2. Conversions to sterling have been made on the basis of OECD estimates of purchasing parity.
3. The figures relate to employment income.
4. In France and Italy child relief is also given according to the number of children.
5. In France relief is given to married couples by means of the income splitting system which reduces the tax payable by a married couple.

Table 2
Income Tax Sales

Rate per cent.	*Band of taxable income, £*
France	
0	1–1,305
5	1,306–1,364
9·6	1,365–1,617
14·49	1,618–2,557
19·2	2,558–3,288
24	3,289–4,129
28·8	4,130–4,997
33·6	4,998–5,765
38·4	5,766–9,606
43·2	9,607–13,212
49	13,213–15,628
53·9	15,629–17,778
56·8	over 17,778
Italy	
12	1–2,522
22	2,523–4,623
27	4,624–11,768
34	11,769–21,015
41	21,016–42,032
48	42,033–63,049
53	63,050–126,100
58	126,101–252,204
62	over 252,204

Notes:
1. See Note 1 to Table 1.
2. See Note 2 to Table 1.

SCOTLAND

Prisons

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many persons originally from *(a)* Northern Ireland and *(b)* the Irish Republic were in prisons in Scotland at the latest date for which figures are available.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I regret that this information is not available in the format requested. However, in 1987, a total of 83 persons born in Northern Ireland and 34 persons born in the Irish Republic were received under sentence into penal establishments in Scotland.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, in respect of land within environmentally sensitive areas in Scotland *(a)* how many applications have been received from voluntary conservation bodies wishing to enter into management agreements in each of these areas, and what is the total area of land involved and *(b)* how many agreements have so far been concluded with voluntary conservation bodies in each of these areas and what is the total area of land involved.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: One application covering 373 hectares in the Loch Lomond ESA has been received from a voluntary conservation body. An agreement was concluded covering these 373 hectares.

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects to lay a report before the House in accordance with the requirements of section 18(8) of the Agriculture Act 1986 on the performance of management agreements in environmentally sensitive areas in Scotland; and whether any such report will describe the steps taken to monitor the effect of the agreements on wildlife and the landscape in each area.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: It is too early to assess the effect of the performance of management agreements on each environmentally sensitive area as a whole. My right hon. and learned Friend is, however, considering whether a preliminary statement describing conditions in each area might be helpful. The report on the effect of agreements which will be provided in due course will describe the monitoring arrangements adopted.

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give in respect of environmentally sensitive areas in Scotland *(a)* the total extent in hectares, of each area, *(b)* the extent of agricultural land within each area, *(c)* the number of farmers eligible to enter into management agreements in each area, *(d)* the number of agreements concluded with farmers in each area and *(e)* the total area of land covered by agreements in each area.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information is as follows:

	Total area has	*Estimated extent of agricultural land—has*	*Estimated number of eligible farmers/ crofters*	*Concluded agreements*	*Area covered by agreements*
Breadalbane	120,000	90,000	160	55	26,360
Loch Lomond	42,000	30,600	89	15	8,250
Whitlaw and Eildon	8,000	7,500	65	—	—
Stewartry	42,000	39,000	300	4	550
The Machair of the Uists, Benbecula, Barra and Vatersay	7,000	7,000	800 + 65 Grazing Committees	7	65

Dumfries Bypass

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland at what stage are the plans for the A75 bypass around Dumfries, and if he will make a statement on the future timetable for this scheme.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The contract for the Dumfries bypass has been awarded and construction is due for completion by October 1990.

Rating Reform

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his estimate of the effect of the introduction of community charge on the income of full-time students in Scotland, in terms of average losses or gains per month.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend has made no such estimate.

Scottish Bus Group

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will set out the programme for the disposal of Scottish Bus Group subsidiaries, providing, where known, the proposed timetable for disposal.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My right hon. and learned Friend hopes soon to announce the detailed pattern of privatisation in terms of the units to be offered for sale. It is not possible in advance of the necessary legislation to say when sales will begin.

Forestry Commission

Mr. Onslow: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what are the terms of reference of the non-executive members of the Forestry Commission.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The powers and duties of the Forestry Commissioners are mainly set out in the Forestry Act 1967.

Inshore Fisheries (Helicopter Patrols)

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many helicopter patrols for the surveillance

of inshore fisheries have been mounted during the current financial year; how many of these have been specifically or mainly for the surveillance of salmon fisheries; and what their total costs so far have been.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Twenty-four separate patrols have been undertaken in the current financial year by helicopters hired for surveillance of Scottish inshore fisheries, which flew a total of 91½ hours at a cost of £56,137. To isolate the cost of salmon enforcement as distinct from other forms of enforcement is not feasible.

EC Surpluses

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what organisations were licensed to distribute the current issue of EC surplus produce; what criteria were used to select these organisations; what regulations or advice has been give to those charged with distribution of this food; what quantity is being distributed in Scotland and in each locality; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given today by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Parliamentary Questions (Norman Shaw North Branch Library)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will take steps to arrange for a duplicate set of written parliamentary questions to be placed in the Norman Shaw North branch library on each sitting day; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wakeham: I have no plans to do so at present.

Palace of Westminster (Child Care Facilities)

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Lord President of the Council what facilities are available for the care of the children of hon. Members and staff in the Palace of Westminster.

Mr. Wakeham: No such facilities exist. Their provision is, however, being considered, along with other claims for accommodation, in the context of phase II of the new parliamentary buildings.

ENVIRONMENT

Local Government Officers

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if local government officers falling within the politically restricted group as defined in his Department's response to the Widdicombe committee of inquiry, who have been selected to contest elections prior to the enactment of legislation arising from this response, will be required to resign their positions or withdraw from being a candidate for the election.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The White Paper "The Conduct of Local Authority Business" (Cm. 433, paragraph 5.23) sets out the Government's proposal: local authority officers holding a post in the politically restricted group will not be capable of being elected as an MEP, MP or member of a principal local authority at or after the next election occurring after the legislation comes into force.

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what discussions his officials have had prior to his response to the Widdicombe committee of inquiry, with the International Labour Organisation concerning the implications of imposing political restrictions on the existing contracts of employment of affected local government officers.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: None.

Use Classes Order

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will consider revising the 1987 Use Classes Order in order to separate the office from the light industrial use classes.

Mr. Chope: I have no plans to amend the scope of the business use class (B1) of the 1987 Use Classes Order.

Anti-litter Campaign

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the achievements of his national anti-litter campaign.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The programme, launched by the Prime Minister, of experimental projects undertaken by the Tidy Britain Group is well under way. With Government support the group is running a series of project-based pilot schemes to tackle specific major problem areas over 12 months. The projects incorporate before and after studies to help assess the effectiveness of different approaches. It is too soon to reach conclusions, but I understand from the group that the projects are attracting good support from all sectors of the community.

New Dwellings (London)

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many new dwellings have been constructed in each London borough in each year since 1979 by *(a)* local authorities, *(b)* housing associations and co-operatives and *(c)* the private sector.

Mr. Trippier: Housebuilding figures reported by London boroughs and, until its abolition the GLC, are published for the local authority, housing association and private sectors in table 1 of "Housebuilding in England by local authority areas: 1980 to 1987". These figures include building outside boroughs' own areas, details of which are given in table 2(b). Geographical information on GLC build and building by housing associations assisted by the GLC are given in table 3.

Housebuilding figures reported for 1979 are given in table 4(b) of "Local Housing Statistics", issue No. 59. Housing association figures are shown under the heading "Other public sector" and include activity by Government Departments; for London this amounted to three starts and 161 completions. A geographical breakdown of GLC build and build by housing associations assisted by the GLC is given in table 7 of "Local Housing Statistics", issue No. 53. No boroughs reported any building activity outside their own areas in 1979.

Copies of these publications are available in the Library.

Figures for housing co-operatives are not reported separately to the Department. Activity will be included either in the housing association sector or the private sector depending on the type of co-operative.

Limehouse Link Road

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the cost of purchasing land required for the Limehouse link road; and what is the expected cost of building the Limehouse link road.

Mr. Trippier: LDDC estimates that at outturn prices the Limehouse link road will cost £141·5 million to construct. The cost of associated land acquisition will be determined by the outcome of current compulsory purchase orders and of statutory compensation procedures.

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if his Department or the London Docklands development corporation is providing finances for the building of the Limehouse link road; what are the respective sums being made available from all sources; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: The costs of constructing the Limehouse link will be met wholly by the LDDC. The corporation itself will decide what proportion of these costs will be met from its Government grant, and what proportion from land disposal receipts.

Freshwater Biological Association

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what recent representations he has received regarding the proposed closure of the Windermere and River Frome laboratories of the Freshwater Biological Association; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: I have received a number of representations about the River Frome laboratory. This and the Windermere laboratory of the Freshwater Biological Association are funded by grant-in-aid from the Natural Environment Research Council which comes under the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science.

Piers

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement concerning the future ownership maintenance and operations of piers in the tidal Thames.

Mr. Moynihan: The Thames Water Authority is currently considering the implications of the reorganisation of the water industry for the future ownership of the piers which are currently in its ownership.

Housing Investment Programmes

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list those local authorities whose housing investment programme in 1988-89 is less than 20 per cent. of its housing investment programme in 1979-80, in real terms.

Mr. Trippier: A comparison of gross capital expenditure on housing in 1979-80 with authorities' estimates for 1988-89 identifies no authorities whose 1988-89 expenditure was, in real terms, less than 20 per cent. of its 1979-80 expenditure. We have not yet received returns of estimated 1988-89 expenditure from 14 authorities.

Owner-occupation

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list those local authorities in whose area there is a 75 per cent. or higher rate of owner-occupation.

Mr. Trippier: The most recent information for individual local authority areas is from the 1981 census. The percentages of households who were owner occupiers is shown in Table 17 of "Census 1981, Key statistics for local authorities, Great Britain", a copy of which is in the Library.

Channel Tunnel

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he is now taking to evaluate the impacts of proposals to utilise a new high-speed railway from London to the Channel tunnel for daily working journeys for residents in Kent to and from London; what effects he expects such proposals to have on the existing structure plan for that county; and if he will state his criteria for development in areas not scheduled for residential expansion.

Mr. Chope: The impact on daily working journeys for residents in Kent is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport.

I understand that British Rail is undertaking widespread consultations on Channel tunnel train services and is at present discussing the strategic implications of its proposals with Kent county council and the London planning advisory committee, and that Kent county council hopes to come to a conclusion on the strategic implications in January. It will be a matter for Kent county council to decide, in the light of British Rail's decision on a preferred route, whether or not to undertake a further review of the Kent structure plan.

The Secretary of State's criteria for development in areas not scheduled for residential expansion are set out in general terms in circulars issued by the Department and more recently in the planning policy guidance notes. The detailed application of these policies in this case is primarily a matter for the local planning authorities in Kent and London.

Irish Sea (Pollution)

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment on what basis tests are carried out to establish the level of pollution in the Irish sea; whether he seeks the opinion of independent monitoring organisations; and if he will make a statement on pollution in the Irish sea.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Monitoring and research in the Irish sea is carried out by a wide range of organisations including United Kingdom Government Departments with responsibility for fisheries and the environment, by

water authorities and by research agencies including the National Environmental Research Council. The independent Irish sea study group offers an opportunity to interested parties including universities, industry, Government Departments and conservation groups to meet to discuss these issues. The group, whose work the Department welcomes, hopes to produce a report on the Irish sea shortly. Aspects of pollution in the Irish sea were considered in a recent report on the Irish sea, by the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas, which we are considering. We are in contact with the Irish Government about how best to take these matters forward.

Vicuna

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if, pursuant to his reply of 28 January, *Official Report*, column *374*, he is now in a position to provide details of the amounts and destinations of trade in vicuna and stock levels of vicuna available in the United Kingdom market; what progress has been made in reconciling the discrepancy between United Kingdom and Japanese statistics; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The majority of international trade in vicuna products from the United Kingdom in recent years has been to Japan. The total exports (in kg) for the years 1983 to 1987 to Japan and to the rest of the world were:

	Japan	*Rest of world*
1983	54·71039	20·34270
1984	184·43149	20·83830
1985	245·01560	14·56341
1986	205·88448	6·19800
1987	332·42721	25·97895

The current stock level of pre-convention vicuna held in the United Kingdom is 406,53 kg.

The apparent discrepancy between the United Kingdom and Japanese statistics has been resolved and full details of the exports concerned were contained in my letter of 29 September 1988 to the hon. Member.

Full details will be published in due course in the United Kingdom supplementary report on CITES trade for 1986 and the EC CITES reports for 1986 and 1987.

Conservative Party Conference

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what services were provided by personnel of his Department for the 1988 Conservative party conference.

Mr. Ridley: None, but, in preparing for the conference, my Ministers and I drew upon material produced by my Department during the normal course of business.

Pool Cars

Mr. French: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many representations he has received regarding criminal offences associated with the use of pool cars; what plans he has for curtailing the abuse of pool cars; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[pursuant to his reply, 13 July 1988, c. 235]:* I am sorry that my hon. Friend's question appeared wrongly in the Order Paper addressed to the Secretary of State for the Environment. It was correctly tabled for answer by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, but was transferred because of a misinterpretation of the term "pool car" as referring to the Government car service pool vehicles used by Ministers and officials, the responsibility of the Department of the Environment. There was insufficient time, once the mistake had come to light, to transfer the question back to the Home Department before the day on which it was set down for answer.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Gas Supply

Mr. Page: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when the report of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission on the supply of gas to non-tariff customers is to be published; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: The report is published today, following a reference to the commission by the Director General of Fair Trading in November 1987.

In its unanimous report, the commission found extensive discrimination by British Gas in the pricing and supply of gas to contract customers. It concluded that this practice operated against the public interest. The commission made four main recommendations which it felt would encourage competition in the supply of gas, and restrain BG's discriminatory policy on pricing and supply of gas. The recommendations were that BG should be required:

to publish a price schedule at which it is prepared to supply firm and interruptible gas to contract customers, and not to discriminate in pricing or supply;

not to refuse to supply interruptible gas on the basis of the use made of the gas, or the alternative fuel available;

to publish further information on common carriage terms;

to contract initially for no more than 90 per cent. of any new gas fields.

One of the main findings was that BG's policy of price discrimination imposed higher costs on customers less well placed to use alternative fuels, or to obtain them on favourable terms, thus placing an arbitrary cost disadvantage on these customers. In addition, BG's policy of relating prices to those of the alternatives available to each customer placed it in a position to undercut potential gas suppliers, which may be expected to deter new entrants and inhibit the development of competition in the market. Its refusal to supply interruptible gas to some customers also imposed additional costs on those users.

The commission also concluded that BG's failure to provide adequate information on the costs of common carriage, its ability to identify potential customers of competing suppliers and the potential source of gas, and its position as a dominant purchaser of gas may all be expected to deter entry into the market.

My right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State welcomes this report. The MMC's recommendations offer a sound basis for encouraging the development of effective competition in the supply of gas to contract customers. The Secretary of State is asking the Director General of Gas Supply to seek agreement with British Gas to modifications to British Gas's authorisation so as to effect remedies relating to British Gas's pricing and contract policies in the supply of gas to large users, and also relating to the provision of information on its common carriage

terms for transmission of gas. If satisfactory arrangements cannot be made by agreement, the Secretary of State has powers to remedy the adverse effects by order under the Fair Trading Act.

In order to encourage the emergence of other suppliers of gas to industrial users, the Secretary of State considers that it is essential that a reasonable percentage of the output of new gas fields should be available to suppliers other than British Gas. He has asked the Director General of Fair Trading to consult interested parties on the basis of the MMC's recommendations, with a view to proposing by 31 January 1989 a scheme which will make it easier for others to buy gas from developers of gas fields. In particular, he has asked the director general to advise him whether requirements under such a scheme should be subject to a time limit, and if so what the limit should be. The Secretary of State will then consider the position further.

The Secretary of State believes that these measures will remove distortions in the gas market with consequential improvements to resource allocation and efficiency. The remedies are designed to encourage new entrants into the industrial gas market thereby accelerating the development of competition.

Balance of Trade

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what was the balance of trade in each of the following goods and services for *(a)* the second quarter of 1988 and *(b)* the second quarter of 1987 (i) passenger motor cars, (ii) other consumer goods, (iii) machine tools, (iv) instrument engineering, (v) tourism and (vi) banking and insurance services.

Mr. Alan Clark: Quarterly estimates of earnings from the banking and insurance services are not available. The balance of trade for the remaining goods and services is given in the table:

United Kingdom Balance of Trade

£ million

	Second quarter 1987	*Second quarter 1988*
Passenger motor cars	−840·0	−1,316·9
Other consumer goods	−1,119·2	−1,515·4
Machine tools	−0·5	−20·2
Instrument engineering	−137·0	−160·0
Tourism	−307·0	−550·0

Note: All figures provisional.

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for the last 12 months of available figures the overall balance of trade of the United Kingdom in respect of *(a)* the European Economic Community and *(b)* the rest of the world showing for each the percentage of both overall trade and of the respective surpluses or deficits.

Mr. Alan Clark: Information on United Kingdom trade with EC and the rest of the world is in the table. Because the overall trade balance comprises both surpluses and deficits it is not meaningful to express components as percentages.

United Kingdom Trade, 12 months to June 1988

£ billion BoP basis

	Exports	*Imports*	*Balance*	*Total trade (exports plus imports)*
Trade with:				
EC	39·2	50·6	−11·4	89·8
Rest of World	40·6	44·1	−3·5	84·6
World	79·8	94·7	−14·9	174·5

Source: Monthly Review of External Trade Statistics.

Manufactured Goods

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Newham, North-East, of 20 July, *Official Report*, column *619*, he will give the information requested on the trade in manufactured goods between the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic of Germany in the form in which it is available.

Mr. Alan Clark: Figures of United Kingdom trade in manufactures with the Federal Republic of Germany at current prices are in the table:

United Kingdom trade in manufactures[1] with Federal Republic of Germany

	Exports fob	*Imports cif*	*Crude balance*	*Exports as percentage of imports*
	£ billion	*£ billion*	*£ billion*	*Per cent.*
1970	0·4	0·5	−0·1	81
1971	0·4	0·6	−0·2	72
1972	0·5	0·8	−0·3	60
1973	0·6	1·3	−0·6	50
1974	0·8	1·7	−0·9	47
1975	1·0	1·7	−0·7	57
1976	1·4	2·5	−1·0	58
1977	1·9	3·2	−1·3	59
1978	2·2	4·1	−1·9	54
1979	2·8	5·3	−2·5	52
1980	3·1	5·1	−2·0	61
1981	3·2	5·3	−2·2	60
1982	3·4	6·7	−3·3	51
1983	3·9	8·9	−4·9	44
1984	4·9	10·0	−5·1	49
1985	5·8	11·6	−5·8	50
1986	6·4	13·1	−6·7	49
1987	7·3	14·7	−7·5	49

[1] Standard International Trade Classification (Rev 2) Sections 5-8.

Source: United Kingdom Overseas Trade Statistics.

Barlow Clowes

Mr. David Shaw: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) if he will take steps to examine the accounts of all the corporate financial intermediaries which placed client moneys in funds managed by Barlow Clowes operations in the United Kingdom, Switzerland, the Channel Islands and Gibraltar to ascertain whether they have kept proper books of account in each year since 1983 in accordance with the Companies Acts, and that all commission and benefits due or payable to those companies was properly included as revenue in the accounting records of those companies;

(2) if he will appoint inspectors to those financial intermediary companies which placed in total £100,000 or more of client moneys with Barlow Clowes operations in order to ascertain whether those companies have kept proper books of account which have incorporated all

benefits, payments and commissions due to, paid or payable to the companies, their employees, their directors and their shareholders since 1983.

Mr. Maude: I understand the concerns of the many investors who put their money into the Barlow Clowes funds on the advice of professional intermediaries. The Financial Intermediaries Managers and Brokers Regulatory Association is looking into dealings with Barlow Clowes by its members. My Department is in close touch with FIMBRA and the Securities and Investments Board over this matter. Whether further action by my Department in this area is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take remain under close and careful consideration.

Dr Glyn: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what representations he has received about advice given at the London Regional Transport retirement seminar to pensioners to invest in Barlow Clowes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: I have received many representations from pensioners and others who placed investments with Barlow Clowes. I do not believe I have received any which refer to retirement seminars given by London Regional Transport.

Dr. Glyn: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will take steps to ensure that all stockbrokers and financial intermediaries who advised their clients to invest in Barlow Clowes will have their names published and that FIMBRA is not solely responsible for this disclosure.

Mr. Maude: I do not think that it would be appropriate to publish such a list at this stage.

Ranks Hovis McDougall (Bid)

Mr. Steel: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he has received a report from the Office of Fair Trading on the Goodman Fielder Wattie bid for Ranks Hovis McDougall plc.

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he is yet in a position to say if he will refer the Ranks Hovis McDougall takeover bid by Goodman Fielder Wattie to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Mr. Maude: My right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State announced on 18 August that he had decided, in accordance with the advice of the Director General of Fair Trading, to refer the proposed acquisition by Goodman Fielder Wattie (GFW) for Ranks Hovis McDougall plc to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission for further investigation. GFW subsequently abandoned its bid, and the reference has been laid aside.

Pleasurama

Mr. Skinner: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will now take steps to investigate the alleged insider dealing in shares in Pleasurama; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: The surveillance division at the stock exchange looks at cases of price movements before price sensitive announcements, and where appropriate it passes information to my Department for consideration of whether further investigation is required, in particular by the appointment of inspectors under section 177 of the Financial Services Act 1986. Such appointments are not normally announced.

City (Self-regulation)

Mr. Skinner: To ask the Chancellor of Duchy of Lancaster whether he will now introduce legislation to outlaw self-regulation in the City; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: No.

Capital Investment (North-west)

Mr. Pike: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will publish, using the 1979 base year figure of £971 million, the percentage charge of capital investment in the north-west in the years 1987 and 1988 to date; and if he will also give that figure as a cash sum for each year.

Mr. Maude: Regional capital expenditure data are available only for manufacturing industry. Results for 1987 and 1988 are not yet available. In current prices, net capital expenditure in manufacturing industry in the north-west region rose by 3 per cent. from £971 million in 1979 to £1,000 million in 1986. In constant (1980) prices, net capital expenditure fell by 38 per cent. from £1,118 million in 1979 to £698 million in 1986.
Source: Annual Census of Production.

Computers (Export)

Mr. Onslow: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster further to the answer of 29 April 1988, *Official Report*, column *287*, what further steps have been taken, to ease the current restrictions placed by HM Customs on the temporary export of personal computers by British business men; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: The arrangements described in my answer of 29 April, *Official Report* column *287*, eased the burden on business men visiting most free world countries. For destinations not covered by those arrangements my Department will consider applications for temporary export licences for multiple use.

I have arranged for copies of the press notice announcing the measures to be placed in the Library of the House.

Nottinghamshire (Structural Funds)

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will agree to meet a delegation from Nottinghamshire county council to discuss reorganising Nottinghamshire as an eligible area in the revised European structural funds as well as in national regional industrial policy.

Mr. Newton: No, for the reasons set out in my letter of 30 September to the chief executive of Nottinghamshire county council, of which I am sending the hon. Member a copy.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Strip Searches

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many strip searches were made of female prisoners in Her Majesty's prison, Maghaberry, in July, August and September, respectively, giving the number of persons involved and number of times each person was searched; if any prison contraband, smuggled item or illegal correspondence was discovered in any search, indicating which items; in how many cases prisoners refused to be searched and had to be restrained while the search was being conducted; and what were the reasons for the search under each of the following headings *(a)* making a remand appearance at a trial, *(b)* attending trial, *(c)* inter-prison visit or *(d)* other reasons.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The information requested is as follows:

Number of Searches	*July*	*August*	*September*
Total number of searches carried out	28	18	29
Total number of inmates searched	20	13	22
Number of prisoners searched once	12	9	15
Number of prisoners searched twice	8	3	7
Number of prisoners searched more than twice	—	1	—
Reasons for Search			
First admission on remand/awaiting trial	12	5	5
First admission on sentence/final discharge	11	11	21
Attending remand court	—	—	—
Attending trial	—	—	—
Inter-prison visits	—	1	1
Pre-release home leave	3	1	1
Visits to outside hospitals	2	—	—
Released on bail	—	—	1

No prohibited article was found during these searches and no prisoner refused to be searched.

New Businesses

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many businesses have been set up in the area defined as "Catholic West Belfast" in the document "Making Belfast Work" in the last five years using public funds; and if he will list them showing whether they are still in business and the amounts of public funds invested, together with the numbers of jobs created, when they started and any subsequent job losses.

Mr. Needham: The area in the document is defined by reference to council wards. The information requested is not held at ward level and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Public Bodies

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many non-departmental public bodies, agencies, boards and units have been set up by his Department since November 1985; how many staff are employed by them; if he will list the names and functions carried out by such organisations; and how many such organisations have been wound up since November 1985.

Mr. Needham: Since November 1985, six such bodies have been established (details are as shown) and four bodies have been wound up.

Name of non-departmental public body	*Number of staff*	*Functions*
Interim Council for Catholic Maintained Schools	21 full time 3 part time	In consultation with the Department of Education and Education and Library Boards to negotiate, establish and implement educational policy in general educational matters and in areas of management of Catholic maintained schools
Northern Ireland Centre for Learning Resources	17 full time 2 part time	The Centre provides high-level audio-visual and print design resources to support the education and training of teachers and to help to facilitate curriculum development work in schools
Mental Health Commission for Northern Ireland	7	To keep under review the care and treatment of people suffering from mental disorder and to monitor the operation of the operation of the Mental Health (NI) Order 1986
Northern Ireland Health Promotion Committee	Nil	To provide services to support Government policies to promote good health and prevent disease
Technology Board for Northern Ireland	8 departmental staff (of whom 5 are employed by DED)	To advise Government on strategic scientific technological and industrially related research and development issues
Northern Ireland Advisory Committee on Travellers	Nil	To advise the Minister on ways and means of securing such improvements as they may deem necessary or desirable in the living conditions of the Travelling People in Northern Ireland

Divis Joint Development Committee

Mr. A. Cecil Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what sums of money have been received or applied for by the Divis joint development committee in the past year from the Department of Economic Development and the Department of Employment Belfast action team; and what are the profits concerned.

Mr. Needham: For the financial year 1987-88 grants were paid as follows:

	£
Department of Economic Development (ACE Scheme)	267,736·48
Department of the Environment (BAT)	35,749·60

Profits do not accrue from these programmes.

Mr. A. Cecil Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the Housing Executive or any

other Government body is funding new premises for the Divis joint development committee; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham: I understand that there have been consultations between the executive and the committee about a possible alternative site for new premises, since the committee's present premises are scheduled for demolition. Neither the executive nor any other Government Department has proposals at present to fund any new premises.

Mr. A. Cecil Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what information he has as to whether the Divis joint development committee has applied to the International Fund for Ireland for contributions; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: This is a matter for the board of the International Fund for Ireland. I have arranged to have the question referred to the chairman.

Union Flag

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland why the Union flag was not flown on the Southern health and social services board premises at The Mall, Armagh, on Sunday 21 August; and what new arrangements are being made to ensure that the Union flag is flown on these premises on all appropriate dates.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The requirement to fly the Union flag on those prescribed days relevant to Northern Ireland applies to central Government offices only. There is no requirement therefore for the Southern health and social services board to comply.

Milk Quota

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, pursuant to the reply of 7 June, *Official Report*, column *465*, how many of the 801 milk producers who were contracted out of production had applied for milk quotas to the Department of Agriculture (NI) prior to 31 July; and when they were advised that they should apply by 31 July.

Mr. Viggers: While various inquiries by producers had been made during the period 31 March 1984 to 31 July 1988, the exact number could not be determined without incurring disproportionate cost. The European Commission only announced in September its proposals for dealing with the European Court judgment about milk quotas and the non-marketing of milk scheme. One of its conditions for eligibility was that former producers must have applied for additional quota before 31 July 1988. Obviously advice could not be given to producers to apply before that date because the proposed deadline was not known until after it had passed. The United Kingdom and other member states have been expressing strong reservations about the proposed 31 July 1988 deadline. Consideration of the proposals continues and it is likely to be some time yet before the final arrangements are established.

Agricultural Land (Development)

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on co-ordination between the Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland and the Department of the Environment (Northern Ireland) over the release of agricultural land for building development.

Mr. Needham: Both Departments are concerned to ensure that conditions favour a viable rural economy in Northern Ireland. Developments which will improve the quality of life, including employment prospects, in rural communities, while at the same time conserving the countryside are encouraged.

The Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland as planning authority consults the Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland on planning applications which affect agricultural land. The Department of the Environment when drawing up an area, local or subject plan also consults the Department of Agriculture to ensure that the development proposals in the plan are acceptable from an agricultural viewpoint.

Barr Hall, Portaferry

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what information he has about the proposal to use the private residence at Barr Hall, Portaferry, as a prisoner rehabilitation centre; whether there is a planning permission for this proposal; and whether he will arrange a public inquiry before any planning decision is made for an application to use Barr Hall as a rehabilitation centre.

Mr. Needham: None. Should a planning application for such a proposal be received, it will be processed in the normal way, including consideration of the need for a public inquiry.

EC (Surplus Produce)

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what organisations were licensed to distribute the current issue of EEC surplus produce; what criteria were used to select these organisations; what regulations or advice has been given to those charged with distribution of this food; what quantity is being distributed in Northern Ireland and in each local authority area; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Viggers: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply given today by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

Farm Woodland Schemes

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what has been the response to the new farm woodland schemes: how many inquiries he has received; how many applications have been approved; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Viggers: There has been considerable interest shown in the farm woodland scheme which opened to applications on 1 October. The Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland held two FWS open days at Seskinore and Garvagh, at which approximately 400 farmers attended. Another open day is being held at Castlewellan on 19 October and further publicity events are planned. One hundred and forty information packs

have been issued, and to date 15 applications have been received by the Department. None of these applications has yet been approved.

Housing (Insulation Standards)

Mr. A. Cecil Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland why housing insulation standards are lower in Northern Ireland than in Scotland and England; what steps are being taken to introduce the latest standards to Northern Ireland; and when these new standards will be implemented in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Needham: The same thermal insulation standards apply in Northern Ireland as in Great Britain. It is the intention that, subject to consultation with interested parties, standards in Northern Ireland will be adjusted to reflect any increase in standards in Great Britain.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

United States of America

14. **Mr. Morley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has any plans to visit the United States of America.

Mr. Eggar: No dates have yet been fixed for my right hon. and learned Friend's next visit to the United States. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister will be there from 15 to 17 November.

South Africa

19. **Mr. Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last met a representative of the Government of South Africa; and what matters were discussed.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend last met the South African ambassador on 23 September. They discussed a range of issues of common interest.

36. **Mr. Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the current state of United Kingdom relations with South Africa.

Mrs. Chalker: I refer the hon. Member to the speech that my right hon. and learned Friend made on 17 May to the Royal Commonwealth Society, a copy of which has been placed in the House of Commons Library.

Southern Africa

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next intends to meet representatives from the African National Congress of South Africa and the South West African People's Organisation of Namibia.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend has no present plans to do so.

22. **Mr. Anderson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what initiatives the Government propose to take in relation to southern Africa.

Mrs. Chalker: We shall continue to pursue policies designed to promote fundamental change in South Africa.

United Nations

26. **Mr. Anthony Coombs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last met the United Nations secretary-general; and what subjects were discussed.

33. **Mr. Eastham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last met the secretary-general of the United Nations; and what was discussed.

69. **Ms. Armstrong:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, when he last met the secretary-general of the United Nations; and what was discussed.

16. **Mrs. Clwyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last met the secretary-general of the United Nations; and what was discussed.

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. and learned Friend met the secretary-general on 27 September during his visit to the general assembly. They discussed Afghanistan, Iran/Iraq, Namibia and Cyprus. The following day the secretary-general was present at a confidential meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council.

21. **Mr. Patnick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the outcome of the latest session of the United Nations general assembly.

Mr. Eggar: The 43rd session of the UN general assembly began on 20 September and is not expected to end until early December.

International Debt

17. **Mr. Knapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions were held at the latest session of the United Nations general assembly on the resolution of the international debt problem.

Mrs. Chalker: During the recent visit of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State to New York for the opening of the United Nations general assembly, a number of speakers referred to international debt issues.

Central America

18. **Mr. McTaggart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Government of the United States of America regarding recent developments in the central American peace process.

Mr. Eggar: We have regular discussions with the United States Administration on a wide range of issues, including developments in the central American peace process.

29. **Mr. Wareing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has any plans to visit central America.

34. **Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has any plans to visit central America.

37. **Ms. Abbott:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has any plans to visit central America.

57. **Mrs. Mahon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has any plans to visit central America.

Mr. Eggar: I will attend the San Jose V conference due to be held in San Pedro Sula, Honduras in February 1989. I also hope to be able to visit the region during 1989.

71. **Mr. Patchett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Government of the United States of America regarding recent developments in the central American peace process.

Mr. Eggar: We have regular discussions with the United States Administration on a wide range of issues, including developments in the central American peace process.

Chile

20. **Mr. McAvoy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had recently with the Government of the United States of America regarding the current situation in Chile.

Mr. Eggar: We have remained in regular and close contact with the United States Government about the political situation in Chile, in particular about the recent plebiscite. Both of us have welcomed the exemplary conduct of the polling and the Chilean Government's acceptance of the result.

31. **Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he had had recently with other Governments of the European Economic Community regarding the current situation in Chile.

44. **Mr. Frank Cook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had recently with other governments of the EEC regarding the current situation in Chile.

Mr. Eggar: We have remained in close and regular contact with our European Community partners on the political situation in Chile. The twelve member states issued a statement on 7 October on the outcome of the recent plebiscite. A copy has been placed in the Library of the House.

Refuseniks

24. **Mr. John Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations Her Majesty's Government have recently made about the plight of refusenik families in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Mr. Waldegrave: We take every suitable opportunity to raise these issues with the Soviet authorities. My right hon. Friend the Secretary for Education and Science took up a number of individual cases during his recent visit to the Soviet Union. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State raised the case of Mr. George Samoilovich with Mr. Shevardnadze in New York on 26 September, following earlier representations by officials.

Bophuthatswana

25. **Mrs. Ann Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's policy towards recognition of Bophuthatswana.

39. **Mr. Michael Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will consider giving full diplomatic recognition to the country known as Bophuthatswana.

61. **Mr. Nicholas Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a further statement on Her Majesty's Government's policy towards recognition of Bophuthatswana.

66. **Mr. Beggs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a further statement on Her Majesty's Government's policy towards recognition of Bophuthatswana.

73. **Mr. Mudd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a further statement on Her Majesty's Government's policy towards recognition of Bophuthatswana.

73. **Mr. Woodcock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's policy towards recognition of Bophuthatswana.

Mrs. Chalker: The creation of Bophuthatswana was a key element in the South African Government's policy of seperate development, to which we are wholly opposed. In common with all other states except South Africa we do not recognise Bophuthatswana as independent.

Western European Union

27. **Sir Dudley Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the priorities of the United Kingdom presidency of the Western European Union.

Mr. Waldegrave: Our four main priorities for our presidency of the WEU remain those set out in the reply of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Putney (Mr. Mellor) to my hon. Friend the Member for Ashford (Mr. Speed) on 28 June 1988, namely: to elaborate the commitments in the WEU platform in order to make practical contributions to the common defence; to use the WEU as a forum for frank discussions of key European security issues; to develop the WEU as a forum for coordinating European approaches to out of area issues; to secure a satisfactory outcome to the enlargement negotiations with Spain and Portugal.

Spain

28. **Mr. David Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last met the Prime Minister of Spain; and what subjects were discussed.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary's last meeting with the Prime Minister of Spain was on 27 November 1987. They discussed EC matters and Gibraltar.

40. **Mr. Amos:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the current state of Anglo-Spanish relations.

Mrs. Chalker: Anglo-Spanish relations are excellent, as shown by the recent visit by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and the current state visit by Her Majesty The Queen.

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has any plans to visit Spain.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary is in Spain at the moment in attendance upon Her Majesty The Queen during her state visit.

France

30. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make an official visit to France.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend will visit Paris on 2 November when he will address the conference of the "Kangaroo Group" on the European single market and have talks with the French Foreign Minister, Monsieur Dumas.

Weapons Control

32. **Mr. Wallace:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress has been made during the summer adjournment on negotiations towards a treaty regarding chemical weapons.

60. **Mr. Evennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the general progress of the arms control negotiations in Geneva.

65. **Mr. Chapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement about progress in all arms negotiations or conferences currently under way.

72. **Mr. Curry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress is being made on the negotiation of a treaty to ensure the global elimination of all chemical weapons.

Mr. Waldegrave: The United States/Soviet nuclear and space talks in Geneva continue to make progress but their conclusion is unlikely this year. The United States and Soviet Union are negotiating verification protocols to the threshold test ban and peaceful nuclear explosions treaties with a view to early submission for ratification. We hope that a mandate for conventional stability talks covering the area from the Atlantic to the Urals can soon be agreed in Vienna. The mutual and balanced force reduction talks in Vienna remain stalled.

At the Geneva negotiations for a global chemical weapons convention discussion during the summer session (which finished on 20 September) continued on a series of technical issues, particularly verification.

The United Kingdom is again playing an active role in the first committee of the United Nations general assembly which convened in New York on 17 October.

Middle East

35. **Mr. Marlow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the situation in the middle east.

Mr. Waldegrave: We shall continue to encourage the parties to the Arab/Israel dispute to pursue the search for peace, and to agree arrangements for an international conference.

Narcotics Trade

38. **Mr. Couchman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what efforts Her Majesty's Government are making to negotiate asset seizure agreements with third countries to counter international trade in narcotics.

Mr. Eggar: We have signed agreements to trace, freeze and confiscate the proceeds of drug trafficking this year with the United States of America, Bahamas, Canada and Australia. Negotiations are well advanced with several other Governments and talks have opened with a further 40 countries.

United Arab Emirates

41. **Mr. Pawsey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the current state of United Kingdom relations with the United Arab Emirates.

Mr. Waldegrave: Our relations with the United Arab Emirates are long established and very good.

Zimbabwe

42. **Mr. McLoughlin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last met the Foreign Minister of Zimbabwe; and what subjects were discussed.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend last met the Zimbabwean Foreign Minister on 26 September 1988 in New York when he called on President Mugabe. They discussed my right hon. and learned Friend's recent visit to Africa, our bilateral relations, and recent developments in southern Africa.

Mozambique

43. **Mr. Jacques Arnold:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has any plans to visit Mozambique.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend visited Mozambique from 17 to 19 September. He had friendly and useful talks with President Chissano, the Mozambican Foreign Minister and other senior Ministers. The visit confirmed our assessment that the Mozambique Government are following pragmatic policies, both internally and in their relations with their neighbours.

Mexico

45. **Mr. Hardy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has any plans to visit Mexico.

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. and learned Friend has no present plans to visit Mexico.

Tanzania

46. **Mr. Baldry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has any plans to pay an official visit to Tanzania.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend visited Tanzania between 14 and 17 September. He has no plans for a further visit.

Cyprus

47. **Mr. Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussion he had with the President of Turkey on his recent visit on the presence of Turkish troops in the occupied area of northern Cyprus; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: This subject was raised in my right hon. and learned Friend's talks with the Turkish Foreign Minister during President Evren's state visit. He made clear our view that the withdrawal of Turkish troops would be an important element of any final settlement.

Kenya

48. **Mr. Nicholas Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last met the Foreign Minister of Kenya; and what subjects were discussed.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend last met Dr. Ouko on 11-12 September during his recent visit to east Africa. They discussed a range of regional, bilateral and other issues.

Prince Sihanouk

49. **Mr. Mullin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has any plans to meet Prince Sihanouk of Cambodia; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: Prince Sihanouk is paying a working visit to Britain on 25 and 26 October in the course of which my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State will discuss with him the current situation in Cambodia and the prospects for progress towards a negotiated settlement.

Eastern Europe

50. **Mr. Ward:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last had the opportunity to raise the issue of human rights in Eastern Europe with the Foreign Ministers of the countries concerned.

Mr. Waldegrave: We attach great importance to the observance of human rights commitments. We take every suitable opportunity of raising abuses of human rights, both in general terms and in relation to individual cases where appropriate, with the Governments concerned.

My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs last raised such issues in meetings with his counterparts in Eastern Europe as follows:

Romania:	November 1987 in London
Czechoslovakia:	June 1987 in London
Bulgaria:	September 1987 in London
GDR:	November 1986 in London
Poland:	December 1987 in London

In addition, he wrote to the Romanian Foreign Minister in September this year about the human rights implications of Romania's rural redevelopment programme ("systematisation").

Hungary's human rights record, though not faultless, is good by comparison with its neighbours. We have not had cause to raise human rights issues in recent ministerial contacts.

EC (Spanish Presidency)

51. **Mr. Dykes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he expects to hold talks in the near future with his Spanish counterpart and the Spanish Minister of EEC Affairs on the suggestions which the United Kingdom intends to put forward for the period of the Spanish presidency, beginning on 1 January 1989.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend saw the Spanish Foreign Minister yesterday and discussed a number of issues including future developments in the European Community. I am also in regular contact with my Spanish opposite number on these issues.

Test Ban Treaty

52. **Mr. Strang:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress has been made towards reaching agreement on a comprehensive test ban treaty; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: The negotiations on nuclear testing between the United States and Soviet Union appear to be making satisfactory progress towards their first goal: ratification of the 1974 threshold test ban treaty and the 1976 peaceful nuclear explosions treaty. The ultimate objective is the complete cessation of nuclear testing as part of an effective disarmament process. Our position on a comprehensive test ban was contained in the answer given on 27 June by my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Putney (Mr. Mellor): a comprehensive test ban remains a long-term goal; but we shall continue to rely for our security on a nuclear deterrent for the foreseeable future and that means a continuing requirement to conduct tests in order to ensure that our nuclear weapons remain effective and up to date.

Brazil

53. **Mr. Maples:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the current state of Anglo-Brazilian relations.

Mr. Eggar: The United Kingdom enjoys traditionally good relations with Brazil, which we are seeking to develop. We welcome her return to democracy. Brazil is by far our largest export market in Latin America. I am looking forward to visiting Brazil myself from 4-14 November. My right hon. Friend the Minister of State Department of Energy is in Brazil this week.

Pakistan

54. **Mr. McKelvey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next intends to visit Pakistan to discuss progress towards the restoration of democracy.

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. and learned Friend has no plans at present to visit Pakistan.

Soviet Union (Ministerial Meetings)

55. **Mr. Yeo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last met Foreign Minister Shevardnadze of the Soviet Union; and what subjects were discussed.

Mr. Waldegrave: My right hon. and learned Friend last met Mr. Shevardnadze in New York on 26 September. They discussed arms control questions; regional conflicts, including the role of the United Nations in resolving them; CSCE and human rights; and bilateral relations.

68. **Mr. Sims:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the current state of Anglo-Soviet relations.

Mr. Waldegrave: Anglo-Soviet relations are better than for many years, and we welcome this. We maintain an active dialogue with the Soviet leadership in order to secure progress in arms control; on the resolution of regional conflicts; greater respect for human rights; and increase in trade; and more contacts at all levels between our two peoples.

Uganda

56. **Mr. Devlin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last met the Foreign Minister of Uganda; and what subjects were discussed.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend last met Mr. Ssemogerere during his visit to Uganda between 13 and 14 September. They discussed a range of bilateral, regional and other issues.

Gibraltar

58. **Mr. Colvin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with Spanish authorities and the new Chief Minister of Gibraltar on the implementation of the Gibraltar airport agreement with Spain.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend has made clear, both to the Spanish authorities and to the Chief Minister, that we believe that the agreement is very much in Gibraltar's interest; that we hope that the Gibraltar House of Assembly will take steps to implement it; but that we will not attempt to impose it on the people of Gibraltar.

Soviet Union

59. **Mr. Gow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next intends to visit the Soviet Union.

Mr. Waldegrave: Having visited the Soviet Union in February this year my right hon. and learned Friend has no immediate plans for a return visit. I will pay a visit to the Soviet Union as soon as dates can be agreed.

Common European Policies

62. **Mr. Knox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next proposes to have discussions with his European Community partners concerning the development of common European foreign policies.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend attended an informal weekend meeting in Yannina on 15-16 October. All his colleagues from the EC were present. They had an excellent discussion of political co-operation matters, particularly the prospects for further developments in East-West relations with Europe.

Arms Reductions

63. **Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement about the current state of conventional arms reduction negotiations.

Mr. Waldegrave: Informal discussions are taking place in Vienna between representatives of NATO and the Warsaw pact aimed at agreeing a mandate for negotiations on conventional stability covering the Atlantic/Urals area. Few outstanding difficulties remain to be settled but the talks cannot begin before the conclusions of the Vienna CSCE review meeting. This in turn is dependent on achieving a satisfactory outcome in respect of human rights. Meanwhile the MBFR negotiations, now in their 16th year, continue in Vienna but with little prospect of substantive agreement.

Central Europe

64. **Mr. Boswell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will make a statement on the latest security developments in central Europe.

Mr. Waldegrave: Implementation of the INF treaty has now begun involving inter alia the withdrawal of Soviet and US LRINF/SRINF missiles from central Europe. At the same time Warsaw pact and Alliance negotiators are meeting in Vienna with a view to agreeing a mandate for new negotiations on conventional stability. While these will cover the whole Atlantic/Urals area they are likely to focus on areas where the concentration of forces is greatest, notably in central Europe. It is hoped the conventional negotiations will begin within the next few months, in parallel with further negotiations on confidence building. Meanwhile the MBFR talks, which are directly concerned with the reduction of armed forces in central Europe, continue in Vienna but with little prospect of early agreement.

Gibraltar Airport

67. **Mr. Stanbrook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the current state of Anglo-Spanish relations in the light of the continuing restrictions imposed by Spain on British military aircraft wishing to use Gibraltar airport.

Mrs. Chalker: I refer my hon. Friend to my answer to the hon. Member for Hexham (Mr. Amos). We continue

to press the Spanish authorities to lift the restrictions imposed on British military aircraft using Gibraltar airport, but regrettably they have not yet done so.

Visa Fees

70. **Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received about introducing last June a full visa fee for children entering the United Kingdom.

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. and learned Friend has received no representations on this point.

Western European Union

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what consultation has occurred between the members of the Western European Union and those members of the European Economic Community, who are not members of the Union, concerning the conclusion of paragraph 2 of the Union's adopted document, "Platform of European Security Interests", which states that Union members are convinced that the construction of an integrated Europe will remain incomplete as long as it does not include security and defence.

Mr. Waldegrave: No formal consultations have taken place.

Economic and Monetary Union

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list those proposals placed before the Council of Ministers of the European Economic Communities which implement the objective of the progressive realisation of economic and monetary union, as adopted at the Hanover European Council.

Mrs. Chalker: No proposals on economic and monetary union have been considered by the Council of Ministers since June. The committee tasked by the Hanover European Council with studying and proposing concrete stages leading towards economic and monetary union is due to complete its proceedings in good time to enable the Ministers for Economic Affairs and for Finance to examine its results before the European Council in Madrid in June 1989.

Falkland Islands

Mr. Chris Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on economic progress in the Falkland Islands.

Mrs. Chalker: The most recent estimates indicate that the GNP of the Falkland Islands increased threefold from 1986-87 to 1987-88, from approximately £9·9m to approximately £30m. I expect this increase to be sustained in 1988-89. The islands' welcome prosperity has enabled the Falkland Island Government to finance an increasing number of its own development projects in fisheries, local infrastructure and farming.

Council of Ministers

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list those decisions of the European Economic Community Council of Ministers which have been taken by qualified majority vote in accordance with the provisions of the Single European Act since it came into force, indicating those in which the representatives of the United Kingdom *(a)* abstained and *(b)* voted in the minority when a qualified majority was obtained.

Mrs. Chalker: The information on Council decisions is not available in the form requested. About 100 decisions have been taken by majority vote since the Single European Act came into force.

Political Prisoners (South Africa)

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate his Department has of the number of political prisoners held in South African gaols.

Mrs. Chalker: I regret that we have no reliable estimate of the number of political prisoners in South African jails.

Council of Ministers (Standing Orders)

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will place in the Library the standing orders or their equivalent of the Council of Ministers of the European Economic Community.

Mrs. Chalker: I have made arrangements for a copy of the rules of procedure of the Council, published by the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

EC Treaties

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he has taken to publicise the availability of the Treaty Series No. 47 (1988) treaties establishing the European Communities (CM. 455).

Mrs. Chalker: I am grateful for this opportunity to draw the attention of the House to the consolidated version of the three basic Community treaties as amended by the Single European Act, recently published by HMSO. Copies of the Command Paper have been deposited in the Library of the House.

Publication of the Cm. 455 was announced in HMSO's Daily List and on Prestel in the normal way. It will be listed in HMSO's September monthly catalogue and will be one of the featured titles in the July-September "New Books from HMSO" leaflet.

In addition, HMSO is planning to mail fuller details, with information on other titles of European interest, to some 5,000 bookshops, businesses and libraries shortly.

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list any statutes, treaties or other agreements which define the scope and manner of the internal and external relationships and obligations of member states of the European Economic Communities, other than those contained in Treaty Series 47 of 1988 (Cm. 455).

Mrs. Chalker: There are none.

European Union

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will list in the *Official Report* those publications or speeches by Ministers which express the policy of Her Majesty's Government towards the interpretation of the concept of European union;

(2) what definition of the term European union is currently accepted by Her Majesty's Government; and what is Her Majesty's Government's policy towards European union.

Mrs. Chalker: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the speech of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State on 23 April 1986 at column 325.

Kampuchea

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to initiate the convening of an international conference to promote a settlement for the Kampuchean people, containing international guarantees against the return to power of Pol Pot and his immediate followers.

Mr. Eggar: We fully support the efforts of Prince Sihanouk and the Association of South East Asian Nations to bring about a negotiated political settlement in Cambodia. Naturally we are ready to help when and where we can. This might include eventual participation in an international conference if, in due course, that seemed to be the best way to proceed.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to promote the exclusion of the Pol Pot faction of the Khmer Rouge from the United Nations.

Mr. Eggar: We see no reason to change our policy on the question of Cambodia's seat at the United Nations, which implies neither recognition of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (we recognise only states, not Governments) nor support for the abhorrent Pol Pot.

Arms Sales

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to propose the establishment of a United Nations-backed comprehensive register of international arms sales.

Mr. Eggar: In 1982 we proposed that all states should report to the United Nations the value of their military production and of their imports and exports of arms. We followed up these proposals at the recent Third United Nations special session on disarmament with a call for greater openness on all types of international transfer of conventional weapons; we raised the possibility at that time of establishing a United Nations register of arms transfers on a universal and non-discriminatory basis. We believe that such a register could provide a means of monitoring measures taken to restrain the accumulation of conventional arms.

Anglo-United States Relations

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last had consultations with the United States Secretary of State about Anglo-United States relations.

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. and learnd Friend met Mr. Shultz for bilateral talks in the margins of the United Nations general assembly on 29 September.

North Atlantic Assembly (Parliamentary Delegation)

Mr. Page: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what changes have been made in the composition of the United Kingdom parliamentary delegation to the North Atlantic Assembly.

Mr. Waldegrave: Mr. James Lamond, MP, Mr. Frank Cook and Lord Lucas of Chilworth have replaced Mr. David Clark, MP, Mr. Kevin McNamara, MP and Lord Colnbrook as members of the delegation.

Black Rhino Horn

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if any representation have been made to the Government of North Yemen regarding the use of black rhino horn for dagger handles; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: No representation has been made to the Government of North Yemen regarding the use of black rhino horn for dagger handles.

Vicuna

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has about current vicuna stocks in Hong Kong; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: Since the enactment in 1976 of the Animals and Plants (Protection of Endangered Species) Ordinance, which covers vicuna, the Hong Kong Authorities have not issued any licence for the import, export or possession of vicuna or any of its products. They therefore have no record of such stocks in the territory.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make funds available to the Government of Peru to assist them in the project to expand vicuna population; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: We are aware that the Peruvian Government are interested in expanding the vicuna population, but not aware of any request for financial assistance. We have recently conducted a review of our bilateral aid programme for Peru, and the question of vicuna was not raised by the Peruvian authorities.

Prime Minister (Tour Costs)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what additional costs were incurred by each of Her Majesty's embassies and high commissions arising from the tour by the Prime Minister to various countries in August 1988.

Mr. Eggar: All separately identifiable expenditure incurred by Her Majesty's embassies and high commissions is being reclaimed from the Office of the Minister of the Civil Service. Any residual costs not separately identified will have been absorbed within posts' existing local budgets.

Iran-Iraq (United Nations Force)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what contribution towards the costs of the United Nations observation force supervising peace between Iran and Iraq has *(a)* been sought and *(b)* been paid.

Mr. Eggar: According to the latest bulletin from the United Nations the total requests for contributions towards the costs of the United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group amount to $35·2 million. Of this total $16·2 million have so far been paid. The assessed contribution of the United Kingdom for the first three months of the operation of the force (9 August to 8 November 1988) is $2,085,184. This has been paid.

TRANSPORT

East-London River Crossing

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will publish the terms of reference given to the consultants contracted to report on the alternative design of the proposed east London river crossing, showing separately those related to *(a)* navigational requirements, *(b)* maximum height of structure and *(c)* any limit on additional cost over that estimated for the existing design; and if he will request a report on the design and cost implications of incorporating facilities for a single or double line for (i) a conventional railway and (ii) an extension of the docklands light railway.

Mr. Channon: The terms of reference of the review are as follows:

(a) to ascertain whether there is, within the broad order of costs of the Department's proposed bridge, an alternative design which would be practicable, acceptable, satisfy the objectives of the east London river crossing scheme and keep options open for the future use of London City airport;

(b) to consult interested parties including:

(i) the Port of London Authority

(ii) the Civil Aviation Authority

(iii) the Royal Fine Arts Commission

Consideration of additional rail links across the Thames is a matter for the public transport operators concerned.

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what are the estimated costs of the newly approved east London river crossing and associated roads, broken down under the headings *(a)* roadworks north of the Thames, *(b)* the river crossing by one or more possible means or designs of bridge, *(c)* roadworks south of the Thames, *(d)* environmental conservation elements in *(a)* to *(c)* above, globally or individually and *(e)* the Oxleas wood tunnel and other conservation works recommended by his inspector; what is the approximate percentage cost of *(e)* compared to the estimated total; and what are his reasons for not authorising expenditure under this heading.

Mr. Channon: The estimated costs of the east London river crossing, as presented at the public inquiry, excluding land acquisition and supervision costs, at average 1984 prices are as follows:

(a) Works north of the Thames: £21 million.

(b) The Thames bridge proposed by the Department: £56 million.

(c) Works south of the Thames: £66 million.

(d) It is not possible to identify separately all the environmental conservation elements of a scheme as they are not all additional items but integral parts of the scheme design. Identifiable environmental conservation measures in *(a)* to *(c)* above, including new footpaths, footbridges and landscaping, amount to some £19 million. About £1 million will be spent north of the river and the remainder south of the Thames.

(e) The inspector estimated that his recommendation of a tunnel under part of Oxleas wood and associated works would cost about an additional £10 million. Additional environmental measures and cycleways recommended by the inspector will cost some £750,000. These recommendations approximate to 8 per cent. of the total estimated works costs. The inspector's tunnel recommendation would also have required the deletion of the south facing slip roads at the Shooters hill interchange. Having carefully weighed the advantages of the inspector's proposals against the disadvantages, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment and I were not satisfied that the additional cost of the tunnel and the loss of benefits from deletion of the slip roads were justified.

Driving Tests (Cancellation)

Mrs. Wise: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will reduce the amount of notice which must be given by a learner driver to cancel a driving test without loss of fee from the current time of 10 days.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: No. The 10 days' notice was introduced on 27 June this year to cut the number of wasted test periods, shorten waiting times for all candidates and keep down fees.

Mrs. Wise: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will ensure that at least three days notice of cancellation of a driving test is given by his Department, except if the reason is exceptionally bad weather;

(2) if he will ensure that driving tests are not cancelled by his Department without notice.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Every effort is made to give as much notice of cancellations as possible. Circumstances such as sudden illness of an examiner may sometimes make a last-minute cancellation unavoidable. In such cases, priority is given to re-booking the candidates involved; and claims for reasonable out-of-pocket expenses are considered sympathetically.

General Secretary, ASLEF

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he last met the general secretary of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen; and what was discussed.

Mr. Portillo: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State met the general secretary of ASLEF on 12 July, when he received a deputation from the railway unions about a report which they commissioned on quality of service on British Rail.

Channel Tunnel

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proposals he has received concerning private funding of all or part of any new rail link between London and the Channel tunnel.

Mr. Portillo: British Rail will be inviting proposals from the private sector shortly.

Passenger Transport Companies

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will set out the programme for the disposal of passenger transport companies formed from the metropolitan county PTEs providing, where known, the proposed timetable for disposal together with any proposals for their subdivision into smaller parts.

Mr. Portillo: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has no powers to dispose of passenger transport companies formed from the old metropolitan county PTEs bus undertakings. My right hon. Friend recently announced his approval to the sale of Yorkshire Rider Ltd. to its management and employees.

Municipal Operators (Disposal)

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will set out the programme for the disposal of English and Welsh municipal operators, providing, where known, the proposed timetable for disposal.

Mr. Portillo: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has encouraged local authorities and PTAs to consider disposing of their municipal bus companies but no powers presently exist to require this.

Fares (London)

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will state what instructions or other basis he hs given to the board of London Regional Transport which permits or requires it to raise fares on London bus and underground services to levels twice that of inflation.

Mr. Portillo: The level and structure of fares is a matter for the board of London Regional Transport.

London Rail Services (Congestion)

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he received the joint report from British Rail and London Regional Transport concerning congestion on rail services in central London; when this will be made public; and if he will make a statement concerning his responses.

Mr. Portillo: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State hopes to receive the report of the central London rail study and announce its main findings towards the end of the year.

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if, consequent to the receipt of the report by London Regional Transport and the British Railways Board on rail congestion in London, he will estimate the cost of extending the approved rail link from Heathrow to Paddington over two miles of new standard gauge tube tunnel to King's Cross, and investigate the implications of using such a line, and that proposed from Mottingham to King's Cross, as part of the London urban rail network.

Mr. Portillo: The central London rail study is taking account of the proposed new Heathrow-Paddington rail link. It is for British Rail and BAA to consider whether they wish to bring forward proposals to extend the link beyond Paddington.

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if, consequent to the receipt of the report by London Regional Transport and the British Railways Board on central London rail congestion, he will use his statutory power to require London Regional Transport and its subsidiaries to restore train frequency on London underground to that of pre-war or subsequent levels, where currently they do not reach such levels of service.

Mr. Portillo: The central London rail study is considering the scope for improving the utilisation of the existing network. We shall consider carefully any such proposals.

Dial-a-ride, London

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what are his latest plans for the future of the London dial-a-ride service.

Mr. Portillo: There have been increases of 50 per cent. in funding and ridership since LRT assumed responsibility for funding the scheme. I am encouraging LRT in its objective of securing improvements in the utilisation of vehicles and drivers so that more people can benefit.

Train Punctuality and Complaints

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will now seek to place a statutory duty on British Rail to provide information on train punctuality and complaints to the Central Transport Consultative Committee and to the local committees.

Mr. Portillo: I understand that BR already provides the CTCC and TUCCs with detailed monitoring information on performance against quality standards including punctuality. Perhaps my hon. Friend could write if there is a particular problem he has in mind.

British Rail (Investment)

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will give the levels of investment for British Rail for 1985-86, 1986-87 and 1987-88 together with the anticipated level of investment for 1988-89, 1989-90 and 1990-91, and in addition the figures to be broken down by region.

Mr. Portillo: The levels of British Rail investment for the years in question are as follows:

	£ million	
	Cash	*1988-89 prices*
1985-86	412	462
1986-87	411	447
1987-88	543	567

BR's 1988 corporate plan shows an increasing investment programme, with total investment expenditure of around £2bn over the three years to 1990-91 (at current prices).

BR does not break the figures down on a regional basis.

Manchester Airport Rail Link

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent developments there have been in regard to the Manchester airport rail link; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: I have recently received a statement from the PTA in support of its case that this link is financially viable. I am studying that, and also British Rail's views on the need for financial support from the PTE. I have therefore asked greater Manchester PTA to set out for me the way in which it sees the link being financed, including the scope for private sector funding.

PSV and Bus Operator Licences

Dr. Marek: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many cheques for applications for *(a)* PSV operator, and *(b)* bus operator licences bounced in the last 12 months for which figures are available.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Figures on bouncing cheques are not readily available.

Driving Tests

Dr. Marek: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many driving tests were carried out in the last 12 months for which figures are available; and how many cheques that were issued in payment for the driving test fee bounced.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: A total of 2,096,181 driving tests of all types were conducted in the financial year 1987-88. Information about numbers of bouncing cheques is not readily available.

Driving Licences (Recall)

Dr. Marek: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport in what circumstances a driving licence can be recalled once it is issued.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Powers exist to revoke an ordinary driving licence for medical reasons or if it was granted in error or contained an error or omission. In addition, the statutorily independent traffic commissioners may suspend or revovke a vocational driving licence if they are not satisfied that the holder meets the required standards of fitness, or if conduct means that the holder is not a proper person to have the vocational licence in question.

MFV Inspire (Sinking)

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has about the sinking of the MFV Inspire on 5 September; what plans he has for an inquiry; what other vessels were known to be in the vicinity at the time; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: One of my Department's marine surveyors is investigating the circumstances surrounding this tragic accident. His investigation will include consideration of whether any other vessels were in the vicinity of the Inspire at the time that she was lost.

Collisions and Sinkings

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what incidents have been reported to him in the last 12 months involving collisions, sinkings or other interactions between vessels in the Irish sea, firth of Clyde and Atlantic coast of Scotland.

Mr. Portillo: The following incidents have been reported to my Department between 1 October 1987 and 30 September 1988.

General Lapas (Phillipines) (Merchant Vessel (MV)) Osco Spirit (Liberia) (MV)—In collision in Belfast Lough on 29.10.87

Tipperary (Ireland) (MV) Sumburgh Head (Bermuda) (MV)—In collision off Dublin on 18.2.88

Drum (Yacht) Otis (Submarine)—Yacht contacted unlit submarine 3½ miles south of Mull of Kintyre 27.7.88

Ardlough (Antigua) (MV)—Flooded and sank in the Irish Sea on 26.9.88

Ocean Gain (UK fishing vessel) (FV)—Founded off Holyhead on 1.3.88

Mhairi (UK FV)—Capsized and sank off the West Coast of Iona on 17.1.88

Alert II (UK FV)—Founded off the Isle of Muck on or about 3.5.88

St Patrick (French FV)—Struck North Shoals and sank on 14.2.88

Emma Jane (UK FV)—Flooded and sank 3 miles North East of Anglesey on 18.7.88

Kaya (UK FV)—Collided in Loch Broom on 22.7.88

Inspire (UK FV)—Capsized and sank off Cemaes Head, Cardigan, on 5.9.88

Village Belle III (UK FV)—Struck a rock whilst departing from Kirkcudbright on 6.9.88 and subsequently sank.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received about recent loss of vessels, incidents and collisions in the Irish sea; what action he has taken as a result; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo My Department has received two representations. These are being dealt with by way of correspondence with my officials.

Roads and Utilities (Report)

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what further action he has taken, or expects to take, considering on the Horne report on roads and utilities.

Mr. Peter Bottomley Proposals for legislation, developed in consultation with the street works advisory committee, are advancing.

Progress is being made jointly with the utilities and highway authorities in producing the technical systems and documents required to support the new arrangements, including specifications for reinstatements, a code of practice for diversionary works, training and certification of workmen and a computerised street works register.

Legislation will be introduced when a suitable opportunity can be found.

Foreign Reflaggings

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many foreign reflaggings to the ensign have occurred since the introduction of the Armilla patrol; and which countries' ships have been involved;

(2) if any contributions towards the cost of the Armilla patrol have been sought from countries or companies whose ships have reflagged to the ensign; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: It is not possible to provide this information going back to September 1980, except at a wholly disproportionate cost.

No contributions have been sought towards the cost of the Armilla patrol and there is no intention of seeking any from countries or companies whose ships have reflagged.

Buses (London)

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will state the timetable he now envisages for the privatisation of London Buses Ltd. and deregulation of buses in London, respectively; and what steps he is taking to ensure the continuity of major existing bus routes prior to and after the implementation of each of these measures.

Mr. Portillo: We intend to deregulate bus services in London in the early 1990s. No timetable has been set. Detailed proposals will be brought forward in due course.

Unlicensed Vehicles

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many reports of unlicensed vehicles have been received by the London enforcement office in the period from 1 January 1988 to date.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: 252,752.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 20 October 1988

ENVIRONMENT

Private Housing (Basic Amenities)

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list those local authorities in whose area more than 5 per cent. of the private housing stock are without basic amenities.

Mr. Trippier: The information requested is not available.

Unfit Dwellings

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list those local authorities by areas in which 4·5 per cent. or more of the dwellings are considered unfit.

Mr. Trippier: The following 56 English housing authorities have reported, in their 1988 housing investment programme returns, that 4·5 per cent. or more of the total stock in their areas at 1 April 1988 was unfit:—

Allerdale, Barnsley, Birmingham, Blackburn, Bolsover, Bolton, Bradford, Brent, Brighton, Bristol, Bury, Camden, Caradon, Cleethorpes, Ealing, Gedling, Great Grimsby, Hackney, Hammersmith and Fulham, Haringey, Hastings, Hyndburn, Islington, Kensington and Chelsea, Kingston upon Hull, Lambeth, Leeds, Leicester, Malvern Hills, Manchester, Mendip, Mid Suffolk, Newcastle upon Tyne, Newham, Oswestry, Penwith, Preston, Reading, Richmond upon Thames, Rochdale, Rossendale, Rugby, Salford, Sandwell, South Herefordshire, Southwark, St. Helens, Stoke on Trent, Sutton, Tameside, Thurrock, Tower Hamlets, Walsall, Waltham Forest, Wandsworth, Wolverhampton.

Five authorities have not yet made a return and a further 21 have not provided estimates of the numbers of unfit dwellings covering their private sector stock.

Public Sector Housing

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he will publish the report his Department has now received from Glasgow university's centre for housing research on public sector housing; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: The report will be published by HMSO in the new year.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the cost to his Department of the report he has now received from Glasgow university's centre for housing research; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: The contract is estimated to cost about £180,000 excluding VAT.

Rural Development Commission

Mr. Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what progress has been made by the Rural Development Commission in encouraging and diversifying rural enterprise.

Mr. Ridley: The Rural Development Commission came into being on 1 April 1988 through the merger of the Development Commission with its main agency, the Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas. The annual report of the two constituents bodies for 1987-88 has been published today, and I have placed copies in the Library of the House.

I am grateful to the Lord Vinson and his fellow commissioners for the efforts which they have devoted to fostering the economic and social development of rural areas and which have led to the achievements described in the report. There is now a general recognition of the important part that small-scale industry must play in maintaining economic activity in rural areas and there has been a considerable increase in prosperity in many rural development areas. I welcome the commission's intention to review its objectives in the light of changed conditions in order to maximise the stimulus it provides for rural enterprise. I shall also take full account of advice given by the commission about other problems of rural areas and possible approaches to resolving them.

PRIME MINISTER

Hillmorton, Rugby

Q131. **Mr. Pawsey:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has any plans to make an official visit to Hillmorton, Rugby.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

Neutron and Proton Therapy

Q156. **Dr. Bray:** To ask the Prime Minister what advice she has received from the Medical Research Council, the Imperial Cancer Research Fund, the Cancer Research Campaign, the United Kingdom Co-ordinating Committee for Cancer Research, the Advisory Council on Science and Technology or any other body regarding the £6 million grant to a London hospital for a cyclotron for neutron and proton therapy; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: The Minister for Health announced on 7 June the award of a grant to the Cyclotron Trust as a contribution towards the charitable funds it is raising to provide a cyclotron at St. Thomas's hospital to improve the care of cancer patients. I have received a letter from Sir Raymond Hoffenberg, chairman of the United Kingdom Co-ordinating Committee on Cancer Research, and a reply has been sent today.

Engagements

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 20 October.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 20 October.

Mr. Butler: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 20 October.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 20 October.

Mr. Skinner: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 20 October.

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 20 October.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 20 October.

Mr. Stern: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 20 October.

The Prime Minister: This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House I shall be having further meetings later today, including one with the Premier of the state of South Australia.

Dental and Optical Examinations

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Prime Minister if she will take steps to seek to exempt Wales from the provisions of the Health and Medicines Bill concerning charges for dental and optical examinations; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: On enactment the provisions of the Health and Medicines Bill will apply throughout Great Britain. The Government see no reason to vary that.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Barlow Clowes (Report)

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he now expects to be able to publish the report of the internal inquiry into the role of his Department in the collapse of the Barlow Clowes companies.

Mr. Maude: I refer my hon. Friend to the statement made today by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Trade Descriptions Act 1972

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when the terms of the successor regime to replace the Trade Descriptions Act 1972, will be laid before Parliament.

Mr. Forth: I laid before Parliament yesterday the Trade Descriptions (Place of Production) (Marking) Order 1988. This will require goods to be marked with or accompanied by a statement of the place of production, if the goods are presented in a way which is likely to give consumers the impression that the goods were manufactured or produced in a different place. Subject to the parliamentary procedures, the order will come into force on 31 December, at the same time as the repeal of the 1972 Act. The order bringing into force the repeal of the 1972 Act was laid before Parliament in draft on 29 July.

Regional Development Grant

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he will make a statement about payment of regional development grant.

Mr. Newton: My right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Scotland and for Wales and I have decided that the current two-month waiting period for interim payments under the revised regional development grant scheme will be lifted tomorrow. Payments which are at present held up by the waiting periond will be made as soon as practicable. This will be of immediate benefit to companies operating in the development areas, particularly in the light of the increased case processing times which have resulted from the surge in applications before the scheme closed last March.

Small Companies

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he is yet in a position to announce the outcome of the Government's review of audit requirements for small companies.

Mr. Maude: On 22 May 1986, my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Folkestone and Hythe (Mr. Howard) announced that the Government had decided to retain the statutory requirement for small companies to have their accounts audited. Since that announcement, the Government have considered again the arguments for and against the compulsory audit of small companies. We still believe that the involvement of an independent professional accountant such as the audit requirement entails is likely to improve the reliability of accounts and provide a continuing protection against fraud. We have looked at possible alternative ways of achieving these objectives without requiring a full-scale audit, but have concluded that none of the alternatives offers sufficient advantages over the audit. We do not, therefore, propose to remove the statutory requirement.

EMPLOYMENT

Coal Industry

Mr. Skinner: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what steps he is taking together with British Coal to reduce the 130 per cent. increase in underground fires between 1979 and 1986; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: The number of underground fires in mines owned by the British Coal Corporation increased from 68 in 1979 to 77 in 1985-86, an increase of about 13 per cent. The increasingly intensive use of plant during this period meant that the reduction in the number of mines had no significant effect on the potential of fire.

Reducing the number of underground fires is a primary objective of the Health and Safety Executive which is actively monitoring measures taken by British Coal. These include the application of more sophisticated inspection and detection techniques, the raising of standards in the specification, design, installation and maintenance of machinery and equipment and the continuing development of fire-resistant materials.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he will consider decentralising the statistical function in his Department dealing with Scottish jobless totals to a separate unit located in Scotland.

Mr. Lee: The unemployment statistics are a by-product of the Great Britain wide system for paying unemployment-related benefits. Dissemination and briefing on the figures for Scotland are already the responsibility of a unit located in the ofice of the Training Agency's director for Scotland.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

China (Overseas Aid)

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has any plans to make an official visit to China to discuss overseas aid; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chris Patten: I visited China from 17-23 September during which time I signed on behalf of the United Kingdom a new memorandum of understanding providing aid and trade provision support for development projects up to a total value of £300 million. Soft loans and mixed credits will be available for projects to be agreed by the British and Chinese Governments. I also visited a number of British aid activities—particularly English language teaching and science and technology consultancies—which are providing excellent value for money and are strengthening Britain's growing political and commercial links with China.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

County Court Judges (Northern Ireland)

Mr. Stanbrook: To ask the Attorney-General what remuneration is paid to county court judges in Northern Ireland.

The Solicitor-General: The salary of a county court judge in Northern Ireland is currently £45,800. County court judges are presently in group 6 of the judicial salary structure. The Government have decided that they should be paid at the higher group 5 rate for as long as they are required to carry out significantly different work from their counterparts elsewhere in the United Kingdom, as is currently the case. They will therefore be paid £50,180 with effect from 1 April 1988, increasing to £50,900 with effect from October, in line with the Government's implementation of the recommendations on judicial salaries in the 1988 report of the Top Salaries Review Body.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Right of Silence

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he intends to propose amendments of the law concerning the right of silence in England and Wales.

Mr. Hurd: I told the House on 18 May at columns *465-66* that I saw a strong case for changing the law in relation to the inferences which may be drawn from a failure to answer questions put to a suspect by the police. I considered that more careful work needed to be done before I could bring forward with confidence a specific proposal for legislation, and I set up a working group (comprising officials, members of the legal profession and a senior police officer) to carry out that further work and submit an early report with a view to legislation.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has similarly reached the conclusion that the law of the province needs to be changed. He has laid before the House a draft Order in Council containing provisions to this effect.

I will seek the earliest opportunity after receiving the working group's report to bring forward legislation on this subject for England and Wales. Although the timing of change will inevitably be different in the two jurisdictions, the Government see a clear need for substantial changes to be made in both if the law is to be effectively enforced.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Lincolnshire-Australia Links (Exhibition)

Mr. Quentin Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has considered an application for an exhibition relating to Lincolnshire links with Australia to be held in the Upper Waiting Hall, in the week beginning 31 October.

Mr Eggar: I understand that, under procedures agreed by the Services Committee, arrangements have been made with the authorities of the House for the exhibition to be held in the Upper Waiting Hall from 31 October to 4 November.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Sean Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what are the latest available figures for his Department in the London pay area of the number of vacancies by grade and the proportion this is of the grade complement in London.

Mr. Eggar: In the diplomatic wing, there are currently 145·5 vacancies in all grades amounting to 2·6 per cent. of total complement. The majority are in clerical and technical support grades though the number in any grade fluctuates from month to month with changes in operational requirements and the recruitment cycle.

In the aid wing, there are 58 vacancies in all grades amounting to 10·9 per cent. of total complement. The majority are in clerical, secretarial and other support grades.

Mr. Sean Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will provide the latest available figures for his Department for *(a)* numbers of staff in receipt of local pay additions, by grade, *(b)* location of those offices awarding local pay additions and *(c)* annual cost.

Mr. Eggar: In the diplomatic wing of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, local pay addition is being paid to a total of 927 members of staff, in the following grades:

	Number
Administrative Assistants	82
Administrative Officers	261
Diplomatic Service Grade 10 Officers	272
Secretarial Staff	307
Teleprinter Operators	5

All the staff work in FCO buildings in central London, and at Croydon. The annual cost is £462,100.

In the aid wing, local pay addition is being paid to a total of 189 members of staff, in the following grades:

	Number
Administrative Officers	104
Typing Managers	3
Secretarial Staff	82

All the staff are working at ODA headquarters at Eland house, London, SW1. The annual cost is £120,400.

Palestine

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a further statement on the situation in Palestine.

Mr. Waldegrave: The continuing violence in the occupied territories underlines the urgent need for a just and durable solution to the Arab-Israel dispute. This would be best achieved by the holding of an international conference, as the framework for negotiations between the parties concerned.

Anglo-Soviet Relations

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is his latest assessment of the effect upon Anglo-Soviet relations of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics' policies of glasnost and perestroika; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: Bilateral relations have greatly improved since Mr. Gorbachev assumed power in the Soviet Union. A more pragmatic Soviet approach to contentious issues such as Afghanistan and human rights, and greater Soviet willingness to facilitate exchanges of people and ideas, have contributed to this improvement. We have combined readiness to make use of these new opportunities with a realistic view of what has not changed, including Soviet military capabilities and the need for secure defence. This consistent approach has earned respect and brought results.

WALES

Welsh Development Agency (Asset Sales)

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list in the *Official Report* the annual amount of cash raised by the Welsh Development Agency from the sale of assets for each of the years 1980 to 1988; if he will list for each of those years the details of the assets sold, including buildings and support services; if he will indicate the current target for such sales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the annual accounts of the Welsh Development Agency for the years up to and including 1987-88. The target for property and investment disposals for the current financial year is just over £15 million. Details of the assets sold to date could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Pharmacy Technicians

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many pharmacy technicians are employed in each of the health authorities in Wales.

Mr. Grist: The information which relates to whole-time equivalents as at 30 September 1988 is given in the following table:

District health authority	*Pharmacy technicians*
Clwyd	24·4
East Dyfed	5·8
Gwent	38·1
Gwynedd	10·0
Mid Glamorgan	21·8
Pembrokeshire	1·0
Powys	2·0
South Glamorgan	34·2
West Glamorgan	21·9

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) what steps he will take to enhance the status of pharmacy technicians with the National Health Service; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he proposes to improve the salaries of pharmacy technicians; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: The salaries of pharmacy technicians are negotiated within committee "C" of the professional and technical staffs "B" Whitley council. The staff side has rejected an offer of a 5·5 per cent. increase in pay with effect from 1 April 1988, but further discussions are being arranged for later this month.

In recognition of the difficulties which are being experienced in some parts of the country in the recruitment of staff for hospital pharmacies, the management side of the Whitley council is undertaking a review of the duties and grading structure of pharmacy technicians.

Blood Supplies

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) if he will make a statement concerning the supply of blood to north Wales hospitals during the recent industrial dispute involving donor staff; and if he will list the numbers of staff employed in the blood donor service as it affects north Wales;

(2) what is the requirement of individual blood units for *(a)* Clwyd and *(b)* Gwynedd per week for the efficient running of the donor centres; and if he will list the numbers of individual donors for each of the months of 1988.

Mr. Grist: The collection of blood from donors and the supply of blood products to hospitals in Clwyd and Gwynedd is undertaken by the Mersey regional blood transfusion service. The information requested is not held by the Welsh Office although the Department maintains contact with the north Wales health authorities on the adequacy of blood supplies.

ROSPA (Wales)

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will increase his grant aid to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (Wales); how much he has given annually in real terms since 1979; what are his plans for funding levels for the years 1989-90, 1990-91 and 1991-92; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: In order to secure best value for money, the amount of grant in aid to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents up to 1992 is being reviewed and negotiations are still in progress. The annual grant paid since 1979 in real terms is as follows:

	£
1979-80	68,892
1980-81	52,099
1981-82	46,815
1982-83	51,584
1983-84	54,742
1984-85	52,424
1985-86	49,469
1986-87	47,851
1987-88	45,558

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many representations he has received concerning the funding of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (Wales); and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: My right hon. Friend and I have received 15 representations from 12 different sources.

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will meet the Road Accident Prevention Federation for North and South Wales to discuss grant aid to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (Wales) up to 1991-92; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The amount of grant in aid given is a matter for discussion between the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents and the Welsh Office. The Road Accident Prevention Federation for North and South Wales has conveyed its views in writing to my right hon. Friend and these will be taken into account.

Road Accident Statistics

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many fatal road accidents in Wales there were in each of the years 1979-88; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The number of fatal road accidents is as follows:

Year	*Number*
1979	295
1980	252
1981	243
1982	260
1983	228
1984	227
1985	224
1986	214
1987	196
1988 to June	[1]93

[1] provisional.

The downward trend is most encouraging.

Carers

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list those health authorities and social service departments that make provision for carers in Wales; what initiatives he will take to ensure that the needs of carers in the community are recognised; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: It is necessary for all health and social services authorities to take into account the needs of carers in providing suitable care for their patients and clients. We have made this clear in our published strategies and initiatives for those with mental handicaps, the elderly and our proposals in respect of the development of mental illness services. Income support for carers is available in certain circumstances under arrangements which are the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services.

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what estimate he has on the number of people who would enter long-term hospitals or institutional care if carers were not available; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: Information is not available on the form requested. There can be no doubt, however, that without the care and support which families and friends often provide, many more people would require additional support from caring agencies. We would not accept, however, that this would necessarily lead to admission to long-term hospital or institutional care. Our policies and programmes are designed to ensure that care is provided in people's own homes and communities rather than in institutions, wherever possible.

Clwyd Community Health Council

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will meet the Clwyd South community health council to discuss the implications of charging for dental and optical examinations in Clwyd; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: I do not believe that a meeting with Clwyd CHC on this matter would serve any useful purpose, since it has been debated so thoroughly both inside and outside Parliament.

Dental and Optical Examinations (Pensioners)

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is his estimate of the number of pensioners in *(a)* Clwyd, *(b)* Wales, *(c)* the United Kingdom and *(d)* Alyn and Deeside district council area who will be (i) obliged to pay for dental and optical examinations and (ii) exempt; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: This information is not available.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Local Pay Additions

Mr. Sean Hughes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will provide the latest available figures for Her Majesty's Stationery Office for *(a)* numbers of staff in receipt of local pay additions, by grade, *(b)* location of those offices awarding local pay additions and *(c)* annual cost.

Mr. Brooke: The following is the information:

	Number
AO	89
AA	17
Senior Personal Secretary	1

	Number
Personal Secretary	4
Typist	1

(a) Numbers of staff in receipt of local pay additions, by grade.
(b) Location of those offices awarding local pay additions:
Holborn Bookshop, 49 High Holborn, London, WC1V 6HB
Britannia House, 7 Trinity Street, London, SE1 1DA
Hansard Press, 11 Steedman Street, London, SE17 3AF
Parliamentary Press, Mandela Way, London, SE1 5SS
Macaulay Press, Unit 2A, Tideway, 87 Kirtling Street, London, SW8 5BP
Parliamentary Liaison Office, Lower Ground Floor, Norman Shaw Building (North), Victoria Embankment, London, SW1A 2JF
Golden Cross House, Duncannon Street, London, WC2N 4JF
Controller's Suite, Room 1-15, 24 Whitehall, London, SW1A 2ED
Publications Centre, 51 Nine Elms Lane, London, SW8 5DR
(c) Annual cost:
1 June 1988—31 March 1989—£50,000
1 May 1989—31 March 1990—£63,400

Gross Income

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of gross income was represented by the amount of income tax and employees' national insurance contributions payable on incomes *(a)* half average earnings, *(b)* average earnings and *(c)* 1½ times average earnings in the financial years 1963-64, 1973-74, 1983-84 and 1988-89, using the latest data on average earnings for 1988-89.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The information is in the tables.

Income tax and income tax and NIC as percentages of Gross Earnings

		Multiples of average earnings[1] *0·5*	*1*	*1·5*
Single person				
1963-64	Tax	7·3	17·3	21·6
	Tax & NIC	13·6	22·4	25·0
1973-74	Tax	14·2	22·1	24·7
	Tax & NIC	21·0	27·9	29·2
1983-84	Tax	18·0	24·0	26·0
	Tax & NIC	27·0	33·0	34·2
1988-89[2]	Tax	14·8	19·9	21·6
	Tax & NIC	23·8	28·9	29·1
Married[3] *couple*				
1963-64	Tax	1·3	12·5	18·4
	Tax & NIC	7·6	17·6	21·8
1973-74	Tax	9·4	19·7	23·1
	Tax & NIC	16·2	25·6	27·6
1983-84	Tax	11·1	20·6	23·7
	Tax & NIC	20·1	29·6	32·0
1988-89[2]	Tax	8·9	17·0	19·6
	Tax & NIC	17·9	26·0	27·1

[1] Earnings are average earnings of full-time adult males working a full week on adult rates in all occupations.
[2] Provisional
[3] Assumes wife not in paid employment

Balance of Payments

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his latest estimate for the balance of payments in the current year; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Major: My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer will be making a new forecast in his autumn statement.

PAYE and VAT

Mr. Robert Banks: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the outcome of the pilot study of joint pay-as-you-earn and value added tax visits which the Inland Revenue and Customs and Excise undertook in the Nottingham area.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The pilot study, which took place in the last quarter of 1986, was designed to test the Keith committee's suggestion that joint visits, rather than separate visits for PAYE and VAT purposes, could be mutually beneficial to traders and to the Inland Revenue and Customs and Excise.

The findings are that, while joint visits are feasible and acceptable to most of the traders who received them, in only 2 per cent. of cases would a joint visit replace two separate visits. So, in most instances, a joint visit would add to, rather than reduce, the inspections of a business's records. Furthermore, a system of joint visits would add substantially to the departments' costs.

In the light of these results, it is not proposed to implement a programme of joint visits at this stage. But both departments will continue to improve the information and other services they provide, especially to small businesses.

European Communities (Finance) Bill

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when notes on clauses for the European Communities (Finance) Bill will be made available to the House.

Mr. Brooke: Copies have been placed in the Vote Office today.

EC (Advance Payments and Overdraft Facilities)

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement about the advance payments and overdraft facilities granted by the United Kingdom to the European Commission in August, September and October.

Mr. Brooke: In each of the three months August, September and October the Commission had cash flow problems because its spending obligations exceeded the revenue available under the 1988 budget. The Commission therefore requested member states, by reference to article 10(2) of regulation 2891/77, to advance by one month the payment of own resources other than VAT. The United Kingdom accordingly made advance payments from the Consolidated Fund on 22 August, 20 September and 20 October, under section 2(3) of the European Communities Act 1972.

In August and September the Commission also overdrew its accounts with member states, by reference to article 12(2) of Council regulation 2891/77. The overdraft with the United Kingdom currently totals £159·8 million. The Government have met this obligation from the Consolidated Fund, again in accordance with section 2(3) of the European Communities Act 1972. Overdrafts are unwound by corresponding reductions in subsequent own resources payments.

The table shows the level of advance payments made under article 10(2) in August, September and October; and the extent of the outstanding overdraft under article 12(2) at the end of each month.

£ million

	August	September	October
Early payment of non-VAT own resources under article 10(2) (reimbursed in the following month)	163·8	145·8	140·4
End-month overdraft under article 12(2)	96·9	3·9	n/a

The total amount which the Community is authorised to spend in 1988 remains as set out in the 1988 budget and supplementary budget. There is, therefore, no net addition to public expenditure arising from the Commission's use of these advance payment and overdraft facilities.

The Community's cash flow difficulties in 1988 should be resolved when member states are in a position to make available their contributions under the intergovernmental agreement on the financing of the 1988 budget.

Tax Cuts

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the effects of the tax cuts announced in the Budget, on the rate of inflation.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 19 October 1988]*: The budget gave no fiscal stimulus to inflation. It left the overall burden of taxation as a percentage of GDP unchanged. In the longer run, the tax reforms and reductions in tax rates, by improving supply, will help the Government to achieve their aim of reducing inflation.

Crown Estate Commissioners

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what are the annual salaries and allowances payable to each of the part-time Crown Estate Commissioners.

Mr. Lawson *[holding answer 19 October 1988]*: The combined salaries and allowances payable to the part-time Crown Estate Commissioners are as follows:

First Commissioner and Chairman of the Board—£25,524 a year.
Two part-time Commissioners—£9,940 a year each.
Four part-time Commissioners—£7,940 a year each.

HEALTH

Occupational Therapists

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what initiatives he will take to enhance the status and salary of occupational therapists; how many occupational therapists there are in *(a)* the United Kingdom *(b)* England and *(c)* Wales; how many have qualified in each of the years 1979 to 1988; what plans he has to increase occupational therapist trainee places; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: The remuneration of occupational therapists is determined following recommendations of the pay review body covering nurses, midwives, health visitors and the professions allied to medicine which was set up by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister in 1983. Since that date the average rates of pay of occupational therapists, in common with those of the other professions allied to medicine, have increased by 24·1 per cent. in real terms. This reflects the importance that the Government place on the work done by these groups of staff.

At 10 October 1988 there were 10,540 occupational therapists in the United Kingdom on the state register maintained by the occupational therapists board of the Council for the Professions Supplementary to Medicine. Separate figures for England and Wales are not available.

Numbers of students qualifying in the years 1979 to 1987 (figures for 1988 are not yet available) are as follows:

	Number
1979	463
1980	508
1981	538
1982	557
1983	593
1984	592
1985	673
1986	667
1987	660

On 15 May 1987 the Government announced detailed plans to increase the number of occupational therapy training places. The number of funded training places is expected to have risen by 100 a year by 1990-91. In addition, health authorities are funding a number of conversion courses for occupational therapy helpers and the Department is partly funding a shortened course for graduates at the London hospital.

The joint DH-NHS manpower planning advisory group has commissioned a study of staffing and skill mix in occupational therapy. Preliminary results will be available in late 1989 and this will enable us to review the need for training places.

Nursing Sisters

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Health What is the approximate number of nursing sisters who under the current proposals will be designated *(a)* as being in charge of a ward or being a senior sister in an assignment and *(b)* those designated as having equal responsibility at the same proposed grade, together with the respective figures which reflect the current distribution of responsibilities; and what representations he has received from persons with extensive nursing qualifications and experience which favours the change to sole responsibility, giving their names and the terms of such representation.

Mr. Mellor: On the information currently available, a clear majority of hospital sisters and about two out of three of all sisters and charge nurses in England will be graded at the higher level on the basis that they carry continuing responsibility for the management of a ward or that they are responsible for the provision of specialist clinical advice. Returns from regional health authorities indicate that there are, in addition, some 3,500 wards where two or more sisters currently share responsibility for the management of the ward and where authorities plan to create one post which will carry continuing responsibility and attract the higher grading. Once that process is complete, some three out of four sisters and charge nurses will be on the higher grade and about two out of three of those working in hospitals.

I understand from regional chairmen and general managers that a large majority of nurse managers and

senior nurses have expressed support for the principle of one post carrying continuing responsibility for a ward as set out in the new grading definitions.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Benefits and Allowances

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will give the expenditure on industrial disablement benefit in 1978-79 and 1987-88 at 1987-88 prices; and if he will state the amount and proportion of the increased expenditure that was due to *(a)* increase in real value of the basic pension, *(b)* increase in number of beneficiaries and *(c)* other factors.

Mr. Scott: Expenditure on industrial disablement benefit (including special hardship allowance and its successor, reduced earnings allowance), at 1987-88 prices, is estimated to have been £448 million in 1978-79 and £449 million in 1987-88. Available information is that an increase of £22 million due to the real increase in average awards of benefit was offset by a decrease of £21 million due to a fall in the number of beneficiaries over the period.

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will give the expenditure on invalidity benefit in 1978-79 and 1987-88 at 1987-88 prices; and if he will state the amount and proportion of the increased expenditure which was due to *(a)* an increase in real value of the basic pension, *(b)* increased payments of additional component, *(c)* and increase in number of beneficiaries and *(d)* other factors.

Mr. Scott: Expenditure on invalidity benefit at 1987-88 prices grew from £1,705 million in 1978-79 to £2,985 million in 1987-88. Of this increase, £1,120 million (87 per cent.) was attributable to increased numbers of beneficiaries; and £160 million (13 per cent.) to a real increase in the average amount of benefit paid. This latter increase was the net result of £260 million growth in additional pension offset by £100 million attributable to the following changes in the other elements of invalidity benefit, including basic pension: adjustment of child dependancy increases to take account of child benefit; the 5 per cent. abatement of invalidity pension from November 1980 to September 1985; and the reduction of invalidity allowance in respect of any entitlement to additional pension.

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will give the expenditure on attendance allowance in 1978-79 and 1987-88 at 1987-88 prices; and if he will state the amount and proportion of the increased expenditure that was due to *(a)* an increase in real value of the allowance, *(b)* an increase in number of beneficiaries, *(c)* any change in the proportion of beneficiaries receiving the higher rate and *(d)* other factors.

Mr. Scott: At 1987-88 prices, expenditure on attendance allowance rose from £340 million in 1978-79 to £850 million in 1987-88. Of this increase, £475 million (93 per cent.) was attributable to increased numbers of beneficiaries and £35 million (7 per cent.) to a real increase in the average amount of benefit paid. This latter figure subsumes the expenditure consequences of a change in the proportion of higher rate allowances from 43 per cent. of total awards in December 1979 to 40 per cent. in March 1987.

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will give the expenditure on mobility allowance in 1978-79 and 1987-88 at 1987-88 prices; and if he will state the amount and proportion of the increased expenditure that was due to *(a)* the difference between the increase in the retail price index and the index of motoring costs, *(b)* and increase in the number of beneficiaries and *(c)* other factors.

Mr. Scott: Expenditure on mobility allowance, at 1987-88 prices, rose from £95 million in 1978-79 to £595 million in 1987-88. Of this increase, £400 million (80 per cent.) was attributable to increased numbers of beneficiaries; and £100 million (20 per cent.) to a real increase in the average amount of benefit paid. Any difference between the rise in the retail price index and motoring costs did not contribute directly to the increased expenditure.

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will give the expenditure on NCIP/severe disablement allowance in 1978-79 and 1987-88 at 1987-88 prices; and if he will state the amount and proportion of the increased expenditure that was due to *(a)* an increase in real value of the allowance, *(b)* an increase in the number of beneficiaries, *(c)* the change in the qualifying conditions and *(d)* other factors.

Mr. Scott: The expenditure on non-contributory invalidity pension, at 1987-88 prices, was £140 million in 1978-79. This benefit was replaced by severe disablement allowance and expenditure on the latter in 1987-88 was £305 million. Of this increase, £105 million (64 per cent.) was attributable to increased numbers of beneficiaries; and £60 million (36 per cent.) to a real increase in the average amount of benefit paid. I regret that detailed information is not readily available on which to base a reliable analysis of how far changes in the qualifying conditions or other factors contributed to these increases.

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will give the expenditure on invalid care allowance in 1978-79 and 1987-88 at 1987-88 prices; and if he will state the amount and proportion of the increased expenditure that was due to *(a)* an increase in real value of the allowance, *(b)* an increase in the number of beneficiaries and *(c)* other factors.

Mr. Scott: At 1987-88 prices, expenditure on invalid care allowance rose from £8 million in 1978-79 to £165 million in 1987-88. Of this, £22 million (14 per cent.) was attributable to a real increase in the average amount payable whilst £135 million (86 per cent.), attributable to increased numbers of beneficiaries, was largely the result of the extension of the allowance to married women in 1986.

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will give the expenditure on war disablement pension in 1978-79 and 1987-88 at 1987-88 prices; and if he will state the amount and proportion of the change in expenditure that was due to *(a)* an increase in real value of the basic pension, *(b)* a change in number of beneficiaries and *(c)* other factors.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Estimated expenditure on war disablement pensions and allowances, including gratuities for disablement of less than 20 per cent. at 1987-88 prices, was £452 million in 1978-79 and £399 million in 1987-88. It is estimated that there was a reduction in expenditure of about £132 million, or 29 per cent., due to a reduction in the number receiving war pensions and allowances from 287,000 at December 1978 to 203,000 at December 1987. This was offset by an estimated increase in expenditure of about £79 million, or 17 per cent., due to an increase in the real value of the average war pension and allowances, mainly because of the introduction of a new allowance, mobility supplement, in 1983 and a 12 per cent. increase in the proportion of war pensioners receiving an age allowance.

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will give the expenditure on supplementary benefit (housing) paid to long-term sick and disabled people in 1978-79 and 1987-88 at 1987-88 prices; and if he will state the amount and proportion of the increased expenditure that was due to *(a)* an increase in real value of the benefits, *(b)* an increase in number of beneficiaries and *(c)* other factors.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: We do not keep records specifically of long-term sick and disabled people in receipt of supplementary benefit, only of people whose reason for claiming supplementary benefit was sickness. Information for 1978 and 1987 is not in any case comparable because of the introduction of the housing benefit scheme in 1982-83 which now provides help with rent and rates. The term "housing costs" in 1978 therefore includes rent and rates as well as mortgage interest, ground rent, and so on, whereas the term "housing costs" in 1987 excludes rent and rates.

The information available, based on the annual statistical inquiries, shows that the amount of housing costs included in the assessments of people claiming supplementary benefit because they were sick was £42 million in 1978 and £39 million in 1987. These figures do not reflect the amount actually paid in supplementary benefit for housing costs—this would have been less if the claimant had other income or had any dependent adults living in his household.

In 1987-88 housing benefit expenditure for people in receipt of supplementary benefit because of sickness amounted to some £200 million.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Abortion

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, pursuant to the reply of 22 July, *Official Report*, column *563*, what information he has about the policy of the Northern Ireland branch of the British Medical Association on the extension of the Abortion Act 1967 to Northern Ireland.

Mr. Needham: I understand that the Northern Ireland branch of the British Medical Association follows the national policy of the association and therefore does not have a separate policy on the extension of the Abortion Act 1967 to Northern Ireland.

Regent House School, Newtownards

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many pupils at Regent House school, Newtownards, live in the constituencies of *(a)* Strangford, *(b)* South Down, *(c)* North Down, *(d)* Belfast, East and *(e)* elsewhere.

Dr. Mawhinney: The information requested is not available.

Criminal Law Reform

Mr. Lewis Stevens: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he has any proposals for the reform of the general criminal law in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tom King *[pursuant to his reply, 20 July 1988, c. 641.]:* I have today laid before Parliament a draft Order in Council which proposes amending the general criminal law of Northern Ireland relating to evidence both before and during trial.

The provisions of this draft order would allow the courts to attach whatever weight they think proper to the fact that someone remained silent when questioned—for example, where circumstances were such that an innocent person might reasonably have been expected to protest his innocence and draw attention to facts which served to establish it.

The draft order proposes amending the criminal law to permit the courts in Northern Ireland to draw whatever inferences would be proper from the fact that an accused remained silent in four situations. Two are dealt with by provisions that have the same effect as provisions recommended by the Criminal Law Revision Committee in 1972. The first is the "ambush" where, having remained silent during police questioning, the accused offers an explanation of his conduct for the first time at his trial when he might reasonably have been expected to offer it when being questioned. The second provides that once the prosecution has established that there is a case to answer, the accused should be warned that he will be called to give evidence and that if he should refuse to do so the court may draw such inferences as would appear proper.

The other two situations are covered in provisions which have the same effect as provisions in the Criminal Justice Act enacted by the Irish Parliament in 1984. One allows a court to draw such inferences as would appear proper from an accused's failure or refusal to explain to the police certain specified facts such as substances or marks on his clothing. The other makes similar provision where an accused fails or refused to account to the police for his presence at a particular place.

My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has also announced today his intention to bring forward legislation on this subject for England and Wales at the earliest opportunity.

Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects the remainder of the £4·5 million promised for the upgrading of the Royal Belfast hospital for sick children to be made available; what sums have been spent so far and on what; when he expects work to be completed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 19 October 1988]:* The present position regarding the programme of seven improvement schemes for the Royal Belfast hospital for sick children is as follows:

	Cost (£000)	*Spent to date (£000)*	*Completion date*
Extension to X-Ray Department	441	441	August 1983
Barbour Ward	200	200	November 1984
Day Care Unit	578	578	January 1987
Engineering Services	340	340	October 1987
Musgrave & Paul Ward	1,347	638	March 1989
Total	2,906	2,197	

The two remaining schemes, the operating theatres/intensive care unit and the out-patients department/A&E department have now been presented by the Eastern health and social services board as a composite scheme which is currently being considered. I cannot state at this time when this scheme will be completed.

Irish Sea

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on what basis tests are carried out to establish the level of pollution in the sea off the Northern Irish coast; whether he seeks the opinion of independent monitoring organisations; and if he will make a statement about the level of pollution in the water around the coast of Northern Ireland.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 19 October 1988]:* Tests to assess the level of pollution in the sea off the Northern Irish coast are carried out on the basis of requirements set out in the relevant national legislation, EC directives and international conventions and for the purpose of public reassurance. The opinion of independent monitoring organisations is not sought. The tests have shown that the water around the coast of Northern Ireland is generally of good quality.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Departmental Staff

Mr. Sean Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what are the latest available figures for his Department in the London pay area of the number of vacancies by grade and the proportion this is of the grade complement in London.

Mrs. Rumbold: On 1 October 1988 there were the following vacancies against the formal complement for administrative and support staff in the Department's London divisions. The proportions of the grade complement that this represents are shown in brackets.

	Numbers	*(per cent.)*
Grade 5	1	(2)
Grade 7	4	(3)
Senior Executive Officer	3	(6)
Senior Professional and Technical Officer	4	(25)
Higher Executive Officer	8	(4·5)
Information Officer	1	(8)
Executive Officer	16	(7)
Graphics Officer	1	(17)
Librarian	1	(50)
Assistant Librarian	2	(33)
Personal Secretary	2	(2)
Administrative Officer	15	(7)
Administrative Assistant	10	(9·5)
Paperkeeper	5	(15)
Reprographics Operator	3	(15)
Senior Messenger	1	(7)
Typist	6	(9)

Mr. Sean Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will provide the latest available figures for his Department for *(a)* numbers of staff in receipt of local pay additions, by grade, *(b)* location of those offices awarding local pay additions and *(c)* annual cost.

Mrs. Rumbold: The number of staff by grade awarded local pay additions in my Department is as follows:

	Number
Administrative Officer	200
Administrative Assistant	105
Senior Personal Secretaries	9
Personal Secretaries	104
Typing Managers	9
Typists	79
	506

The awards are made to those in the above grades working in central London, Croydon and Isleworth. Of the above, one administrative assistant, one personal secretary and four typists are at the Croydon local office and one personal secretary and three typists are at the Isleworth local office. The full-year cost is estimated to be £186,000.

Students (Fees)

Mr. Straw: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) whether he has any plans to introduce arrangements so as to approve proposals from the Universities Funding Council by which home students or their families would be required to pay the whole or a part of their tuition fees for final degree and other advanced further education courses at universities, polytechnics and other colleges;

(2) whether he has any plans to permit certain universities to charge higher fees, payable by the student, for tuition.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: There is a developing debate on the method of funding higher education. The Government have no proposal to require students in receipt of mandatory awards to meet part of their tuition fees. Institutions do not need permission to charge tuition fees higher than those met under the mandatory awards arrangements.

Surplus School Places

Mr. Straw: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what steps he has taken to encourage local education authorities to reduce surplus school places; and what financial mechanics are in force to support this.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: Circular 3/87, issued in May 1987, emphasised the high cost of underused capacity at schools

with a substantial proportion of surplus places, urged LEAs to consider rationalising provision by closing and amalgamating schools where appropriate, and set new national targets, since revised, for the removal of surplus places.

Mr. Straw: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what estimate he makes of the number of surplus school places; and what savings would be achieved if these were removed.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: It is estimated that in January 1988 there were approximately 620,000 surplus primary school places and 800,000 surplus secondary school places in England. Savings in premises-related costs of approximately £240 million a year would be achieved if these places were removed.

Maintained Schools (Expenditure)

Mr. Straw: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) what allocation or planning figure has been made, for capital expenditure for grant maintained schools, for the current and any subsequent financial year;

(2) by what criteria he proposes to judge applications by grant-maintained schools for capital expenditure; and in what way these criteria will differ from those he applies in respect of approvals for capital expenditure by local education authorities on their schools.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: There will be no grant-maintained schools in the current financial year. Allocation will be made for future financial years; the total will depend upon the number of schools. The needs of the first grant-maintained schools will be considered on a case-by-case basis. As numbers build up, schools within the grant-maintained sector will participate in a bidding system similar to that now operated for voluntary-aided schools.

Departmental Officials (Statistics)

Mr. Straw: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list in the *Official Report* the number of officials, including Her Majesty's inspectors, their grades and duties, who work for the whole or part of their time on grant-maintained schools; and if he will estimate their cost.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: The Department has established a division to deal with policy on grant-maintained schools. The division currently consists of nine staff (one grade 5, one grade 7, one senior executive officer, one higher executive officer, two executive officers, one personal secretary and two administrative officers) working full time on all matters relating to grant-maintained schools. Their estimated annual salary cost at 1988-89 prices is about £150,000. Other members of the Department, including HM inspectorate, will in the course of their wider territorial, specialist or other policy functions devote some time to grant-maintained schools matters. It is not possible separately to quantify or cost this element of their work.

Grant-Maintained Schools Trust

Mr. Straw: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what grant from public funds has been made to the Grant-Maintained Schools Trust.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: The Grant-Maintained Schools Trust is not at present in receipt of any grant from public funds. If the trust were in due course to make an application to my Department for financial assistance towards specific activities intended to provide support or advice for schools which had acquired grant-maintained status, the Department would be prepared to consider it.

School Closures and Reorganisations

Mr. Straw: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list in the *Official Report* details of all applications made to him since June 1986 for the closure or reorganisation of any school in England, with the name place and type of school, the local authority area, the number of pupils of the school, the decision which he made and whether it was for closure or reorganisation, the dates when the application was first submitted to his Department, and when his final decision was made, and including any applications still pending.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Research and Development

13. **Mr. Haynes:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will summarise the results of his Department's review of funding for agricultural research and development.

19. **Mr. Darling:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will summarise the results of his Department's review of funding for agricultural research and development.

Mr. MacGregor: The Barnes review of the agriculture departments' R and D programmes is part of a wider review of priorities for all Government-funded R and D against our belief that industry should bear the responsibility for funding work which is close to commercial application and thus of direct benefit to it. Consultations are proceeding on the funding of near market R and D with all sectors of industry involved. My noble Friend has asked for considered responses from each sector by the end of this month. Further discussions will then take place.

22. **Mr. Buckley:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the current annual financial commitment by the agriculture industry to agricultural research and development.

63. **Mr. Allen McKay:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the current annual financial commitment by the agriculture industry to agricultural research and development.

Mr. MacGregor: The agricultural and horticultural industries fund about £20 million of R and D annually, about half of which is raised directly from producers through levies and similar arrangements and the remainder through contributions or contracts from producer organisations. The industries supplying agriculture also undertake substantial investment in R and D, estimated to be in the order of £200 million a year.

28. **Mr. Maxton:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food by how much he expects the financial commitment of the industry towards agricultural research and development to rise over the next five years; and if he will make a statement.

59. **Mr. Home Robertson:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food by how much he expects the financial commitment of the industry towards agricultural research and development to rise over the next five years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I cannot yet say. We have asked industry to provide considered first responses by the end of October to our proposals for withdrawal of Government funding for near market R and D.

31. **Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what proposals he has for modifying research and development programmes in agriculture and fisheries; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Advice from the Priorities Board for R and D in agriculture and food, together with the regular review cycle of all the agriculture and fisheries research programmes, provides a strategic view of the national research needs of these industries. In addition, we have recently undertaken an internal review of expenditure by the agricultural departments on R and D to identify near market work. It remains our policy that the Government should be responsible for funding basic and strategic research as well as work in support of policy and statute; but we believe that near market work which offers the prospect of commercial application within a short enough time scale to justify investment by industry should be funded by industry. Detailed information about our near market programmes has been made available to industry and meetings have been held with the sectors concerned but final decisions have not yet been taken.

38. **Mr. Doran:** To ask the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the latest estimated total level of spending by his Department on agricultural research and development in 1988-89.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The latest available estimate of spending by my Department on agricultural research and development in 1988-89 is £87·3 million on a full economic cost basis out of an estimated total Government spend on R and D on agriculture, fisheries and food for 1988-89 somewhat in excess of £225 million. Further information on R and D funded by my Department is given in the "Annual Review of Government Funded R and D 1988".

42. **Mr. Boyes:** To ask the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the average total amount of public spending on agricultural research and development in each of the last five years.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Public spending on agricultural research and development in the last five years, on a full economic cost basis, was as follows:

	£ million
1983-84	166·1
1984-85	170·0
1985-86	165·0
1986-87	165·7
[1]1987-88	162·3
Average	165·8

[1] Provisional

Details of spending by each Department and by the research councils are published in the "Annual Review of Government Funded R and D."

Meat and Livestock Commission

14. **Mr. Latham:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the chairman of the Meat and Livestock Commission; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Donald Thompson: My right hon. Friend and I maintain regular contacts with the chairman of the Meat and Livestock Commission to discuss matters of mutual interest.

Dry Sow Stall

15. **Mr. Hanley:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what discussions he has had with the pig industry on progress towards the abolition of the dry sow stall.

Mr. Donald Thompson: My Department has consulted the industry and other interests on the Farm Animal Welfare Council's assessment of pig production systems.

Council of Agriculture Ministers

17. **Mr. George Howarth:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what topics were discussed at the last Council of European Community Agriculture Ministers; and if he will make a statement.

20. **Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the outcome of the last European Community Council of Agriculture Ministers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. MacGregor: Decisions were taken on olive oil consumption aid which will produce a saving of 102 million ecu. Other matters were discussed but no decision taken.

Small Farmers Association

18. **Mr. McLoughlin:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the chairman of the Small Farmers Association; and what subjects they discussed.

Mr. Ryder: My right hon. Friend has not met the chairman recently. But he is kept regularly in touch with the Small Farmers Association's views.

Council of Fisheries Ministers

16. **Mr. Wray:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last attended a meeting of the European Community's Council of Fisheries Ministers; and which subjects were discussed.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Together with my noble Friend, the Minister of State, Scottish Office, I represented the United Kingdom at the meeting of the Council of Fisheries Ministers on 19 and 20 October 1988 in Luxembourg. The Council dealt with many issues. In particular, we welcome the agreement reached on improvements to the control

regulation to facilitate better enforcement. The Commission is committed to produce proposals to increase the precautionary TAC for Channel cod. For reasons of conservation the Council agreed to the extension of the mackerel box off our south-west coast and to a reduction in cod quotas off Svalbord and north Norway. We also raised again the importance of having flexibility for fishing for Western mackerel across the 4° W line.

21. **Mr. Harry Barnes:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he next expects to attend a meeting of the European Community's Council of Fisheries Ministers; what matters he expects to discuss; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The next EC Council of Fisheries Ministers is to be held on 28 November 1988. Present plans are that fish product guide prices for 1989 are to be discussed. Other items have yet to be tabled.

Non-alcoholic Drinks

23. **Mr. Thurnham:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement about the current level of sales of non-alcoholic beer and wine.

Mr. Ryder: There are no official statistics, but these sales have clearly increased substantially over the last few years. Technical developments in the industry have contributed to improvements in quality of the products. The recently announced reductions in excise duties chargeable on lower strength drinks should encourage the development of this sector.

United Kingdom Harvest

24. **Mr. Bowis:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he can give an estimate of the likely size of the current United Kingdom harvest.

45. **Mr. Yeo:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his latest forecast for the 1988 cereal harvest.

50. **Mr. Boswell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the 1988 harvest.

79. **Mr. Parry:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what estimates he has of the size of the 1988 harvest.

Mr. MacGregor: My Department currently estimates the 1988 cereals harvest in the United Kingdom to be 21 million tonnes.

Milk Production Hormone

25. **Mr. Clay:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he expects the current trials of the milk production hormone BST to end.

58. **Mr. Cunliffe:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he expects to be able to announce the final results of the trials of the milk production hormone BST.

Mr. Ryder: These trials are being conducted by the companies concerned. Their purpose is primarily to produce evidence as to the efficacy of the products. This evidence will be presented to the Veterinary Products Committee which advises Ministers on applications for product licences. It is up to the companies to decide when to submit their evidence to the Veterinary Products Committee.

56. **Mr. Martlew:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what advice he has received from the Veterinary Products Committee concerning the milk production hormone BST; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ryder: The Veterinary Products Committee was consulted, as is required under the provisions of the Medicines Act 1968, concerning applications for animal test certificates for BST. It advised that it was completely satisfied with all aspects of the safety of BST. So the present trials are designed to assess not the safety of the product, but its efficacy under field conditions.

Two applications for product licences for BST have been received and these are being considered in accordance with the provisions of the Medicines Act and EC legislation.

Tenant Farmers Association

26. **Mr. Knapman:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the chairman of the Tenant Farmers Association; and what subjects they discussed.

Mr. Ryder: Although I have not yet met the chairman of the Tenant Farmers Association, I am glad to say that I shall be addressing the association's annual conference next February. In the meantime, the Department is in regular touch with the association on a wide range of issues.

National Farmers Union

27. **Miss Emma Nicholson:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the president of the National Farmers Union; and what subjects they discussed.

49. **Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met representatives of the National Farmers Union; and what subjects were discussed.

68. **Mr. Sean Hughes:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met representatives of the National Farmers Union; and what subjects were discussed.

Mr. MacGregor: I meet the president of the National Farmers Union frequently to discuss a wide range of agricultural matters. I last met him on 11 October.

54. **Mr. Knox:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when next he is due to meet the president of the National Farmers Union to discuss the dairy sector.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I have no present plans to do so.

EC (Surplus Food and Drink)

29. **Mr. Canavan:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the total volume and value in pound sterling of surplus food and drink in the EEC.

Mr. Ryder: A note setting out the volume of EC intervention stocks of agricultural commodities, which includes only the surplus quantities held in United Kingdom and EC intervention and assisted private storage, is deposited in the Library of the House and is updated monthly. The estimated value of the EC stocks listed in the most recently deposited note, depreciated as now required following the February European Council agreement, is £3·12 billion.

Whale Hunting

30. **Mr. David Martin:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what further steps he will take to encourage more humane whale hunting in the Faroes.

Mr. Donald Thompson: We continue to pursue this matter within the International Whaling Commission which we regard as the primary forum for the discussion of all whaling issues, including those concerning killing methods.

British Wool Board

32. **Mr. Kirkhope:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met with the chairman of the Wool Board; and what subjects they discussed.

Mr. MacGregor: I meet the chairman of the British Wool Board regularly to discuss matters relating to the marketing of wool in the United Kingdom.

Horticultural Research

33. **Mr. Hind:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has any plans to meet the chairman of the Horticultural Development Council to discuss horticultural research; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ryder: My noble Friend the Baroness Trumpington met the chairman of the Horticultural Development Council in June to discuss horticultural research. The chairman continues to make an input into discussions through his membership of two Ministry working groups which are considering particular aspects of horticultural R and D (future HDC funding and rationalisation of facilities for horticultural research).

Forestry Commission

34. **Mr. Page:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the chairman of the Forestry Commission; and what subjects they discussed.

Mr. MacGregor: I last met the chairman of the Forestry Commission on 3 October when we discussed progress in the task of clearing and replanting woodlands damaged by last October's storm in south-east England.

Dairy Trade Council

35. **Mr. Brandon-Bravo:** To ask the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the president of the Dairy Trade Council and what subjects they discussed.

Mr. Donald Thompson: My right hon. Friend the Minister and I have regular contacts with the president of the Dairy Trade Federation to discuss various issues affecting the dairy industry.

Scottish National Farmers Union

36. **Mrs. Ray Michie:** To ask the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the president of the Scottish National Farmers Union; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. MacGregor: I meet the president of the Scottish National Farmers Union whenever I go to Scotland, the last occasion being on 7 to 9 July. A range of matters were discussed. I also meet him from time to time elsewhere.

Countryside Commission

37. **Mr. Batiste:** To ask the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the chairman of the Countryside Commission; and what subjects they discussed.

Mr. Ryder: My right hon. Friend and other Ministers of my Department have frequently met the chairman of the Countryside Commission for discussions on a wide variety of issues. I look forward to meeting him soon.

Beef and Sheepmeat Regimes

39. **Mr. John Greenway:** To ask the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what progress has been made in the negotiations in Brussels on the review of the beef and sheepmeat regimes.

Mr. MacGregor: Little progress has been made on the basis of the proposals on sheepmeat produced by the EC Commission in October last year. The Commission has just presented proposals on beef and revised proposals on sheepmeat, but no texts are yet available. I expect negotiations to resume shortly.

Potato Marketing Board

40. **Mr. Conway:** To ask the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the chairman of the Potato Marketing Board; and what subjects they discussed.

Mr. Ryder: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given to my hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, West (Mr. McLoughlin) on 9 June, at column *677*.

Fishing Vessels

41. **Mr. Terry Lewis:** To ask the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many fishing vessels were constructed in the United Kingdom, with financial assistance from the Sea Fish Industry Authority and FEOGA grants in 1984, 1985, 1986 and 1987; and how many fishing vessels have been built or are under construction in the current year with this kind of financial assistance.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The information requested is as follows:

Number of vessels awarded both United Kingdom and EC aid

	Number
1984	33
1985	43
1986	35
1987	24
1988	19

The 1988 figure includes vessels whose construction is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

Fishing Industry

43. **Mr. Dunnachie:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what recent discussions he has had with fishermen's organisations concerning the present circumstances of the fishing industry.

Mr. Donald Thompson: We are in frequent and regular touch with fishermen's organisations. Most recently this month I discussed the North sea fishing industry at a conference with representatives of the major organisations.

Home Grown Cereals Authority

46. **Mr. Allan Stewart:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the chairman of the Home Grown Cereals Authority; and what subject they discussed.

Mr. MacGregor: I last met the chairman of the HGCA on 10 October and when I addressed the authority's pre-harvest luncheon on 12 July. We discussed a number of topics concerning the cereal sector.

Women's Farmers Union

47. **Mr. Nicholas Bennett:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the president of the Women's Farmers Union; and what subject they discussed.

Mr. MacGregor: I met the national chairman of the Women's Farming Union on 11 July and discussed various subjects of concern to it.

Set Aside Scheme

48. **Mr. Gill:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what indications he has of the level of uptake under the Set Aside Regulations 1988; and if he will make a statement.

60. **Mr. Livsey:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many farmers registered under the set aside scheme by 30 September; and if he will make a statement.

77. **Mr. Charles Wardle:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many of those farmers who had registered for the voluntary set aside scheme by 30 September had decided to take up the scheme for the 1988-89 crop year.

Mr. MacGregor: I refer hon. Members to the answer given earlier today to my hon. Friend the Member for Gedling (Mr. Mitchell).

Imports (Northern Cyprus)

51. **Mr. Cox:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what have been the items and quantity of agricultural produce imported into the United Kingdom from the occupied area of northern Cyprus during the last 12 months.

Mr. Donald Thompson: United Kingdom imports of agricultural produce from the different regions of Cyprus are not recorded separately.

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

44. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the number of cases of bovine spongiform encephalopathy to date in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Up to 14 October 1988, 1,193 cases of bovine spongiform encephalopathy had been confirmed since the disease was first identified in November 1986.

52. **Mr. Patchett:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many cases of bovine spongiform encephalopathy have now been notified to his Department.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Since the disease was made notifiable on 21 June, 1,232 suspect cases of BSE have been reported to the Ministry. Because there is no diagnostic test in live animals affected cattle are slaughtered on clinical evidence of infection. Confirmation is dependent on the examination of brain tissue after death; since 21 June, of the 502 animals for which laboratory results have so far been received 454 have been confirmed as having been affected with BSE.

Farmers (Diversification)

53. **Mr. Steen:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what assessment he has made of the case for measures to improve communication between farmers wishing to diversify and local planning authorities.

Mr. Ryder: I believe there is a case for improved communication in this area. To this end agriculture Ministers have taken every opportunity to meet planners and farmers to encourage a better understanding between them. We will soon be publishing, in association with the Department of the Environment and the Welsh Office, a farmers' guide to the planning system as my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food announced on 25 July in his reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Hyndburn (Mr. Hargreaves). This will encourage farmers to present their applications effectively and discuss their ideas with planning officers, local councillors and their neighbours at an early stage.

Country Landowners Association

55. **Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the president of the Country Landowners Association; and what subjects they discussed.

Mr. MacGregor: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave today to my hon. Friend the Member for Gloucestershire, West (Mr. Marland).

Common Agricultural Policy

57. **Mr. Alan W. Williams:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what steps he takes to ensure that consumer and environmental interests are taken into account in decisions concerning the common agricultural policy.

Mr. Ryder: I receive advice and representations from many sources, including bodies representative of

consumers and of environmental interests. I take these fully into account when decisions are being taken on CAP matters and, as appropriate, urge the Commission and other member states to do the same.

Cereals Co-responsibility Levy

61. **Mr. Alexander:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will press for the European Community cereals co-responsibility levy to be applied to imports of cereal substitutes, and in equal measure.

Mr. MacGregor: Extending the cereals co-responsibility to imported cereals substitutes would be difficult to achieve, contrary to the European Community's international obligations and would be inconsistent with the Government's efforts in the current GATT negotiations to liberalise agricultural trade. The United Kingdom Government have consistently opposed a co-responsibility levy as being the wrong way to tackle the problem of cereal surpluses.

National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations

62. **Mr. Wall:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met representatives of the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations; and which subjects were discussed.

Mr. Donald Thompson: My right hon. Friend the Minister met representatives of the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations at their annual general meeting on 7 May 1988. A number of issues of importance to the United Kingdom fishing industry were discussed including TACs, licensing systems including under 10 m vessels; part-time fishermen; fishing vessel registration; technical conservation measures and mesh sizes including minimum landing sizes for nephrops; North sea plaice; Channel cod; water authority privatisation; pollution and dumping; the Grimsby National Dock Labour Board scheme; the bass fishery; loans; safety; light dues and the ban on the carriage of monofilament nets. Members of the NFFO also attended a conference in North Shields on 5 October on the North sea fishing industry at which I discussed the Government's fisheries policy and pollution.

Agricultural Workers

64. **Mr. Strang:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has any plan to meet the national secretary of the agricultural and allied workers trade group of the Transport and General Workers Union to discuss problems affecting agricultural workers.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I have no plans at present to do so.

65. **Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what topics were discussed at the last Council of European Community Agriculture Ministers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the outcome of the last Council of European Community Council of Agriculture Ministers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. MacGregor: I refer the hon. Members to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Daventry (Mr. Boswell) on 18 October 1988.

Sheep

66. **Mr. Alex Carlile:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the current state of the sheep sector.

Mr. MacGregor: The sheep sector remains buoyant. Returns are good and exports are encouraging.

Sea Fish Industry Authority

67. **Mr. Graham:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement concerning the financing of the Sea Fish Industry Authority.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Following consultation with interested organisations, the authority has now published its intentions to make regulations increasing the present rate of levy from £3·50 per tonne to £7 per tonne with effect from 1 April 1989. In deciding whether to confirm these regulations, fisheries Ministers will take into account any industry objections made to them.

Toxic Waste

69. **Dr. Moonie:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many licences were issued for the incineration of toxic waste at sea in 1985, 1986 and 1987; how many such licences have been issued so far in the current year; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Licences were issued for 24 wastes in 1985 and for 20 wastes in 1986; 14 licences were issued in 1987 and 12 in 1988.

United Kingdom waste has accounted for only about 5 per cent. of the total incinerated at the one, internationally agreed, incineration site in the Dutch sector of the North sea. At the ministerial conference on the North sea in November 1987 all North sea states including the United Kingdom agreed that marine incineration should be substantially reduced, by not less than 65 per cent., by 1 January 1991, and phased out by 31 December 1994. Remaining United Kingdom licensed wastes are therefore being reviewed to identify satisfactory alternative options for disposal of the waste on land.

GATT

70. **Mr. Curry:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what progress he expects in the general agreement on tariffs and trade negotiations prior to the mid-term meeting in December.

Mr. MacGregor: With a view to further reform of agricultural policies in both the short and long term, GATT members are working actively towards a framework of principles to guide the negotiations, which are due to continue till 1990, and on first steps to implement them. I have consistently emphasised the importance of securing progress at the December meeting and will continue to work for a constructive outcome.

Farm Woodland Scheme

71. **Mr. David Nicholson:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what response there has been from farmers to the new farm woodland scheme.

Mr. Riddick: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many farmers have expressed interest in the new farm woodland scheme since its introduction on 1 October.

Mr. Ryder: As the scheme has only been operational since 1 October, it is too early to give any figures for uptake. There has, however, been substantial interest amongst farmers and the scheme's information literature has been in demand.

Clyde Fishermen's Association

72. **Mr. Foulkes:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met representatives of the Clyde Fishermen's Association.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I have not met the Clyde Fishermen's Association.

Agriculture

73. **Mr. David Marshall:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what discussions he has had with environmental organisations to discuss the future of agriculture in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Ryder: My right hon. Friend and other Ministers of my Department have frequently met representatives of environmental organisations for discussions on a wide variety of issues. I look forward to meeting the organisations soon.

Wildlife

74. **Mr. McCartney:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what discussions he has had with wildlife organisations about the future of the countryside.

Mr. Ryder: My right hon. Friend and other Ministers of my Department have frequently met representatives of wildlife organisations for discussions on a wide variety of issues. I look forward to meeting the organisations soon.

Milk Marketing Board

75. **Sir Hal Miller:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the chairman of the Milk Marketing Board; and what subjects they discussed.

Mr. Donald Thompson: My right hon. Friend the Minister and I have regular contacts with the chairman of the Milk Marketing Board to discuss various issues affecting the dairy industry.

Agricultural Land (Classification and Grading)

76. **Mr. Chapman:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he intends to make a statement about agricultural land classification and grading, following the publication of his consultation document in February.

Mr. Ryder: We hope to publish the definitive guidelines and criteria before the end of this month.

East Craigs Seed Testing Station

78. **Mr. Ron Brown:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received since 22 July from the trade union movement and local representatives about the future of East Craigs seed testing station, Edinburgh; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ryder: None. I have nothing to add to the reply given to the hon. Member on 22 July 1988 at columns *879-80*.

Dairy Herds

80. **Mr. Hardy:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what information he has about the present number of dairy herds in the United Kingdom and in each member state of the EEC; and what equivalent information he has for each country 10 years ago.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The most recent data available are for 1986. No comparable data are available for 1976, so the following table compares the 1986 figures with those for 1977.

Number of dairy herds in the EEC

Country	*Year*	*Number of herds*	*Year*	*Number of herds*
Germany	1977	519,000	1986	369,000
France	1977	576,000	1986	329,000
Italy	1977	453,000	1986	338,000
Netherlands	1977	83,000	1986	61,000
Belgium	1977	66,000	1986	45,000
Luxembourg	1977	4,000	1986	2,000
United Kingdom	1977	72,000	1986	53,000
Irish Republic	1977	120,000	1986	77,000
Denmark	1977	56,000	1986	32,000
Greece	1977	n/a	1986	73,000
Spain		n/a		n/a
Portugal		n/a		n/a

Source:
(a) The Agricultural Situation in the Community 1987 Report.
(b) Eurostat Yearbook of Agricultural Statistics 1978.

Storm Damage

81. **Miss Widdecombe:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what help he plans for farmers still facing substantial costs for clearance as a result of the storm on 16 October 1987.

Mr. Ryder: The Government believe that the package of measures which they introduced after last year's great storm provided a comprehensive and appropriate response. Applications have already been received for the replanting of 5 million trees under the special Forestry Commission replanting scheme and it is expected that a half of the fallen timber will have been cleared by the end of next spring. In addition, expenditure of some £2·5 million is expected under MAFF's storm damage recovery scheme for environmental features such as shelterbelts and orchard replacement.

Southall Horse Market

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what information he has as to the conditions at the Southall horse market; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: During recent visits to the market by the Department's veterinary staff no problems affecting the welfare of horses have been noted or brought to their attention.

Sheepmeat

Mr. Speller: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has any plans to review the operation of the sheepmeat regime; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The sheepmeat regime is due to be reviewed by the Council of Agriculture Ministers later this year. I expect negotiations on this review to resume shortly on the basis of proposals by the EC Commission.

Upland Planting

Mr. Harris: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he has provided the chairman of the Forestry Commission with guidance on planting in the uplands of England.

Mr. MacGregor: I have written to the chairman of the Forestry Commission in the following terms:

"You will recall that in his announcement of 16 March setting out our joint view about future planting in the uplands of England, the Secretary of State for the Environment said that I would be writing to you to give further guidance on the matter. This is now set out in this letter.

As you know, a large proportion of the land in England has been used for agriculture as either arable or improved grassland, and we therefore attach a high value to conserving the habitats provided by the limited remaining area of unimproved land in the uplands.

General Criteria

Where unimproved land lies above the 800 ft contour, approval should not normally be given for new planting which consists predominantly of conifers, other than for the planting of small areas, as defined below, where it is clear that this would be environmentally acceptable. An exception may also be made for planting on unimproved land between the 800 and 1,000 ft contours if the Commission agrees with the local authority and any other authorities consulted—or, in the absence of such agreement. Ministers so decide—that this would be justified in the interests of improving forest landscaping. More generally, there may be some scope in the uplands for the planting of broadleaves and mixed woodlands.

These criteria should apply both to plans for new planting by the Commission and to all future approvals of applications for grants for new planting by the private sector.

Unimproved land

For the purposes of this letter, unimproved land is defined as land which has not been converted to arable use or, in the case of grassland, has not been cultivated and reseeded within the ten years prior to the date of this letter, and any future improvement of land now defined as unimproved will not alter that definition.

Predominantly conifers

Since the establishment of broadleaved woods in the uplands is crucially dependent on planting conifers as nurses, often in the ratio of two conifers to one of broadleaves, the term 'predominantly' should be taken to mean the use of more than two conifers for every broadleaved tree at the initial planting stage.

Exception for small areas

The term 'small' should normally be taken to mean any area not exceeding 10 hectares. In appropriate circumstances this exception may also cover an area not exceeding 40 hectares where the Commission agrees with the local authority and any other authorities consulted (or Ministers decide) that this would allow the proposed planting to blend sympathetically with the landscape or to ameliorate over-regulate or oddly-shaped woodland boundaries.

Planting in the industrial Pennines

It is recognised that conifers may also have a role to play in ameliorating the environment of the industrial areas of the Pennines where conditions are not suitable for growing broadleaves. Conifer planting may be permitted in these areas, which for the purposes of this exception should be defined and agreed between Forestry Commission and Department of the Environment officials.

Replanting

In providing grants for replanting, the Commission should encourage practices which will convert forests of even age into attractive and more varied landscapes with a mixture of types and ages of trees. To encourage the conservation, rehabilitation and regeneration of ancient woodlands, applications for grant-aid for their replanting will be expected to follow the Commission's published Guidelines for the Management of Broadleaved Woodland. The Commission should continue to follow similar practices in respect of its own replanting programmes.

Consultation Arrangements

The Commission should introduce arrangements, where these do not already exist, to consult local authorities in England on all new planting proposals above 800 ft where such proposals would involve the planting of more than 10 hectares predominantly with conifers. Otherwise, this letter does not affect the Commission's current arrangements for consulting local authorities and other bodies as appropriate, and individual applications will continue to be considered on their merits under the terms of the general guidance I have given."

I have arranged for copies of my letter to be placed in the Library of the House.

Written Answers to Questions

Friday 21 October 1988

WALES

Physiotherapists and Speech Therapists

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) if he will make a statement concerning the supply of (i) physiotherapists and (ii) speech therapists in Wales and the demand for their services; if he will publish the staff turnover of physiotherapists in Wales; how many physiotherapist posts in Wales are frozen; and if he will make a statement;

(2) how many chartered physiotherapists there are in Wales and in each Welsh health authority; how many vacancies for physiotherapists exist in Wales and in each Welsh health authority; what was the vacancy level expressed as a percentage of (i) physiotherapists and (ii) speech therapists in *(a)* Wales and *(b)* each health authority; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: Physiotherapists and speech therapists are among those staff groups which have been the subject of detailed scrutiny in the first round of the manpower resource planning exercise undertaken by the health service in Wales this year. As part of the exercise, initiated by the manpower steering group established by the Department in 1986, health authorities were requested to make projections of future manpower requirements, including demand and supply estimates, over the next decade.

A report on the outcome of that first planning round is being finalised, following which consideration will be given to its findings to determine the need and scope for action at the all-Wales and district levels to forestall any projected manpower difficulties.

Information on the number of posts frozen by health authorities and on staff turnover rates is not held by the Department, though improvements being sought in the health service information base should provide capacity for analysis of turnover in future years. The decision to freeze posts is an operational matter for health authorities.

Information on the number of physiotherapists and speech therapists in post in each Welsh district health authority as at 30 September 1988 is given in the following table. Information on the number of vacancies is not currently collected by the Department on a regular basis, but information obtained in the course of this year's manpower resource planning exercise indicates that at the all-Wales level at 30 September 1988 there were approximately 32 (whole-time equivalent) vacancies for speech therapists, representing approximately 5 per cent. and 15 per cent. respectively of the planned staffing levels for these groups. These aggregate figures are approximate only; reliable information at individual district health authority levels is not currently available. Staff in post (whole-time equivalents) as at 30 September 1988:

	Physiotherapists	*Speech Therapists*
Clwyd	78·4	24·7
East Dyfed	32·9	14·0
Gwent	79·1	12·1
Gwynedd	46·9	11·9
Mid Glamorgan	74·3	19·6
Pembrokeshire	17·6	6·0
Powys	26·5	7·5
South Glamorgan	142·4	27·7
West Glamorgan	69·6	19·7
All Wales	567·7	143·2

Public Appointments

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if, pursuant to his answer of 26 July, *Official Report*, column *171*, and the information subsequently sent to the hon. Member for Caerphilly, he will provide what information he has concerning the political affiliations of those appointees to public bodies listed.

Mr. Peter Walker: Since individuals are appointed to public bodies on the basis of their intrinsic merits and personal qualities, comprehensive information on political affiliations is not available.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what information he seeks on a regular basis concerning candidates for public appointment.

Mr. Peter Walker: Prior to appointment we seek details of candidates' past and present occupations, relevant specialisms, areas of interest, previous or existing appointments or voluntary service, time availability for public duties and ability to speak Welsh.

Once appointed their performance is regularly assessed and certainly taken into account before any decisions are reached on either reappointment or further appointments.

Agriculture and Horticulture (Research and Development)

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many people are employed in agricultural and horticultural research and development in Wales reliant on Government funds; and if he will give details by institute and site.

Mr. Peter Walker: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Alyn and Deeside (Mr. Jones) on 30 June 1988 at column 310.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) if he will provide figures to show the financial effect of implementing in Wales recently announced proposals to cut Government funding of agricultural and horticultural research and development by sector, institute and site, respectively;

(2) if he will provide figures to show the employment effect of implementing in Wales recently announced proposals to cut Government funding of agricultural and horticultural research and development by sector, institute and site, respectively.

Mr. Peter Walker: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply given to him today by my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Grant-maintained Schools

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what inquiries he has received from schools in the north-west wishing to become grant-maintained schools under the Education Act 1988; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: The Education Reform Act provides an opportunity for all secondary schools and primary schools with more than 300 pupils to apply for grant-maintained status if parents so wish. The Department has received inquiries from a large number of parents, governors and others about these provisions of the Act, including some relating to schools in the north-west.

GCSE

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many children took the GCSE examination in Lancashire in the current year; and what were the results achieved.

Mrs. Rumbold: This information is not yet available centrally.

GCE and CSE

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many children took the GCE O-level and CSE examinations in Lancashire in 1987; and what were the results achieved.

Mrs. Rumbold: In the 1987 summer examination session, some 29,000 pupils in maintained schools in Lancashire sat for O-level and CSE examinations. Information on examination achievements is not available on a strictly comparable basis, but in 1987 there were 20·59 thousand school leavers in Lancashire, of whom 4·76 thousand achieved 5 or more higher grades; 5·91 thousand attained 1 to 4 higher grades; 7·47 thousand achieved no higher grades; and 2·34 thousand gained no graded result.

Cash Limits

Mr. Curry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will give details of any revised cash limits for his Department's votes.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: Subject to parliamentary approval to the necessary Supplementary Estimates, cash limits for the following votes will be revised as follows:

£'000s

Class and vote	*Current cash limit*	*Increase/ decrease*	*Revised cash limit*
XII. 1	482,201	−744	481,457
XII. 3	1,843,880	+744	1,844,624

The increase on class XII, vote 3 represents expenditure originally included for provision within class XII, vote 1 in respect of a major capital project at Goldsmiths' college. The increase on class XII, vote 3 reflects the inclusion of this expenditure following the college's incorporation as part of the university of London.

These changes will not affect the overall planned total of expenditure.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Police Pay

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the estimated total cost of pay increases for the police force in 1988-89.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The estimated cost in 1988-89 of this year's pay increase for police officers below the rank of assistant chief constable in England and Wales is £86·5 million.

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what has been the average pay increase of the police force in percentages for each year since 1970.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The average increases in the pay of police officers below the rank of superintendent have been as follows:

	Percentage
1 September 1970	[1]16
1 September 1971	6·5
1 September 1972	15
1 September 1973	4 (plus £1 a week)
1 September 1974	16·7
1 September 1975	30
1 September 1976	[2]5
1 September 1977	10
1 September 1978 / 1 May 1979	[3]39
1 September 1979	13.5
1 September 1980	21·3
1 September 1981	13·2
1 September 1982	10.3
1 September 1983	8·4
1 September 1984	5·13
1 September 1985	7·5
1 September 1986	7·5
1 September 1987	7·75
1 September 1988	8·5

[1] With a minimum of 10 per cent. and increases of up to 28 per cent. for long-serving constables and sergeants.

[2] Subject to a minimum of £2·50 a week and a maximum of £4 a week.

[3] Implemented in two phases, with half being paid on 1 September 1978 and the remainder on 1 May 1979.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Exchange Rate

Mr. Pike: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is Her Majesty's Government's policy towards the maintenance of a firm exchange rate in the particular context of industry's need to plan ahead; and how this policy has evolved since the statement by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury on 12 December 1986, *Official Report*, column 260.

Mr. Major *[holding answer 19 October 1988]:* Control of inflation is of paramount importance to industry. The Government have made it clear that it will not accommodate inflation by exchange rate depreciation. Industry understands that and can plan ahead on that basis.

Value Added Tax

Mr. Onslow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received concerning the likely

effect of the European Court ruling on the application of value added tax to construction work undertaken by charities; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lawson *[holding answer 19 October 1988]:* A number of letters about the potential impact on charities have been received in response to the consultation paper issued by Customs and Excise on the implementation of the European Court ruling on VAT zero rating for construction services. In addition, Treasury Ministers have received a number of letters from hon. Members and others. Customs officials and the Economic Secretary to the Treasury have also met representatives of the charities to discuss their representations. These, along with other responses to the consultation paper, are being considered in detail; an announcement will be made in due course.

Vacancies (London)

Mr. Sean Hughes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what are the latest figures for Her Majesty's Customs and Excise in the London pay area of the number of vacancies by grade and the proportion this is of the grade complement in London.

Mr. Lilley: The information is as follows:

	Number of vacancies	*Per cent. of complement*
Grade 5 and above	0	0
Grade 6	0	0
Grade 7	16	8·0
SEO	29	7·2
HEO	365	23·3
EO	231	9·4
AO	30	5·2
AA	40	7·4
Secretarial grades	20	9·7
Support staff	31	10·2

Mr. Sean Hughes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what are the latest available figures for Her Majesty's Stationery Office in the London pay area of the number of vacancies by grades and the proportion this is of the grade complement in London.

Mr. Brooke: The following is the information:

Number of Vacancies by Grade

	Proportion of Grade Complement in London percentage
Non-Industrial	
5 Higher Executive Officers (4 of these are computer specialists)	25
1 Higher Printing and Graphics Officer	4
4 Executive Officers (2 of these are computer specialists)	14
2 Printing and Graphics Officers	3
2 Office Machinery Technical Services Service Managers	40
5 Administrative Officers	6
1 Administrative Assistant	5
1 Typist	25
3 Support Grade Band 2	38
Industrial	
2 Order Handlers	4
2 Publications Handlers	3
1 Industrial Messenger	5
1 Machine Assistant	5

Lord Havers (Pension)

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the level of pension and the lump sum paid in respect of the previous Lord Chancellor; and what remuneration he receives in his ex officio capacity as a Lord of Appeal in Ordinary.

Mr. Brooke *[pursuant to his reply 26 July 1988, c. 167]:* Contrary to the information given in my earlier reply, former Lord Chancellors are entitled to a tax-free lump sum payment equal to twice their pension on retirement. This payment is abated if there are any contributions outstanding towards the cost of a widow's pension.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Civil Service

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland why applicants for appointments in administration to posts in the Northern Ireland Civil Service were required to be under the age of 32 years on 1 October; and since when this age restriction has been in operation.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The appointments in administration scheme is a trainee grade and the competition aims to ensure a supply of highly qualified people with the potential to fill senior posts in the Civil Service. Because of the requirement for minimum seniority periods to be served in each grade before an officer is eligible for promotion and the length and variety of Civil Service experience required by those appointed to the most senior posts, it in effect takes a considerable time before appointees are in a position to reach the most senior levels. The age limit of 32 is considered appropriate to the long-term needs of the Northern Ireland Civil Service, and reflects the substantial training input for candidates appointed to this grade.

The age limit for the appointments in administration competition in the Northern Ireland Civil Service has been 32, since the current appointments in administration scheme was introduced in 1973.

Sewage Pumping Station (Donaghadees)

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what information he has as to whether the proposal to construct a sewage pumping station at Quarry Green, Donaghadees, has been approved by Ards borough council; whether he has received any objections to this proposal; and if he will make it his policy to establish a public inquiry into this proposal.

Mr. Needham: The planning application for the proposed pumping station attracted 18 objections. The Department is not yet in a position to consult Ards borough council with its preliminary opinion but it will do so. A public inquiry cannot be held under planning legislation.

Anglo-Irish Agreement

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what arrangements he is making to take account of public views in the review under article 11 of the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

Mr. Tom King: The review, beginning in November, will examine the whole working of the conference and its associated secretariat to see whether any changes in the scope and nature of its activities are desirable. I am anxious to have available any views that hon. Members and other interested parties may wish to put forward. I would be grateful if such views could be forwarded to me as soon as possible, and not later than the end of the year.

I have already written to the leaders of the Northern Ireland parties, and the Northern Ireland spokesmen of other parties in the House, inviting their contributions.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

South Africa

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he plans to introduce any further economic sanctions against South Africa, in collaboration with *(a)* his Commonwealth and *(b)* his European Economic Community partners.

Mrs. Chalker: No.

DEFENCE

Armed Forces Pay

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the estimated total cost of pay increases for the armed forces in 1988-89.

Mr. Freeman: The total cost of pay increases for the armed forces for 1988-89 is £242 million. This figure takes account of the increased deductions made from servicemen's pay in respect of food and accommodation charges as a result of the recommendations made by the AFPRB in its 1988 report.

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what has been the average increase in percentage of payments to the armed forces for each year since 1970.

Mr. Freeman: Since the military salary was introduced in April 1970 average increases in armed forces pay have been:

RPI since 1970

Pay review year	*Equivalent percentage increase for full year*	*Year*	*RPI Increase*
1971	[1]	1970-71	9·5
1972	10	1971-72	6·3
1973	6·5	1972-73	9·1
1974	13	1973-74	15·2
1975	29·5	1974-75	21·7
1976	[2]9·6	1975-76	18·9
1977	5	1976-77	17·5
1978	13	1977-78	7·9
1979	32·5	1978-79	10·1
1980	16·8	1979-80	21·8
1981	10·3	1980-81	12·0
1982	6·1	1981-82	9·4
1983	7·2	1982-83	4·0
1984	[3]4·9	1983-84	3·2
1985	7·1	1984-85	6·9
1986	[4]5·6	1985-86	3·1
1987	4·9	1986-87	4·2
1988	6·4	1987-88	3·9

[1] There was no formal review in 1971 but an interim award of 7 per cent. was made in August 1971.
[2] This percentage is derived from a flat rate award of £6 per week to all AFPRB ranks.
[3] A staged increase, the full amount awarded was 7·6 per cent.
[4] A 7·5 per cent. increase deferred to 1 July 1986.

Bomb Damage (Cyprus)

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the extent of the bomb damage to military married quarters in the island of Cyprus on 4 October; whether these premises were located within a United Kingdom sovereign base area; who was responsible; what was the source of the detonators and explosives used in these two bombs explosions; if he has any plans to improve security against terrorist attacks at the United Kingdom bases in Cyprus; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The bomb explosions occurred at Berengaria camp which is a retained site and not part of the United Kingdom sovereign base areas. There were no casualties and the damage was very minor, consisting of two craters approximately 1ft deep in the gardens of married quarters. Responsibility for the attack and the source of explosives and detonators is not yet known but is the subject of investigation by the Cypriot police. In the light of recent terrorist activity, security in British bases has been reviewed and enhanced where appropriate. We cannot however comment on any particular security measures.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

World Bank and IMF Loans

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what pressure the Government intend to bring to bear on the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to address the environmental and ecological implications of their loans and other transactions.

Mr. Chris Patten: The World Bank has substantially increased the emphasis it gives to the environmental and ecological aspects of its lending operations. An environmental department and regional units have been reinforced to ensure that these considerations are properly reflected in the bank's overall lending and policy objectives. We are in regular contact with the bank on its policies in this area through our executive director's office and his participation in board discussions of policy and specific lending proposals. To the extent that environmental considerations arise in IMF programmes, we adopt a similar approach. The IMF and the World Bank do, of course, co-operate closely.

ENERGY

Departmental Staff

Mr. Sean Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what are the latest available figures for his Department in the London pay area of the number of vacancies by grade and the proportion this is of the grade complement in London.

Mr. Parkinson: The table lists grades where vacancies against complement exist as at 1 October 1988.

Grade	Vacancies	Percentage of complement
Grade 7	2·0	2
Higher executive officer	8·5	9
Administrative officer	5·5	5
Administrative assistant	18·0	24
Personal secretary	7·5	14
Typist	11·0	37
Senior messenger	1·0	20
Security officer	1·0	12
Senior professional and technical/senior scientific officer	4·0	28
Assistant scientific officer	1·0	100
Reservior evaluation specialist IV/V	9·5	33
Petroleum specialist IV	3·0	18
Senior engineering inspector	1·0	25
Mapping and charting officer	2·5	42
Reprographics officer	4·0	80
Senior economist assistant	1·0	20
Senior assistant statistician	2·0	67
Senior information officer	1·0	10

Mr. Sean Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will provide the latest available figures for his Department for *(a)* numbers of staff in receipt of local pay additions, by grade, *(b)* location of those offices awarding local pay additions and *(c)* annual cost.

Mr. Parkinson: The latest available information on local pay additions (LPAs) for the Department of Energy is as follows:

(a) Staff in receipt of LPAs, by grade

	Number
Administrative assistant	38
Administrative officer	114

(b) Location of offices involved:
Thames House South, Millbank, London SW1P 4QJ
Croydon, Surrey
(c) Annual cost: £70,600.

Radioactive Leakages (Sellafield)

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how many radioactive leakages there have been at Sellafield in the current year; and if he will make a statement about the leakage reported on Friday 7 October.

Mr. Michael Spicer: There have been three incidents at Sellafield this year in which small amounts of radioactive material have been detected. All three occurred within buildings at the plant. One of them was the specific incident to which the hon. Member refers. The leak penetrated the soil below the building and has since been stopped. There was no over-exposure to any member of the work force and there was no risk to the public.

All three incidents were reported to my Department in accordance with the revised reporting arrangements announced by the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy on 30 April 1987, columns 203-204.

The incidents were also reported to the nuclear installations inspectorate of the Health and Safety Executive and to Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution. Details of all such incidents are included in British Nuclear Fuel plc's regular Sellafield *Newsletter*, copies of which are available in the Library of the House.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Spirituous Beverages

Mr. Sims: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what recent action Her Majesty's Government have taken to press for the removal of discrimination in rates of alcohol tax and value-added tax on spirituous beverages in Portugal.

Mr. Alan Clark: At the Government's request the European Commission made a formal approach in May to the Portuguese authorities about discriminatory rates of VAT and alcohol tax. The Commission is holding talks with the Portuguese in Lisbon in early November to discuss this issue.

Mr. Sims: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what recent action Her Majesty's Government have taken *(a)* to press for the removal of Greek value added tax discrimination against, inter alia, Scotch whisky in favour of certain locally produced spirits and *(b)* to ensure that the Greek Government complies with its previous commitment to remove all remaining discriminatory taxes on spirits with effect from 1 January 1989.

Mr. Alan Clark: The European Commission's infringement proceedings against the Greek Government are still in progress in the European Court and we continue to keep a close watch on developments. In addition, the Government made an official request to the European Commission earlier this year to monitor taxation measures in Greece after the abolition of the Greek "special consumption" and "regulatory" tax on 1 January 1989.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Detective Inspector Lee Marvin

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Attorney-General whether he intends to proceed against former Detective Inspector Lee Marvin for publication of confidential information about public figures in *The Sun* newspaper.

The Attorney-General: The Director of Public Prosecutions has asked for police inquiries to be made into this matter. No decision as to whether or not any prosecution should be brought can be made until those inquiries are complete.

Public Order Act 1986

Mrs Ann Taylor: To ask the Attorney-General how many cases have been instituted and how many cases concluded under section 18 of the Public Order Act 1986; and how many cases are still pending; and how many of the concluded cases led to convictions.

The Attorney-General: Since Part III of the Public Order Act 1986 came into force last year, one prosecution under its provisions has been brought. That prosecution has not yet concluded.

HEALTH

Erythropoietin

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health in which hospitals clinical trials of erythropoietin are being carried out; and how many patients are involved.

Mr. Mellor: Clinical trials of erythropoietin are currently under way in 38 hospitals in the United Kingdom and 132 patients are participating. They have all given their consent to take part. Representatives of the clinical investigators have asked that no details of the trial sites should be published to avoid the risk of direct publicity disturbing arrangements between patients and investigators which could in turn lead to delay in completing the trials and to other difficulties.

Elderly Persons (Care)

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action his Department will consider arising from the Northwick Park hospital research on the cost-effectiveness of caring for the elderly in the community as opposed to in hospitals.

Mr. Mellor: It is already Government policy that elderly people should be cared for in the community whenever this is possible and appropriate.

We are currently giving careful consideration to Sir Roy Griffiths' recommendations on the whole issue of care in the community, taking account of the independent review of residential care chaired by Lady Wagner, and of the numerous representations we have received.

Community Care

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the representations he has now received following the publication of the Griffiths report on community care; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: We have received formal responses to the Griffiths report from the following national bodies:

Age Concern England
Alcohol Concern
Association of County Councils
Association of Directors of Social Services
Association of Residential Communities for the Retarded
Audit Commission for Local Authorities in England and Wales
BMA (General Medical Services Committee)
COHSE
Community Care Now!
Community Psychiatric Nurses Association
Disablement Income Group
Independent Hospitals Association
Institute of Gerontology
Institute of Health Services Management
Institute of Housing
The King's fund
Leonard Cheshire Foundation
MENCAP
MIND
National Council for Voluntary Organisations
National Demonstration Services in Psychiatric Rehabilitation
National Housing and Town Planning Council
National Schizophrenia Fellowship
Parliamentary Mental Health Group
RESCARE
Regional Health Authority Chairmen and General Managers: Inter Regional Secretariat
Royal College of Psychiatrists
Shaftesbury Society
Social Care Association
Society of Family Practitioner Committees
Social Security Advisory Committee
UK Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting

In addition, we have received representations from:

58 local authorities
18 health authorities
12 Community Health Councils
10 Family Practitioner Committees
18 Professional bodies
20 other voluntary organisations
31 members of the public.

NHS Pay

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the latest estimated total cost of pay increases in 1988-89 for *(a)* nurses, *(b)* doctors and *(c)* ancillary staff in the National Health Service.

Mr. Mellor: The information requested is as follows:

National Health Service England

Cost of pay increases 1988-89	*£ million*
Nurses and midwives	[1]731
Doctors and dentists	255
Ancillary staff	[2]52

[1] The figure follows the recent announcement of additional funding for the Nurses Clinical Grading Review.
[2] In addition a reduction of one hour in the standard working week from 12 December 1988.

Aids

Mr. Robert G. Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he has any plans to change the funding arrangements by which central Government grants are provided to local authorities in respect of AIDS-related problems to take into account the fact that the great majority of people with AIDS live in a relatively small number of local authorities.

Mr. Mellor: I am very pleased to announce that we propose to introduce in 1989-90 a new specific grant to support expenditure on personal social services to enable resources to be targeted on the small number of local authorities facing the greatest pressure as a consequence of AIDS. £7 million of grant, paid at 70 per cent. of total expenditure under the powers available from the Local Authority Grants (Social Needs) Act 1969, will be distributed to those authorities facing the severest pressure. Although the precise details of the arrangements

have yet to be worked out, we intend to monitor the payment and use of resources under this grant very carefully.

Nurses (Pay)

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has received from each regional health authority of the cost of the nursing regrading exercise; what is each region's estimate of their total nursing pay bill in 1988-89; and what is each region's current allocation in respect of nursing pay.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke *[holding answer 19 October 1988]*: I am today announcing additional financial allocations to English regional health authorities to meet in full the estimated final costs of the nurses clinical regrading exercise. The first column of the table gives each regional health authority's estimate* of the basic assimilation cost of its proposed regrading. The remaining information gives the distribution by region of the additional £98 million now being made available (including provision for London pay supplements where appropriate); and the total of £731 million which has now been provided to meet the cost of this exercise in England. Regional estimates of the total nursing pay bill in 1988-89 are not available; and current allocations to regions do not separately identify an element in respect of nursing pay.

Region[1]	*Percentage assimilation cost*	*Additional allocation £ million*	*Total*[2] *allocation £ million*
Northern	16·4	6·3	43·6
Yorkshire	16·2	5·5	47·0
Trent	16·3	7·2	58·7
East Anglia	17·1	4·2	26·3
North West Thames	16·4	5·2	56·8
North East Thames	16·9	7·3	70·8
South East Thames	17·4	8·4	61·9
South West Thames	17·2	6·8	49·8
Wessex	17·6	8·4	39·6
Oxford	18·3	6·8	31·7
South Western	17·8	9·9	46·6
West Midlands	16·2	7·5	66·8
Mersey	16·2	4·9	34·9
North Western	16·7	9·9	61·3

[1] In order to ensure consistency all Regions were asked to calculate the cost of their proposals upon the assumption that all staff would move from the midpoint of their existing scale to the midpoint of their proposed new grade. We and the Regions recognised, however, that because of the present incremental distribution such a method would overstate the cost. Accordingly three Regions, which had the data available, calculated the cost taking account of actual points on scales and grades. This comparison showed in those Regions that on average the midpoint method overstated the cost by 0·6 percentage points. To reflect this, all Regions accepted that their midpoint-to-midpoint estimates should be adjusted by a common factor of 0·6 percentage points.

[2] These figures do not include the provision made for special health authorities and other bodies.

University College and Middlesex School of Dentistry

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations have been received from patients and others about the future of the University College and Middlesex school of dentistry and its associated dental hospital; what replies have been sent; and if he will make a statement on the consequences of closure for patients.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 19 October 1988]*: The Department has received some 90 inquiries from members of the public and staff affected by the closure of the dental school at the University College and Middlesex school of dentistry. The replies to the inquiries explained that there would be a possible serious oversupply of dentists in the future unless the present rate of increase of students admitted to United Kingdom dental schools was reduced. They also indicate that decisions on the funding of individual dental schools are the responsibility of the University Grants Committee.

The provision of dental services provided by University College is a matter for the district health authority. As closure of the dental school will be phased over the next five years there will be time for the authority to arrange for planned transfer of services.

SOCIAL SECURITY

National Insurance

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for those contracted in and for those contracted out, the national insurance contributions rates, including the class 2 and class 4 contributions and the reduced rate, in 1988-89, together with *(a)* the total number in each category, their sex and their marital status and *(b)* the aggregate contributions in each category and the earnings to which they relate.

Mr. Peter Lloyd *[holding answer 27 July 1988]*: Full details of the current national insurance contribution rates can be found in leaflet N1208 "National Insurance, Statutory Sick Pay, Statutory Maternity Pay—rates from 6 April 1988" a copy of which has been placed in the Library.

Estimated numbers of National Insurance contributors in 1988-89

	Millions		
	Males	*Females*	*Total*
Class 1:			
Contracted out			
Standard Rate	6·3	2·7	9·0
Reduced Rate	—	0·3	0·3
Not Contracted out			
Standard Rate	5·2	4·2	9·4
Reduced Rate	—	0·7	0·7
All			
Standard Rate	11·5	6·9	18·4
Reduced Rate	—	1·0	1·0
Total	11·5	7·9	19·4
Class 2	1·9	0·2	2·1
Class 4	1·45	0·15	1·6

Estimated amounts of National Insurance contributions in 1988-89

	£ billions		
	Males	*Females*	*Total*
Class 1:			
Contracted out			
Standard Rate	11·7	3·55	15·25
Reduced Rate	—	0·25	0·25
Not Contracted out			
Standard Rate	10·1	3·85	13·95
Reduced Rate	—	0·35	0·35
All			
Standard Rate	21·8	7·4	29·2
Reduced Rate	—	0·6	0·6
Total	21·8	8·0	29·8

	Males	Females	Total
		£ millions	
Class 2	380	40	420
Class 4	400	40	440

Estimated total earnings of employees in employment in 1988-89

	£ billions		
	Males	*Females*	*Total*
Employees:			
Contracted out			
Standard Rate	85	25	110
Reduced Rate	—	2	2
Not contracted out			
Standard Rate	57	25	82
Reduced Rate	—	4	4
All			
Standard Rate	142	50	192
Reduced Rate	—	6	6
Total	142	56	198
Estimated total assessed earnings of self-employed in 1988-89			
Self-employed	22·5	2·5	25

Estimates by marital status are not available.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is the current reduced rate of national insurance contributions for *(a)* married women and *(b)* widows; how many are still paying contributions at this rate; what is his forecast for 1990-91; how many would otherwise be paying at the rate of 5 per cent. and 7 per cent.; and what is the estimated cost to the national insurance fund in the current financial year in each case.

Mr. Peter Lloyd *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* The current reduced rate contribution for both married women and widows is 3·85 per cent. and it is estimated that around 1 million women are contributing at this rate. It is further estimated that 750,000 women will still be paying at the reduced rate in 1990-91.

If the reduced rate were abolished, around 0·3 million of the women now paying it would pay contributions at 5 per cent., 0·25 million at 7 per cent., and 0·45 million at 9 per cent. The cost of this concession to the national insurance fund in 1988-89 terms would be £200 million.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what has been the increase in the number and annual value of national insurance contributions since 1986 as a result of the reduction in unemployment; and what is the division between full-time and part-time employment.

Mr. Peter Lloyd *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* It is not possible to identify the effect of the reduction in unemployment on the numbers paying national insurance contributions.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the number of nationally insured male and female workers in manufacturing and non-manufacturing, respectively, together with his estimate of average earnings in each case in 1987-88 and his forecast for 1988-89.

Mr. Peter Lloyd *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* I regret that information in the form requested is not available.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the latest estimated income of the national insurance fund from national insurance contributions in the current financial year, the income which would accrue if the upper earnings limit on all contributions was removed and the income which would be lost in each case if *(a)* the contributions rate for single persons was reduced to 5·5 per cent., *(b)* the rate for married persons was dropped to 4 per cent., *(c)* £3,000 were deducted from earned income for contribution purposes, rising to £6,000 for a contributor with a non-earning spouse and *(d)* if the reductions in *(a)* to *(c)* were in operation at the same time.

Mr. Peter Lloyd *[holding answer 27 July 1988]:* The amount of national insurance contributions due to the national insurance fund in 1988-89 is estimated to be £27·3 billion of which £11·85 billion is employees (primary) contributions.

The table shows the estimated effect of the proposals in the question:

	£ Billions	
Current 1988-89 estimates	27·3	
If Upper Earnings Limit removed for[1] employees contributions	28·6	+1·30
If single person's rate reduced[2] to 5·5 per cent.	25·55	−1·75
If married person's rate reduced[2] to 4 per cent.	22·15	−5·15
If £3,000 deducted from earnings[2] for contribution purposes (£6,000 where spouse is non-earning)	23·50	−3·8
If all proposals were in existence[2] at same time	18	−9·30

[1] Assumes that current upper earnings limit remains for the purposes of contracted-out rebates.

[2] Assumes that secondary contributions and contracted-out rebates would be unaffected and that all losses are from gross primary contributions ie. no adjustments for NHS allocation.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security, pursuant to the reply dated 25 March 1987, *Official Report*, columns *199-200*, concerning reduced rate national insurance contributions, if he will provide figures for the gross and net contributions, taking into account the figures supplied on the same date in reply to a question asking for an update of table 40.13 of social security statistics 1985, 25 March, *Official Report*, column *200*.

Mr. Peter Lloyd *[holding answer 28 July 1988]:* It is estimated that an average of 1 million female contributors will be paying the reduced rate of national insurance contributions in 1988-89. The full year cost of this concession in 1988-89 in terms of lower contribution revenue will be £200 million.

Benefit Claimants

Mr. Lester: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will publish a table showing the number of people claiming *(a)* supplementary benefit-income support *(b)* rent-rebate-allowances *(c)* rate rebates and *(d)* family income supplement-family credit, in each year

since 1975, including estimates for 1988, distinguishing between pensioners and those of working age and between certificated and standard housing benefit.

Mr. Peter Lloyd *[holding answer 29 July 1988]:* The information is set out in the tables.

The tables stand alone: figures for particular years cannot be added together to provide a total number of people, as individual recipients may receive more than one benefit.

Supplementary Benefit/Income Support Recipients
(November/December of each year)

	[1] Working age	[2] Pensioners	[3] Total
1975	1,113	1,679	2,793
1976	1,274	1,687	2,960
1977	1,253	1,738	2,991
1978	1,195	1,738	2,932
1979	1,132	1,723	2,855
1980	1,423	1,694	3,118
1981	1,985	1,738	3,723
1982	2,486	1,781	4,267
1983	2,698	1,651	4,349
1984	2,926	1,683	4,609
[4]1985	—	—	—
[5]1986	3,221	1,717	4,938
[6]1987	3,169	1,727	4,896
[7]1988	3,000	1,770	4,770

[1] Supplementary Allowance recipients
[2] Supplementary Pension recipients
[3] Subject to rounding
[4] No annual statistical enquiry in this year
[5] February
[6] May
[7] Estimate from "Impact of the Reformed Structure of Income-Related Benefits"
Source: Supplementary Benefit annual statistical enquiries.

Family Income Supplement Family Credit Recipients
(April of each year)

	Working age	Total
1975	55	55
1976	60	60
1977	85	85
1978	95	95
1979	75	75
1980	90	90
1981	105	105
1982	140	140
1983	190	190
1984	205	205
1985	205	205
1986	200	200
1987	220	220
1988	[1]205	205

[1] Family Credit commenced April 1988. This figure represents the number of transfers from Family Income Supplement to Family Credit.
Source: Ten per cent. sample of Family Income Supplement load.

Housing Benefit Recipients

Great Britain—thousands

	Rent Rebate Allowance			Rate Rebate		
	Pensioners	Working age	[4]Total	Pensioners	Working age	[4]Total
Certificated Housing Benefit						
1975-76 to 1982-83—Not applicable[1]						
1983-84	1,185	1,355	2,540	1,575	1,690	3,265
1984-85	1,155	1,490	2,645	1,580	1,925	3,505
1985-86	1,255	1,380	2,635	1,675	1,770	3,445
1986-87	1,100	1,540	2,645	1,490	1,960	3,455
1987-88	1,140	1,570	2,705	1,550	1,945	3,495
1988-89[5]	1,115	1,640	2,755	1,540	1,900	3,440
Standard Housing Benefit						
1975-76 to 1978-79[3]						
1979-80	[3]—	[3]—	1,440	[3]—	[3]—	3,070
1980-81	[3]—	[3]—	1,570	[3]—	[3]—	3,350
1981-82	[3]—	[3]—	1,840	[3]—	[3]—	3,710
1982-83	[3]—	[3]—	1,910	[3]—	[3]—	3,510
1983-84[2]	1,365	845	2,210	2,530	1,225	3,755
1984-85	1,360	820	2,180	2,530	1,195	3,725
1985-86	1,385	840	2,220	2,445	1,130	3,575
1986-87	1,550	710	2,255	2,540	1,060	3,595
1987-88	1,585	720	2,305	2,495	1,040	3,535
1988-89[5]	1,395	335	1,730	1,925	475	2,400

[1] Prior to November 1982 householders on supplementary benefit received assistance with rent and rates through the supplementary benefit scheme.
[2] A new housing benefit scheme for householders not receiving supplementary benefit was introduced from April 1983.
[3] Not available.
[4] Subject to rounding.
[5] Estimated impact of the New Scheme of Housing Benefit introduced in April 1988. The terms "certificated" and "standard" housing benefit no longer apply and have been superseded by receipt and non-receipt of income support.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Milk

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, pursuant to his reply of 26 May, *Official Report*, columns *263-4*, how many of the 4,500 milk producers who were contracted out of production had applied for milk quotas to his Department prior to 31 July; and when they were advised that they should apply by 31 July.

Mr. Donald Thompson: It is not practicable to invite applications for milk quota from former producers until the criteria against which they are to be judged have been established. I have received many inquiries on this subject, which can be effectively answered only when the Commission's proposals for dealing with this matter have

been fully considered by the Council of Ministers. In the Council discussions so far I have made known my strong reservations about the proposed 31 July application date.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Sean Hughes: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will provide the latest available figures for his Ministry for *(a)* numbers of staff in receipt of local pay additions, by grade, *(b)* location of those offices awarding local pay additions and *(c)* annual cost.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The information requested is as follows.

(a) The numbers of staff currently in receipt of local pay additions by grades are:—

	Numbers
Executive Officers	101
Administrative Officers	555
Administrative Assistants	444
Typing Managers	19
Senior Personal Secretaries	26
Personal Secretaaries	117
Typists	158

(b) The locations of offices awarding local pay additions, by London Borough or local authority area, are:—
Camden, City of London, City of Westminster, Hillingdon, Wandsworth, Kingston upon Thames, Guildford, Reading, Runnymede, Vale of White Horse and Cambridge.

(c) The estimated annual cost of these payments is £692,000.

Research and Development

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) if he will give details of proposed cuts in the funding of agricultural and horticultural research and development recently circulated to sectors of the industry, and if he will make a statement;

(2) whether the proposals to cut Government funding of agricultural and horticultural research and development, recently circulated to sectors of the industry, include the cuts for 1989-90 and 1990-91 already announced in the expenditure plans of January 1988; and if he will make a statement;

(3) if he will outline the estimated employment effects of implementing the proposals to cut Government funding of agricultural and horticultural research and development as circulated to sectors of the industry recently, in total, by sector and by institute, including Government departments, respectively;

(4) what proportion of those cuts in the Government funding of agricultural and horticultural research and development already published have yet to be implemented; and if he will provide figures to show the projected effects in cash and employment terms in total and by sector of the industry, respectively.

Mr. Ryder: The £20 million reduction in planned expenditure on R and D by Agriculture Departments, which was announced in January 1985, was implemented during 1986-87 and 1987-88. The further £10 million reduction announced in November 1987 will be implemented in 1989-90 and 1990-91. Decisions on further amounts by which Government funding of near market research and development from the Agriculture Departments' programme will be reduced, will take into account the reductions already implemented and planned. The information which has been circulated to sectors of the industry is illustrative of the work which is considered suitable for industry funding and I am arranging for copies to be placed in the Library of the House. It is not possible at present to estimate effects on employment.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many people were employed in Government-assisted agricultural and horticultural research and development at the latest available date in the United Kingdom in total, by sector and institute, including Government Departments, respectively.

Mr. Ryder: The information requested is not kept centrally.

Bovine Somatotropin

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what advice he has received from the Veterinary Products Committee concerning the milk production hormone, BST; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ryder: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Carlisle (Mr. Eric Marlow) on the 20 October 1988.

ENVIRONMENT

Rating Reform

Mr. Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what resources he is making available to charging authorities in England for the cost of preparing for the community charge in 1989-90.

Mr. Ridley: After discussions with the local authority associations, I have concluded that half the provision of £110 million being included in the rate support grant settlement for 1989-90 for the current costs of preparing for the community charge will be met through a specific grant. This grant will be made to all charging authorities on a formula which reflects the number and relative mobility of chargepayers in each area. The remaining half of the expenditure will be supported by rate support grant in the normal way. My Department is today providing authorities with details of the amount of grant to be paid to them; copies of the letter to the authorities and a list of the estimated amounts of specific grant to be paid to charging authorities have been placed in the Library.

Capital allocations for 1989-90 will include specific allocations of £135 million for the capital costs of preparing for the community charge and there will be further discussions with the local authority associations on the method of allocation so that the details can be announced following the autumn statement on public expenditure.

Open Spaces (Development)

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has to ensure that all costs of planning appeals for development of green belt or urban open space land should be borne by the developer and not by the ratepayer.

Mr. Chope: The parties to a planning appeal normally meet their own expenses. Awards of costs at a public inquiry can, however, be made on grounds of unreasonable behaviour.

House Prices

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list those local authorities in which the average house price is £20,000 or less.

Mr. Trippier: The information about house prices collected by the department identifies only the county, metropolitan district, or London borough area in which the dwelling is located. For the period July 1987 to June 1988 in none of the 108 such areas was the average price of dwellings purchased with a building society mortgage £20,000 or less.

Vacant Private Housing

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list those local authorities in whose area more than 6·5 per cent. of the private housing stock now stands vacant.

Mr. Trippier: About 80 per cent. (293) of English housing authorities have provided estimates of the number of empty private dwellings (owner-occupied and private rented) in the 1988 housing investment programme returns. Of these, the following 25 authorities reported more than 6·5 per cent. of the private housing stock in their areas as being vacant at 1 April 1988:

Allerdale
Breckland
Burnley
Camden
Hackney
Hammersmith and Fulham
Haringey
Hove
Hyndburn
Islington
Kensington and Chelsea
Lambeth
Leicester
Lewisham
Norwich
Pendle
Peterborough
Rossendale
South Derbyshire
Southend-on-Sea
South Shropshire
Southwark
Tower Hamlets
Westminster
Winchester

Council House Sales

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if receipts from council house sales will be released to discretionary housing use by holding local authorities in the forthcoming parliamentary Session.

Mr. Trippier Under the Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980, local authorities may augment their prescribed expenditure allocations in any financial year by an amount equal to the prescribed proportion of their in-year and accumulated capital receipts. The prescribed proportion currently applicable to receipts from sales of council houses in England is 20 per cent. Proposals for a new statutory framework for the capital programes of local authorities were published by my right hon. Friend on 7 July. These proposals would require legislation and would not take effect before the financial year 1990-91.

Inner Area Programmes

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the inner area programme bids submitted for 1988-89, indicating which have been approved; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier Inner area programmes for 1988-89 have been submitted by all 57 local authorities invited to prepare them and all have now been approved. Urban programme expenditure allocations to support the projects in each IAP have also been confirmed.

Water Privatisation

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much his Department has spent during 1987-88 to the latest available date in relation to proposals to privatise the water industry.

Mr. Moynihan Estimates of expenditure in 1987-88 by the Department in relation to proposals to privatise the water industry are as follows:

	£
DOE Staff and Office Services	710,000
Advisers Fees	622,000

These figures do not include certain other costs, such as accommodation, which are borne centrally. The first item includes the cost of the present system of financial control of the water authorities.

Housing Rental Purchase

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if his Department currently has any proposals with regard to housing rental purchase schemes.

Mr. Trippier We believe that rental purchase has been used as a means of circumventing the Rent Act. The new assured tenancy regime set out in the Housing Bill, which will enable landlords to charge market rents, should reduce the incentive to establish rental purchase schemes. We are awaiting the results of the survey into rental purchase carried out by the Association of Metropolitan Authorities

London Docklands

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans have been considered, or approved by the London Docklands development corporation for further development on Heron quay in the Isle of Dogs enterprise zone, stating the approximate areas in respect of each proposed use.

Mr. Trippier: The LDDC is currently considering a mixed development proposal by Tarmac Brookglade of approximately 2 million sq ft, the use of which would be broadly as follows:

Residential—49 to 62 per cent.
Commercial—14 to 27 per cent.
Retail—4 to 6 per cent.
Business suites—2 to 4 per cent.
Hotel—16 per cent.

Housing Associations

Mr. Batiste: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what further proposals he has for encouraging the setting up of new housing associations in rural areas.

Mr. Trippier: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced in July that the Rural Development

Commission planned almost to treble its funding for the national agricultural centre rural trust in 1988-89, and that the Housing Corporation would provide for a steady expansion in its programme of housing association schemes in rural areas. It is, however, too early to give any further details of these bodies' funding proposals for the coming years.

Water Supply (Failures)

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the number of significant failures of water supply arising, by water authority, for each year since 1979; what was the number of significant serious failures, by water authority for 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 19 October]:* Information is not available centrally for all authorities on a comparable basis. However, information has been made available regarding the existence of levels of service from their publication in the PAC report "Monitoring and Control of the Water Authorities, 1985" (Ref. No. H.C. 249) and in specific circumstances in answers to subsequent parliamentary questions.

TRANSPORT

British Rail (Investment)

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will set out in the *Official Report* details of the major British Rail projects which are receiving funds from his Department.

Mr. Portillo: British Rail will invest £3·8 billion over the next five years. Within that total all investment in British Rail's Network South East and provincial sectors is funded by the Government through the public service obligation grant, either directly as a charge on the revenue account or through depreciation charges.

Twenty-five major investment projects have been approved by Ministers since Government objectives were first set in October 1983, worth some £1,390 million in all (1988-89 prices). Within that total projects which have received funds from this Department include:

Tonbridge-Hastings electrification
149 EMU vehicles (43 sets) for London commuter services
Bishops Stortford-Cambridge electrification
150 lightweight DMU vehicles (75 sets)
100 mediumweight DMU vehicles (50 sets)
Waterloo resignalling
240 mediumweight DMU vehicles (120 sets)
"Windsor" rail link, Manchester
Snow Hill Tunnel Link, London—including 240 EMU vehicles
138 lightweight DMU vehicles (69 sets)
228 mediumweight "Sprinter" DMU vehicles (114 sets)
Bournemouth-Weymouth electrification including 120 EMU vehicles
Rail Link to Stansted Airport including 20 EMU vehicles
Royston-Cambridge electrification
184 EMU vehicles (46 sets) for Great Eastern Lines
204 Class 158 "Express Sprinter" DMU vehicles
48 Class 456 EMU vehicles (24 sets)
Portsmouth-Southampton electrification
200 Class 319-321 EMU vehicles (50 sets)

In addition to these projects British Rail continues investment in the electrification of the east coast main line and is funding improvements connected with the Channel tunnel which do not receive PSO grant.

M45-A45 Slip Roads

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will announce the start date for the slip roads scheme between the M45 and the A45, together with the latest estimate of its cost.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Draft orders will be published early next year. This is later than I had hoped. We hope to start work within the following 12 months. The latest estimate of cost is £1·1m.

Fornham St. Martin cum St. Genevieve (Bypass)

Sir Eldon Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport why, as of mid-October, he had sent no reply to the Fornham St. Martin cum St. Genevieve parish council's letter of 31 August regarding the disagreement between Suffolk county highways department and his Department about the proposed bypass of this village; when he expects this new road will be built; if it is his intention that it should continue as a trunk road; and whether private enterprise can play any part in financing its construction.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The parish council's letter of 31 August was received by the Department's eastern regional office on 15 September. A reply was sent on 7 October.

A bypass scheme for Fornham St. Martin, on the A134 principal road, is the responsibility of Suffolk county council as highways authority. It has programmed the scheme for a planned start of construction in 1990-91.

In December 1987 proposals were published for trunking the A134 from Bury St. Edmunds northwards. We are considering with the county council how best to provide a bypass for Fornham St. Martin and trunk the A134. We understand it is the county council's intention to apply for 100 per cent. grant aid for the bypass scheme. An offer of private funding would be given serious consideration.

Settle-Carlisle Railway

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will publish in full the market research he has in his possession, including passenger attitudes towards *(a)* the desirability of keeping open, *(b)* the desirability of keeping open in the public sector and *(c)* the major purpose in closing the Settle-Carlisle railway; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: We have studied carefully the report from the Transport Users' Consultative Committee which was submitted in 1986 and of which a summary has been published. We look forward to receiving a further report from it by 30 November. We have also seen the results of a survey undertaken by Cumbria county council into the usage of the line. It does not, however, cover any of the issues mentioned by the hon. Member. It would be for Cumbria to decide on the publication of its survey. British Rail has recently submitted its up-dated financial case for wishing to discontinue services on the line.

EMPLOYMENT

Community Programme

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what advice he has given to organisations,

including community task force, about redundancy payments for workers whose contracts are to be terminated because of the end of the community programme.

Mr. Nicholls: The Training Commission sent comprehensive instructions on redundancy payments to all its area offices in August 1988. These instructions explained that the commission would reimburse the employer's share of all statutory redundancy payments due to community programme employees by virtue of their employment on the programme (and earlier temporary employment programmes). Commission area offices were instructed to pass on this information to all their CP agents and sponsors.

Training Schemes

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the total cost of all training schemes funded by Her Majesty's Government for each year since 1975.

Mr. Cope: Since 1975, expenditure on training programmes by the Manpower Services Commission, acting on behalf of the Secretary of State for Employment, has been as follows:

	£ millions (rounded)
1975-76	172
1976-77	256
1977-78	292
1978-79	374
1979-80	451
1980-81	560
1981-82	749
1982-83	869
1983-84	1,050
1984-85	1,144
1985-86	1,257
1986-87	1,441
1987-88	1,613

These figures include all related administrative costs, net of receipts.

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) what is the total number of people who completed training schemes funded by Her Majesty's Government for each year since 1975;

(2) what percentage of the unemployed attended and completed training courses funded by Her Majesty's Government for each year since 1975.

Mr. Cope: The table shows the number of people in Great Britain who started training courses funded by this Department for each year since 1980. The figures include those who joined courses for a second or subsequent time. Numbers starting training courses prior to 1980 and numbers completing courses could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

It is not known how many of these trainees were unemployed at the time they began their training course.

Numbers of starts

Year ended March	*(thousands)*
1980	95
1981	92
1982	96
1983	90
1984	480
1985	529
1986	664
1987	875
1988	[1]912

[1] provisional

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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

SIXTH SERIES **VOLUME 138**

SESSION 1987–88

25th July–21st October 1988

SCOPE OF THE INDEX, ARRANGEMENT AND ABBREVIATIONS

This index is derived from the House of Commons Library's Parliamentary On-Line Information System (POLIS), and the subject terms used are based on those used in POLIS. There are often changes in column numbering, etc, between the daily part or weekly Hansard (which simply collects together the daily parts without revision) and the bound volume. The index for the bound volume is revised to take account of these changes.

Scope and arrangement of the Index

Oral and Written Parliamentary Questions are indexed under subject headings and the names of Members asking and Ministers replying to them. Questions are not listed under the names of Departments replying. Departmental listings can be arrived at indirectly by looking under the names of the Minister(s) of that Department. There are, however, the headings 'Northern Ireland', 'Scotland', and 'Wales' under which one can find not only most Questions answered by the Northern Ireland Office, Scottish Office, Welsh Office but also Questions about these areas of the United Kingdom which are answered by other Departments. Ministerial statements are indexed under subject headings, under 'Ministerial statements' and the names of Ministers making them and Members speaking on them. General debates are indexed under broad subject headings and under the names of all Members and Ministers taking part. Debates on legislation (Bills, Orders, Regulations etc.) are indexed under the name of the Bill, Statutory Instrument etc, under subject headings and under the names of those taking part.

Rulings and Statements by Mr. Speaker and his deputies are brought together under the heading Speaker's rulings and statements.

Other contributions by Mr. Speaker and his deputies appear under the heading Speaker.

Opposition Day Debates, Estimates Day Debates and Standing Order No. 10 applications are listed under those respective headings and under subject headings too.

The date of each item except Parliamentary Questions is inserted immediately before the reference.

Members' names are given in the form by which they prefer to be known and are printed in bold italics. Under their names, entries are arranged under one of the two headings *Debates etc* (to include interventions on statements, points of order and so on) or *Questions*.

Abbreviations

Bills 1R = first reading, 2R = second reading, Money res = money resolution, Com = Committee stage, Rep = Report stage, 3R = third reading, amendt/amendts = amendment/amendments, * = matter taken formally, without debate.

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